Cybercrime, Safety and Well-Being on the Internet for Autistic Individuals

Presented by Maureen Bennie
Director, Autism Awareness Centre Inc.

maureen@autismawaresscentre.com

Let's Talk About The Internet

- How does the internet affect us?

- We need real life and human connection

- Why are autistic people more susceptible to online threats?

- Other online risks for autistic people

- Why prolonged screen time can be problematic

Why are autistic individuals drawn to the internet/computers?

Why are autistic individuals drawn to the internet/computers?

- No need to decode communication
- Less intimidating or stressful than face to face
- More response time
- Motivating
- Less social demands
- Predictability and a sense of control

What are the positive aspects of internet/computer use?

- Planning and organizing
- Typing over handwriting
- Touch screen capability
- Speech to text programs
- Sites that support interests

What are the positive aspects of internet/computer use?

- Improving hand-eye coordination

- Computer thinks visually and is controllable and unthreatening

- Therapeutic for play, imagination, sociability, exploration and creativity

Common Online Risks

Common Online Risks

- Cyberbullying

- Sexual predators

- Catfishing

- Scams, manipulation, or hacking

- Internet addiction

Creating a Safe Environment

The 4 B's

- **Be confident**
- **Be curious**
- **Be cautious**
- **Be prepared**

Safety Measures, Rules and Boundaries

- Data privacy policy

- Set and adjust privacy settings

- Limit the content access

- Create an internet contract – passwords, setting changes, internet time

- Periodically check contact, chat and messages

- Know the online terms and lingo - www.netlingo.com

Safety Measures, Rules and Boundaries

- Police monitoring of sites

- Do a web search by name

- Keep computer in an open area

- Establish areas for tech device use

A Predator Enters – A True Story

Internet User Rules & Boundaries

1. No personal information
2. No real user names
3. No uploading photos
4. Know your friends
5. Not everyone on line is who they say they are
6. Report
7. Take frequent breaks/limit screen time sessions

Health & Safety Rules for Computer Use

1. Seating
2. Breaks
3. Stand up and stretch
4. Avoid using the mouse for long periods of time
5. Posture

Recommended Screen Time for Well-Being

- Under 2 – None

- 2 – 5 years – less than one hour a day

- Ages 5 – 17 – no more than 2 hours a day of recreational screen time

- Canadian Health Measures Survey results

Signs of Too Much Screen Time

- lonely
- sad
- overly tired
- stressed or fearful
- isolated from friends or family
- withdrawn
- nervous
- agitated or tense
- aggressive or angry

From SickKids Health, Toronto, ON

Managing Screen Time

TIPS FOR MANAGING CHILDREN'S SCREEN TIME

Balance screen time with other activities. While your children may be getting more time on screens during this time, just be sure to balance this time with screen-free activities.

Keep meals media-free to promote meaningful conversations and improve dietary patterns.

Model good behaviours by setting time aside every day to fully engage with your family without screens nearby.

Keep mobile devices and charging stations out of the bedroom to promote healthy sleep patterns.

Avoid using screens as a reward or punishment to control behaviour. This can cause children to place high value on screen time and desire more of it.

Use screens for **creating human connection,** such as a video call with grandparents.

Guelph Family Health Study

UNIVERSITY of GUELPH

Making the Tools for the Rules

- Content has to be understood
- Concrete presentation
- How?
  - Charts
  - Checklists
  - Infographics
  - Graphic organizers
  - Visual supports
  - Presentation style – all at once? One idea per page? Veritcal? Horizontal? Photos or images?

Using Charts

- Great for recording computer time

- Seeing usage patterns

- Activities on the computer.

