

# S.E.A.T.

## SENSORY. ESCAPE. ATTENTION. TANGIBLE. FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR CHEAT SHEET

*The whys, whens, & how you can help!*

[WWW.PAAUTISM.ORG/SEAT](http://WWW.PAAUTISM.ORG/SEAT)

### SENSORY

**WHY?** To get sensory input- it feels good, something they enjoy

**WHEN?** Anytime, even when alone

**HOW TO HELP?** If the behavior is harmful to themselves or others, find a safer activity that provides the same sensory experience. If it's not harmful or disruptive, there is no need to change the behavior.

**EXAMPLE:** A person is pushing on their eyes because it creates the sensation of "lights". Provide them with colorful or flashing lights they can look at.

**NON-EXAMPLE:** A person is pushing on their eyes because it creates the sensation of "lights" and you offer them a fidget spinner.

**WHAT TO DO PROACTIVELY?** Provide access to a range of safe sensory items throughout the day.

### ESCAPE

**WHY?** To get out of unwanted activities, interactions, or environments.

**WHEN?** Something is hard, boring, not fun, stressful, or causes anxiety/distress.

**HOW TO HELP?** Break down difficult or unpleasant tasks into smaller steps, teach people to ask for a break, provide praise for small successes, make sure the environment is pleasant and set up for the person to be successful.

**EXAMPLE:** A person is asked to clean up and they begin throwing the items. Ask them to pick up one item and put it away, provide praise, and then help them with the rest.

**NON-EXAMPLE:** A person is asked to clean up and they begin throwing items. You tell them they don't have to clean up anymore.

**WHAT TO DO PROACTIVELY?** Keep tasks small with frequent breaks and build in fun activities with boring, difficult, or stressful activities. Set the environment up to be positive.



## ATTENTION

**WHY?** To get access to people or interactions

**WHEN?** Not getting enough attention or interactions from people in their environment.

**HOW TO HELP?** Give praise and immediate responses for appropriate requests for attention. Teach to ask for attention in appropriate ways.

**EXAMPLE:** Two people are talking to each other and a person begins screaming. Let the person know if they would like to join the conversation, they can once they are quiet. Provide praise and attention as soon as they are quiet.

**NON-EXAMPLE:** A person is screaming while two other adults are speaking. Stop your conversation and give your undivided attention to the person who was screaming.

**WHAT TO DO PROACTIVELY?** Teach people how to appropriately request and access attention throughout their day. Provide plenty of positive attention freely throughout the day.

## TANGIBLE

**WHY?** To get access to items/activities they want, need, or are interested in

**WHEN?** Something they want, need, or are interested in is not available

**HOW TO HELP?** Offer an alternative, "you can't have this but you can do A or B." Or First-then, "first we do this, then you can have that!"

**EXAMPLE:** A person is yelling because they want cake for dessert but there is none in the home. Offer them choices from what is available in the home.

**NON-EXAMPLE:** A person is yelling because they want cake for dessert but there is none in the home. You tell them there is no cake so they can't have any dessert.

**WHAT TO DO PROACTIVELY?** Use first/then statements, let them know when activities are done by setting a timer, teach the person to appropriately request access to items/activities

*Our website offers information about local, regional and statewide events, professional trainings, community resources, services, current research and other information relevant to the autism community.*



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