The TEACCH Model:
Origins, Principles, Educational Approach

Bologna, Italy

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Treatment and **E**ducation of **A**utistic and **R**elated **C**ommunication-handicapped **Ch**ildren

www.teacch.com

Overview

- How did TEACCH begin?

- What values are fundamental to TEACCH?

- What intervention strategies does TEACCH use?

TEACCH Response to Psychogenic Theory of Autism

- Bettelheim Philosophy
  - Problem: Parental rejection of and hostility toward child
  - Solution: Removal of child from parents and placement in his school

- Bettelheim became a negative role model for Dr. Schopler leading to founding TEACCH.
- Parents became cofounders along with professionals

Misunderstanding

1. Autism as emotional illness
2. Caused by parental rejection and hostility
3. Socially withdrawn from parents
4. Parents imposed extreme stress

Clarification

1. Developmental disorder
2. Caused by brain abnormality, biochemical and genetic
3. Socially undeveloped
4. Parents primary source of help

What values are fundamental to TEACCH?

Values: **Culture of Autism**

- Understand and accept the individual's autism

- Appreciate and respect the individual's personality, strengths, and interests

- Base intervention on idea of mutual accommodation

Values: **Individualization**

- Individualize
  - Goals
  - Settings
  - Services
- Work with Individual's Strengths and Interests
- Accurate assessment is essential for individualization

Values: **Parents are Central to any Treatment**

- Family values and priorities must be assessed

- Parents are in the best position to individualize (they are the child "expert")

- Parents are the strongest advocates for the development and funding of new services

Value: **A Primary Goal is to Promote Independence throughout the lifespan**

- Teaching Independence requires teaching
  - Skills
  - Problem solving through use of structure
- If the person with autism does not know how to be independent, this limits their ability to participate in the community

Values: **Characteristics of Autism**

- An understanding of the characteristics of autism should be fundamental to any treatment approach.
  - Our understanding of the cognitive characteristics of autism is why Structured Teaching emphasizes visual instruction.
  - This value is one basis for comparing TEACCH to other intervention philosophies

Differences between TEACCH and other Approaches

MOST PROGRAMS

Pre-existing Psychological or Educational Theory

↓

AUTISM

↓

Intervention

TEACCH

AUTISM

↓

Theory

↓

Structured Teaching

Diagnostic Characteristics

- Impaired Socialization
- Deficits in Communication
- Repetitive and Inflexible Patterns of Behavior

Cognitive Characteristics of Autism

- Visual skills>verbal skills
- Excessive focus on details
- Difficulty generalizing
- Concrete thinking
- Difficulty combining or integrating ideas
- Difficulty with organization and sequencing
- Distractible and easily overstimulated

Structured Teaching

- Physical Structure: Does the student know where he should be and what happens there?

Group Area: Students know where to sit and what to do

Structured Teaching

- **Schedules:** Does the student know what is going to happen during the day and when?