Computer Time Tracker

Computer Time Tracker			

Time	Person Browsing	Websites Visited	Time Spent Browsing
:			
:			
:			
:			
:			
:			
:			
:			
:			
:			
:			
:			

Visuals For Time

Visuals for Smaller Units of Time

- Use for ending a computer session; shorter sessions
- Showing a transition

Visuals for Smaller Units of Time

Infographics – Misunderstandings Online

Best Practices for **Avoiding Misunderstandings Online:**

- **Not everything** you read online is true.
- **Not everyone** who you speak with will be honest.
- **Ask the other person** to clarify what they mean before sharing your opinion.
- **Double check facts** and information.
- **Be polite and calm** even when you are sure that somebody is wrong.

Infographics - Cyberbullying

Infographics - Cyberbullying
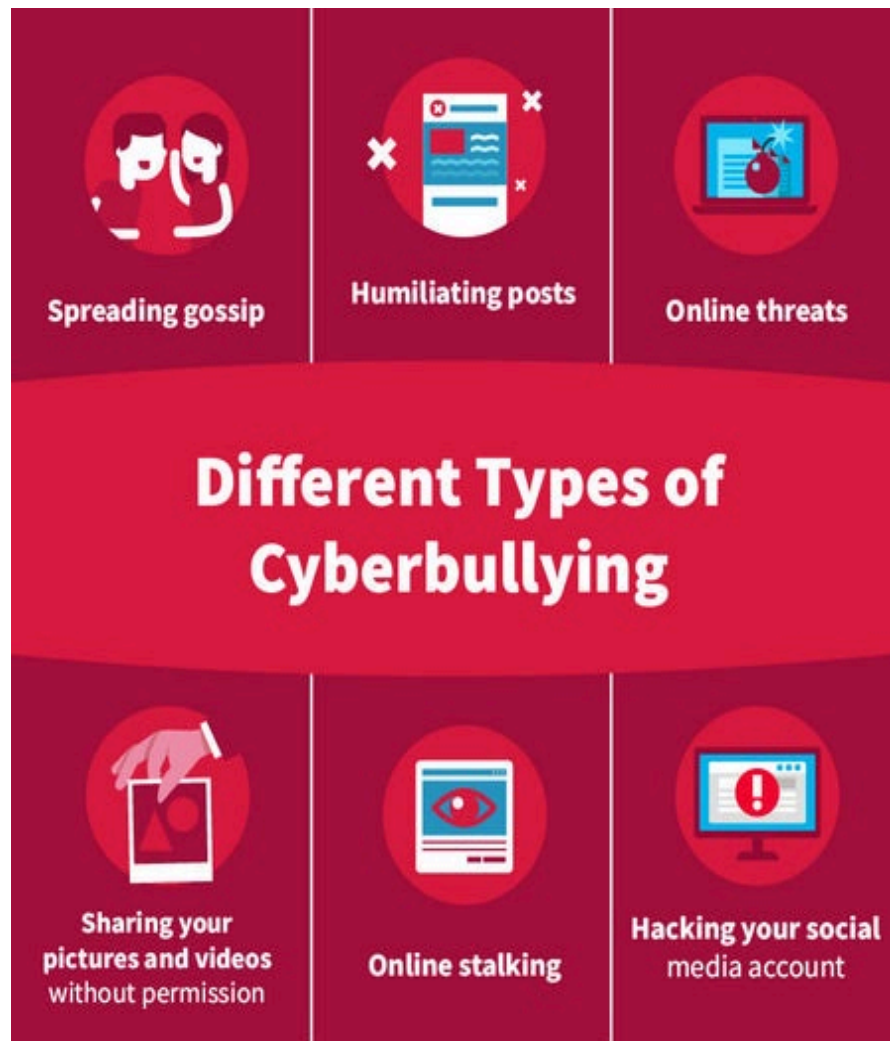
Safety Plans with Visuals

Follow these SMART rules to be safer online

Safe — Stay safe online by not giving out any personal information.

Meet — Do not meet anyone you are only friends with online.

Accept — Do not accept messages, friend request, emails, pictures, or files from people you do not know.

Reliable — Not all information online is reliable

Tell — Tell and adult you trust if something or someone makes you worried or uncomfortable

Play It Safe Acronym

- **P**ersonal information
- **L**et a friend or family member know
- **A**ttachments
- **Y**our feelings are important.
- **I**nformation
- **T**ake breaks from your computer

From Center on Secondary Education for Students with
Autism Spectrum Disorder (CSESA)

Play It Safe Acronym

- **S**pend your money safely.
- **A**ct politely
- **F**riends online should stay online
- **E**njoy yourself

From Center on Secondary Education for Students with
Autism Spectrum Disorder (CSESA)

The Incredible 5 Point Scale

- Created by Kari Dunn Buron and Mitzi Curtis
- A scale that promotes self-management of behavior and emotional regulation
- Allows abstract concepts and feelings to be personalized
- presented visually, concretely, and remain unchanged

The Incredible 5 Point Scale

5-Point Scale (Cyberbullying)

	How I Feel	What I Can Try to Do
5	I feel out of control. I start to cry.	People won't stop being mean online. I ask an adult for help. I can count backwards from 10. I may have to get off the computer and take a walk.
4	I am starting to get really mad. My jaw feels tight.	I tell an adult about my friends and their continued unkind words. I ask an adult to help me know how to participate online and stay calm. I can chew gum to make my jaw feel better.
3	I am starting to worry. My hands are feeling sweaty.	People are being mean to each other online. I tell my friends that we need to get off this app and do something else. I can use my theraputty to calm my nerves.
2	I am feeling sad.	One of my friends said unkind words to another friend. I tell them to stop saying unkind words. I can stay online but I may need to take some deep breaths.
1	I feel good. I feel calm.	I can stay online.

Adapted from Buron & Curtis, 2003

The Incredible 5 Point Scale

5-Point Scale (Anxiety)

	Feels Like	What I can do
5	I'm going to breakdown (cry, begin pacing and bang my head.	I can leave the room with permission and go to home base.
4	My stomach is starting to hurt and I'm having difficulty concentrating.	I can ask to talk privately to an adult. I can listen to my iPod with calming music (headphones).
3	I'm feeling uneasy and I'm starting to sweat.	I can refer to my coping cards and use deep breathing.
2	I feel ok. I can handle the situation.	Self-talk and reassure myself that I can do it!
1	I feel great. No problem!	Smile and relax!

Adapted from Buron & Curtis, 2003

5 Point Scale with Faces

The Power Card Strategy

- involves using interests with visual aids to teach skills

- most effectively used with mild to moderate cognitive disabilities

- paired with a social narrative

- Show what the person should do, not what they shouldn't do

- practicing the power card strategy

Creating the Power Card

1. Choose a behavior or skill to teach

2. Use a person's interest to choose characters

3. Write and illustrate a brief social narrative

4. Create the power card

5. Review the power card

6. Give the person feedback

Power Card Example

Sonic the Hedgehog Plays It Safe Online

Sonic loves being on the internet and talking with friends online. He knows that some information about him must be kept private and not shared online. This is to keep him safe from people who do not know him very well like his family does. Sonic can still have fun online without having to share his real name, address and phone number.

Sonic's Rules

When using the internet, Sonic wants you to stay safe and follow these 3 rules:

- Keep your personal information private like name, address and phone number.

- Use a screen name that is not your real name.

- Tell a trusted adult if someone has asked you for this information, or if you don't feel safe.