William's Afternoon Schedule

🙂 **Lunch**

🙂 **Computer Lab**

🙂 **CHANGE Weight Room**

🙂 **Work Alone**

🙂 **Bake Bread**

🙂 **Get Backpack**

🙂 **Go Home**

Picture Schedules
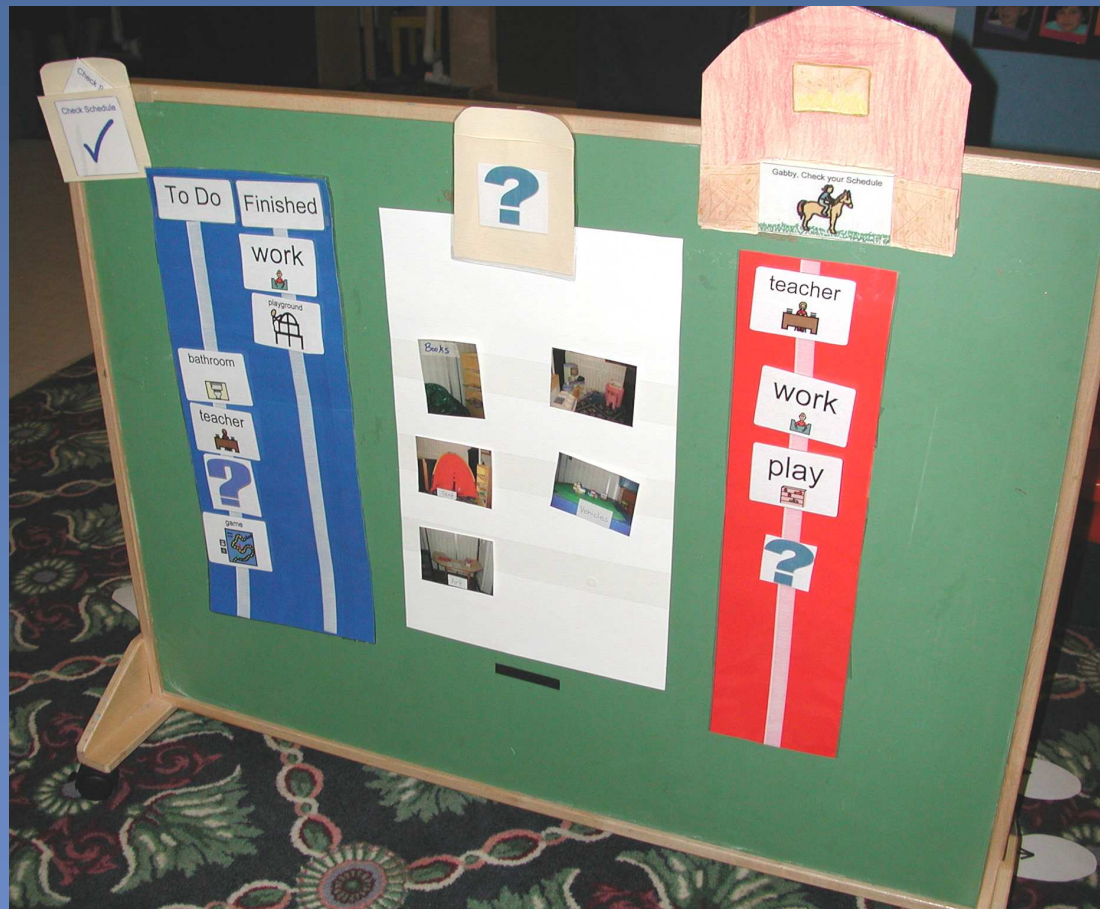
- Students know what is going to happen and know when they get to have a choice.

Structured Teaching "To Do Lists"

- Student needs to know how much work he will do and when he will be finished.

"To Do List" Student Knows What he will do during work time and when he is finished.