Sonic is proud of you for keeping yourself safe on the internet!
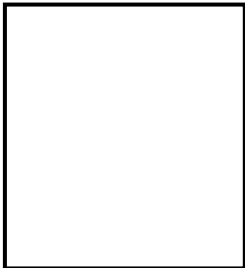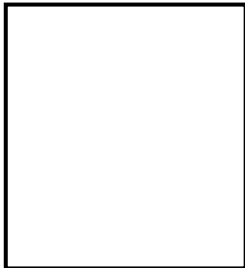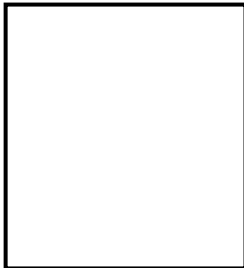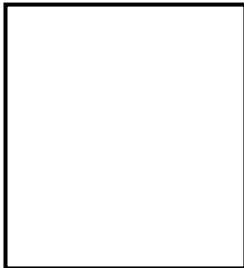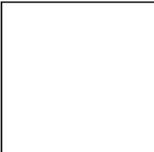
Role Playing - Ideas

- You've been playing a game online and someone you don't know wants to be your friend

- Someone has sent you an attachment with a rude picture

- You've received a mean message from someone you know.

- Someone you don't know has asked for your contact information.

Taking A Break

- Why breaks are needed
- Tools to visually show internet use
- Once patterns are known, breaks can be scheduled
- Offtime App - monitors phone use and creates disconnect time

Breaks on the Visual Schedule

1	2	3	4

Work time

Break

Music	Walk	Yoga ball
Read a book		

Choice ⭐

Computer	library	building
Outside	Pipecleaners	
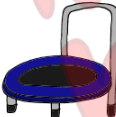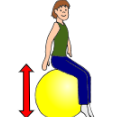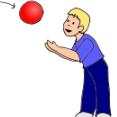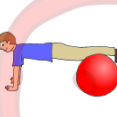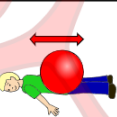
Developing Ideas for Breaks

- Develop break ideas with the person
- May need to be structured
- Build break ideas around interests
- Movement/exercise breaks
- Some suggestions – board games, scrapbooking, reading, coloring, music, puzzles
- Sensory ideas

Sensory Break Ideas

RW Sensory Choices
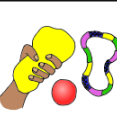
1 Choose 2-3	Trampoline	Racer	Stones	Bounce	Catch
2 Choose 2-3	Theraband	Roller	Walk out	Animal	Pushes
3 3-4 minutes	Bean Bag	Fidgets	Blanket	Massage	Squish