Work to Complete

Computer

Reading

Checking Account

Science

Math

Break
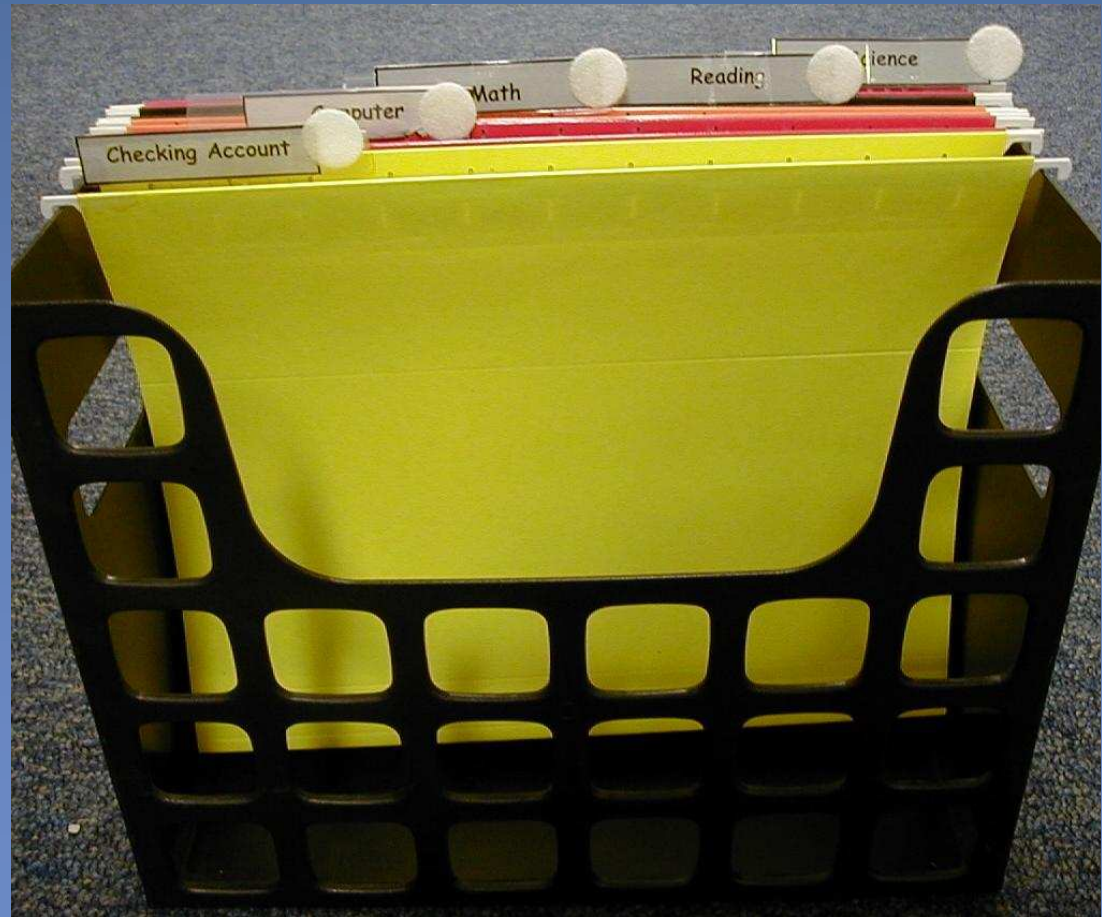
Structured Teaching

- **Visual Structure**: Student needs to be able to see how to complete a task with minimal verbal instructions.

Student Matches numbers to pages in a book

Student matches word to picture

Colors highlight important information

Name: _____
Date: _____

Directions: Write the answer on the RED line.

1. Something you write with _____.

2. These keep your hands warm _____.

3. This is for calling a friend _____.

telephone   pen _paper   gloves

Put work in BLUE finished folder.

Intro to Behavior Difficulties Can't vs. Won't

- Behavior difficulties are not a function of
  - Willfulness, manipulation, "testing limits"
- They are a function of
  - Something the student doesn't understand
  - A skill the student hasn't learned
  - Something that is difficult
  - The characteristics of autism
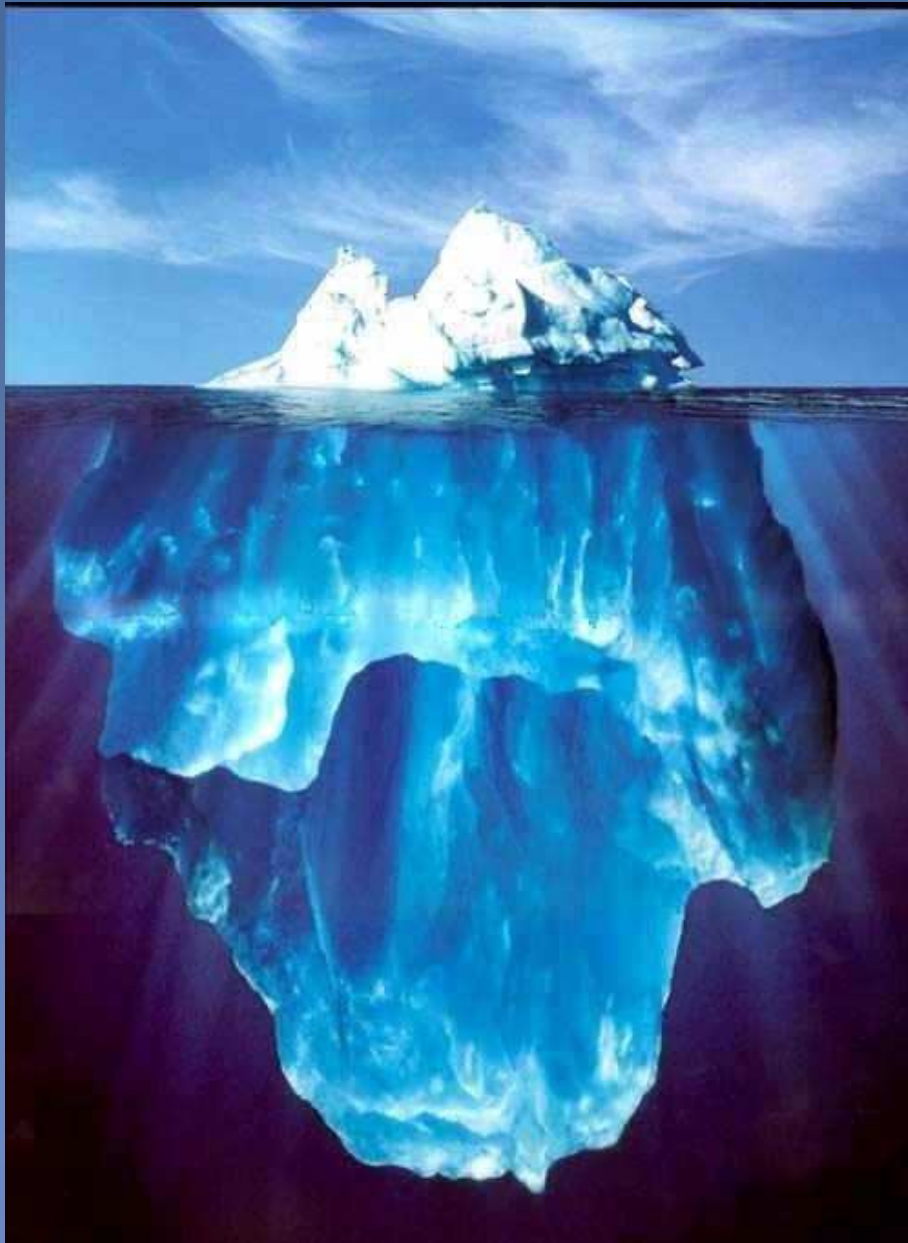
There is more to a behavior problem than just the behavior you can see.

Three steps to successfully
addressing behavior difficulties

Assess (when,
where, what happens,
etc.)

Structure

Teach

Situation when behavior occurred:	Behavior	What you did:	Outcome/Observations
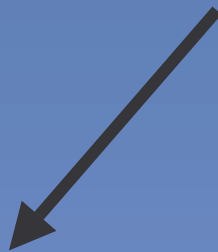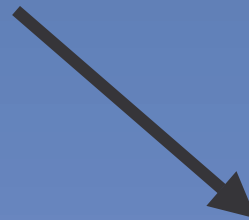
When he gets mad he throws things.

Observed Behavior

1. Communication: Does he know how to tell someone when he's upset?

2. Does he have the skills to know how to calm down?

Theory about why behavior occurred

Teaching a coping strategy to manage tantrums.

I AM UPSET

I NEED A COKE BREAK

YOU SEEM UPSET

GO READ YOUR MAPS
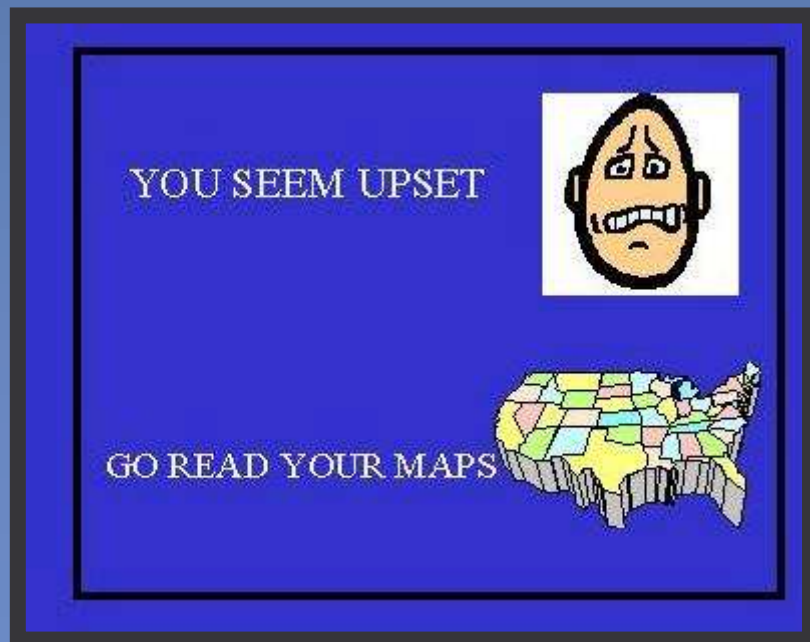
He rips up his class worksheets

Observed Behavior

Theory about why behavior occurred

1. Does he know how to do the work?

2. Is he overwhelmed by the amount of work?

3. Communication Problem: Does he know to ask for help?

Math worksheet: Reducing the number of problems helps the child see when he will be finished.

3 − 2	6 − 1	5 − 0	7 − 2	8 − 4
6 − 6	8 − 2	9 − 1	14 − 7	9 − 2
16 − 8	3 − 0	4 − 2	5 − 1	11 − 2
8 − 0	12 − 6	5 − 2	3 − 1	6 − 3
10 − 2	18 − 9	7 − 1	6 − 2	7 − 7

5 − 0	6 − 1
9 − 1	8 − 2
4 − 2	3 − 0
5 − 2	12 − 6
7 − 1	18 − 9

He runs away when we try to leave the classroom.