Movement Break Ideas

Movement

stretch | dance | walk | trampoline | skipping

hop on the spot | ride my bike | ride my scooter | ball skills | swing

play outside | JUMP JAM | yoga | walk dog | run

Leisure Ideas

Leisure

play	ball	outside	listen to music	watch TV
arts and crafts	draw	game	read	computer
toys	Lego	video game	puzzle	iPad
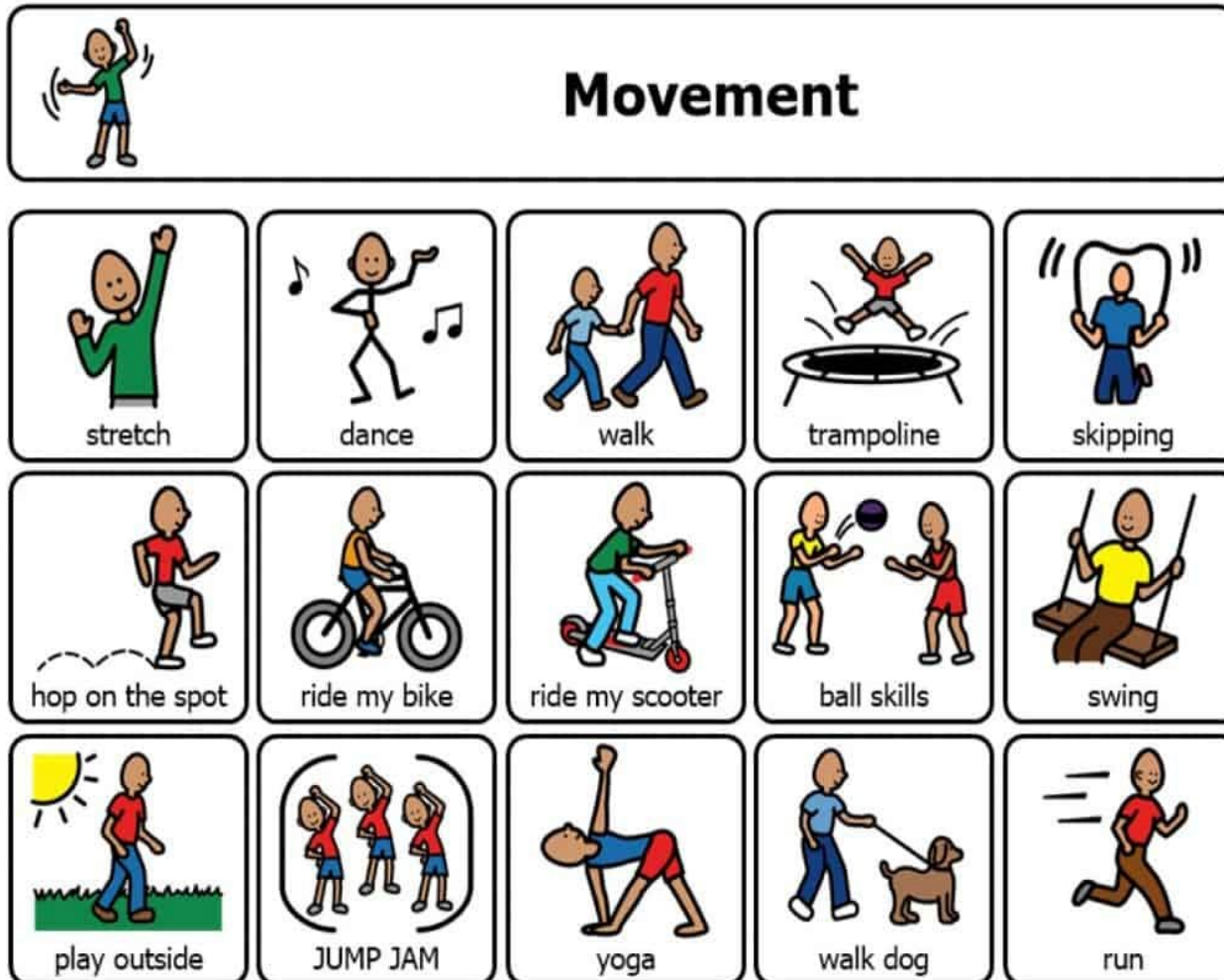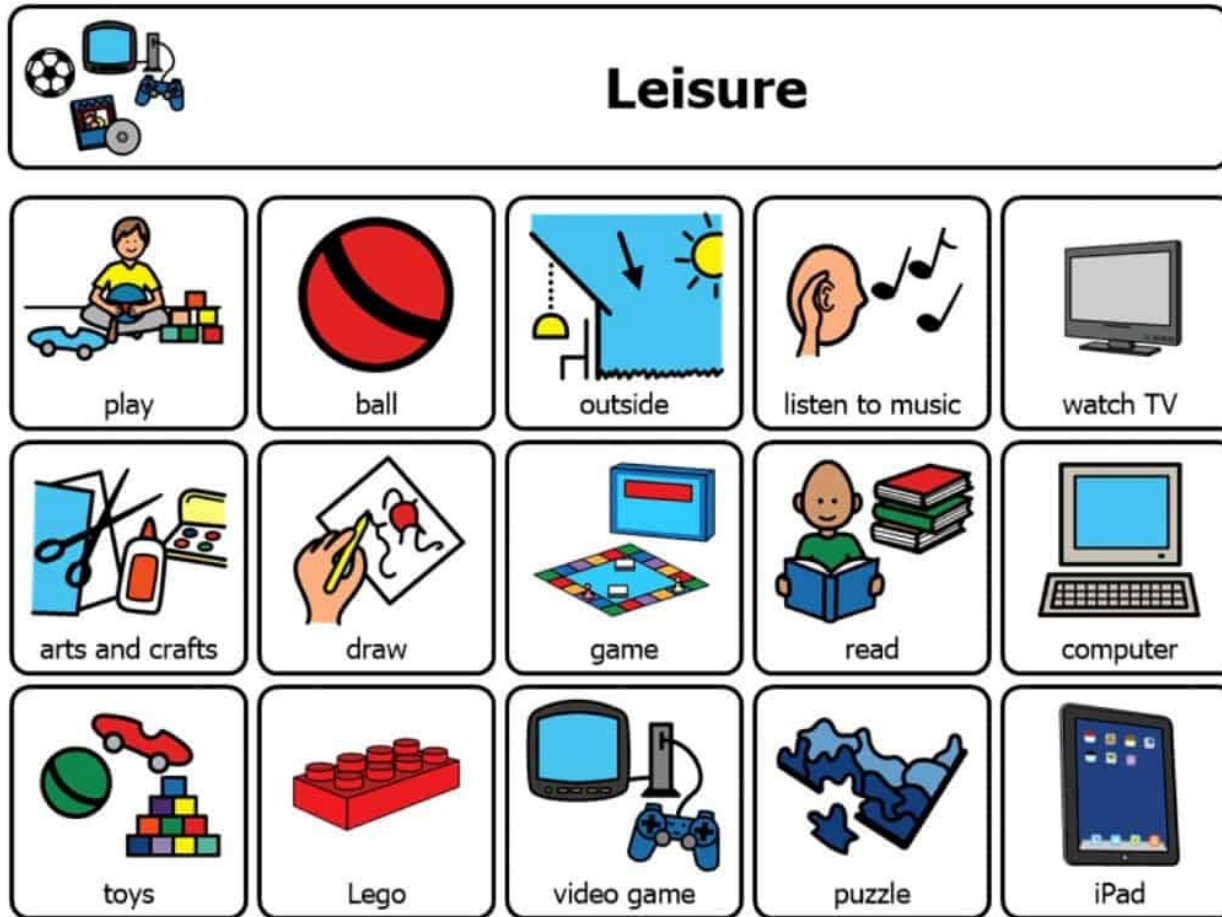
Graphic Organizer
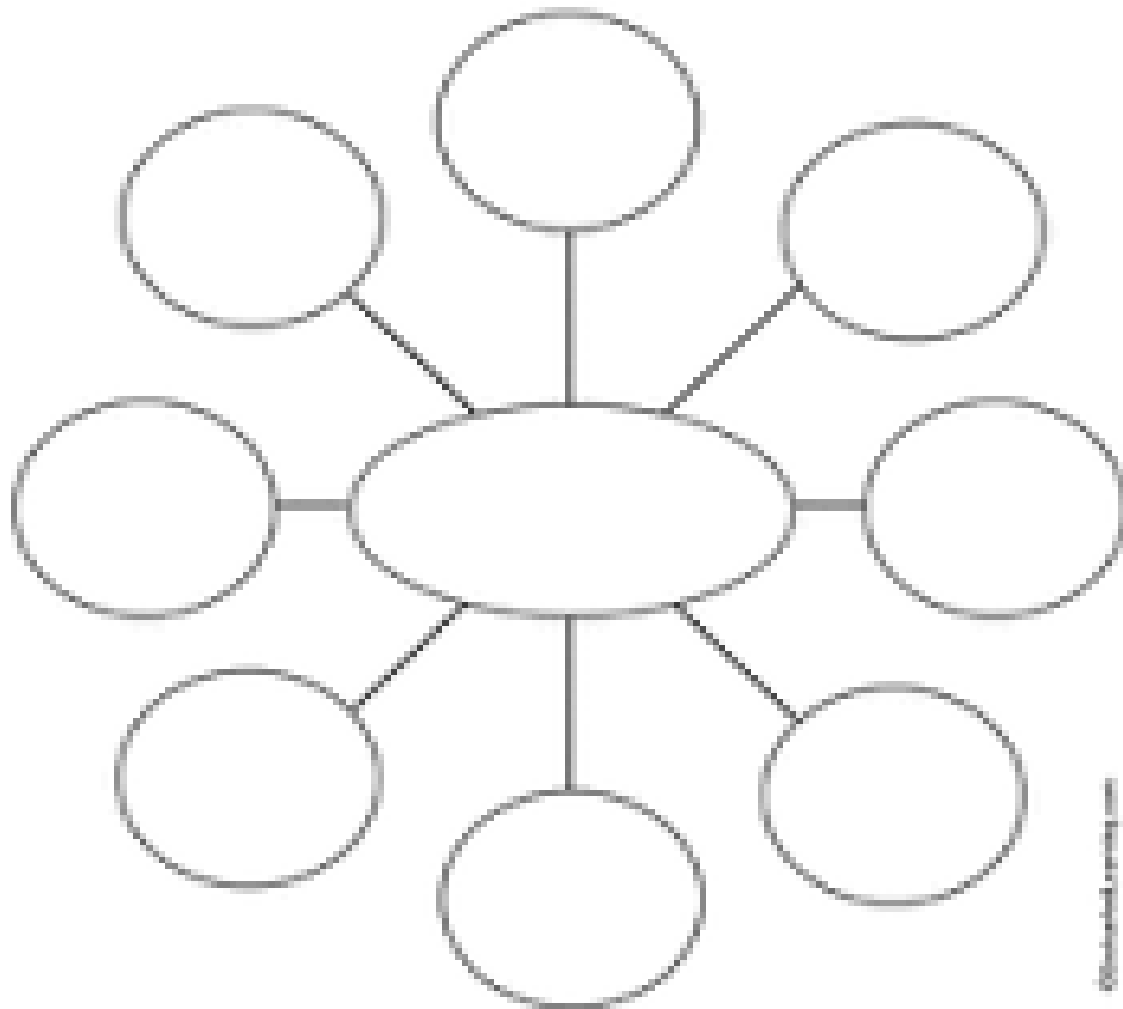
Scheduling the Breaks