Observed Behavior

Theory about why behavior occurred

1. Does he know where he is going? (Can he understand what you say?)

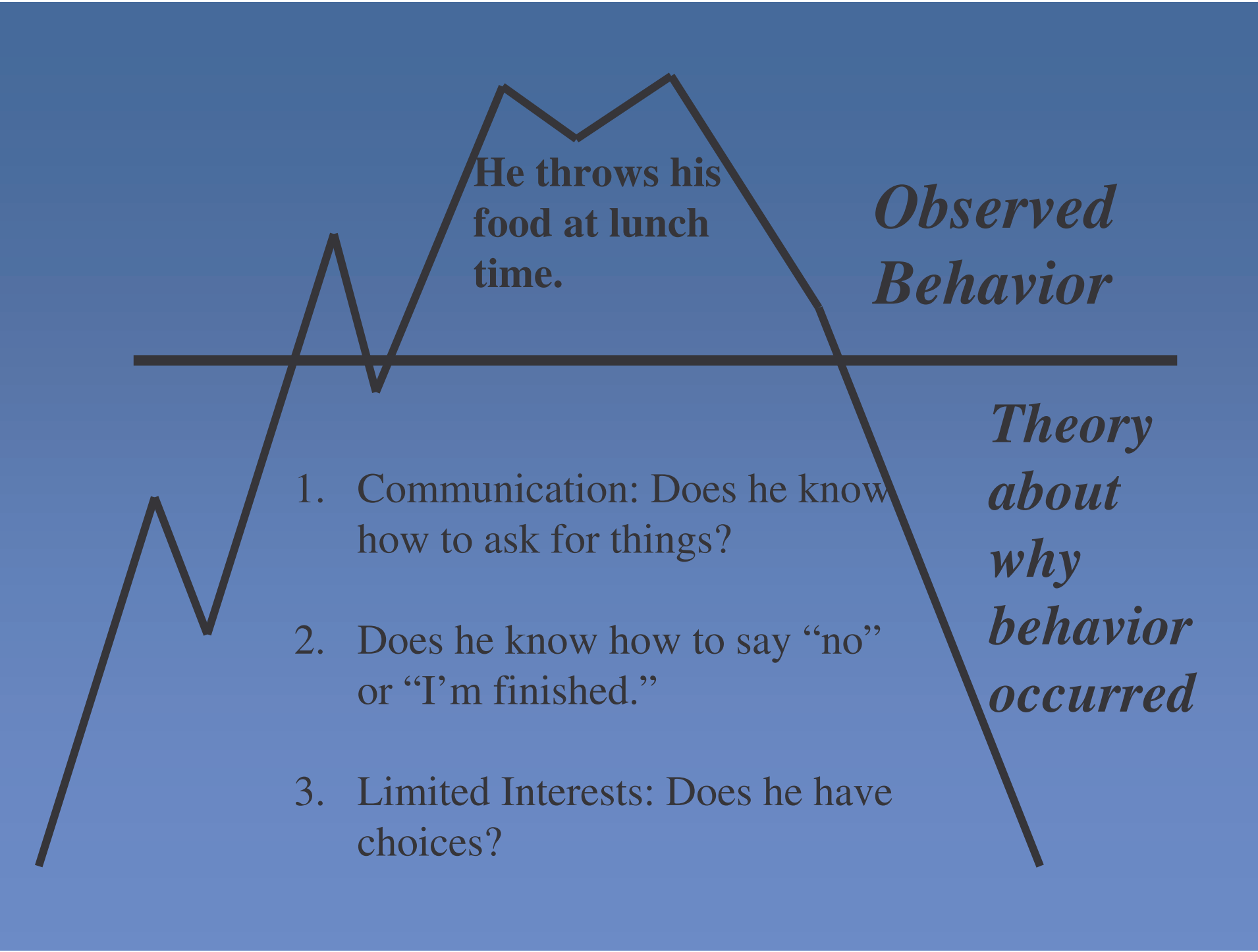2. Does he know when he will be back?

3. Does he know where to wait?

Possible Solutions:

1. Give the child a place to sit and wait.

2. Give the child a schedule so he knows what is happening.

He throws his food at lunch time.

Observed Behavior

Theory about why behavior occurred

1. Communication: Does he know how to ask for things?

2. Does he know how to say "no" or "I'm finished."

3. Limited Interests: Does he have choices?

Making Communication More Visual.

Child has pictures to help him communicate nonverbally.

Child has visual cues of choices.

Structured Teaching Resources

- Pictures for Schedules: www.Do2Learn.com

- Pictures of teaching activities in Tasks Galore Books available at www.tasksgalore.com

- Information about TEACCH research and philosophy

  "The TEACCH approach to Autism Spectrum Disorders"

  available at: www.autismsociety-nc.org

Summary

- Original goal of TEACCH was to help people understand that people with autism benefit from educational interventions not psychoanalytic intervention.

- We individualize for all students to recognize that they all have different learning needs.

- Our understanding of how people with autism think, has become the basis for implementing visual instruction strategies.