- On the visual schedule

- Using the Time Timer or other device

- Build autonomy

- Make it a habit

Book Resources

Book Resources

Nicola Lonie

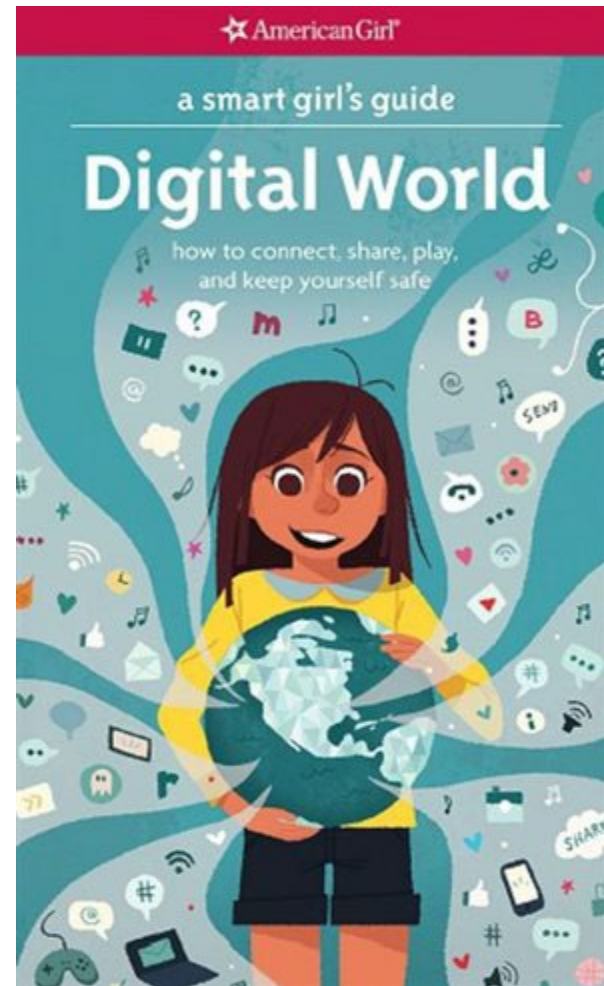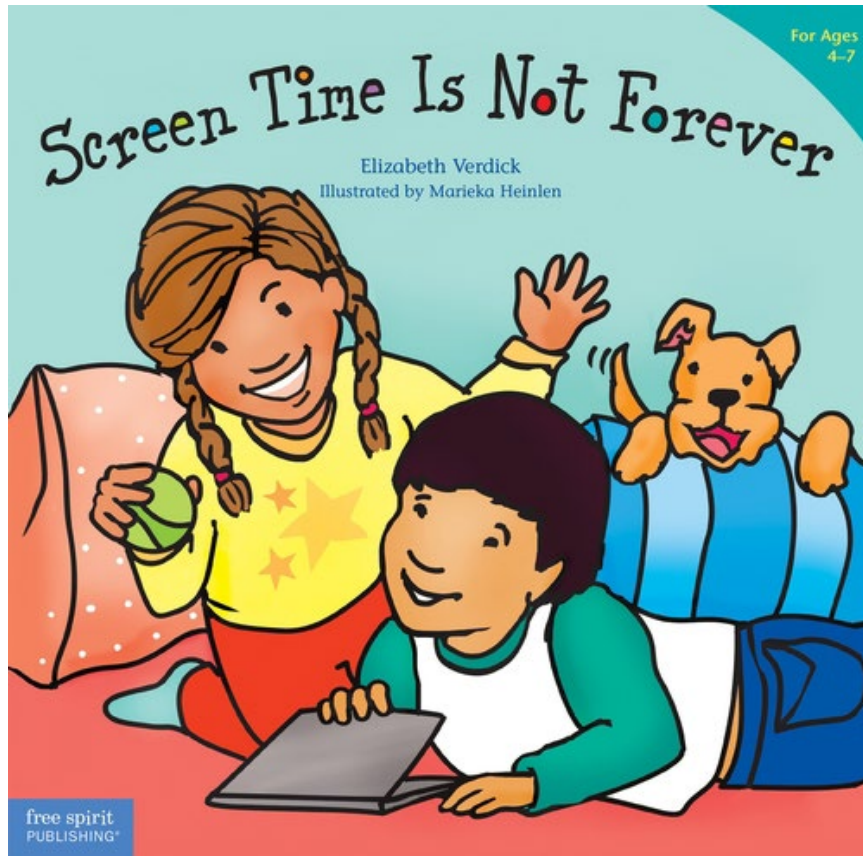ONLINE SAFETY *for* CHILDREN AND TEENS *on the* AUTISM SPECTRUM

A Parent's and Carer's Guide

No More Victims

Protecting Those with Autism from Cyber Bullying, Internet Predators & Scams

Dr Jed Baker, author of *No More Meltdowns*

Additional material provided by Jennifer M'Ilwee Myers

"Essential reading!"
- Dr Temple Grandin, author of *The Way I See It* and *The Autistic Brain*

Final Thoughts

- We have tools to make the internet a safer place to be.

- We need to be aware of online dangers and keep current about these.

- Provide structure and guidelines about internet use.

- Rules and boundaries demonstrated through visuals and understandable tools

Final Thoughts

- Handy infographics for meaningful reminders and references

- Personalize tools for relevance and meaningfulness

- Regular review of safety rules

- Support independence – how and when to take breaks

Final Thoughts

There are lots of wonderful aspects to being online, but at the same time it requires vigilance and a balance of time spent there.