

What is Autism?

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Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- Neuro-biological disorder
- Receives, integrates, & interprets information in the brain differently than others
 - Socialization
 - Communication
 - Behavior

(Centers for Disease Control, 2012; National Institutes of Health, 2012)

ASD Incidence

- 1 in 88 children
- Males > females
- All racial groups and socioeconomic levels

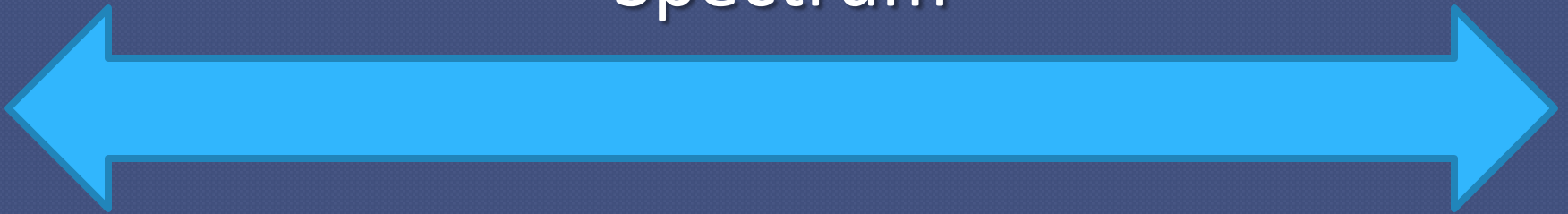
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

● “Spectrum”

- Range of challenges
- Mild to severe challenges in functional levels
- Asperger Syndrome, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Autism

Cognitive Functions

Spectrum



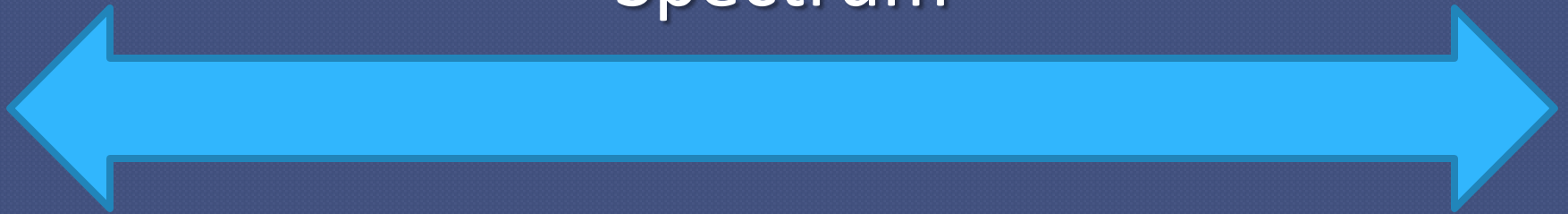
Low cognitive function
Non verbal

High cognitive function
Highly verbal
Gifted skills

(CDC, 2012; NIH, 2012)

Social

Spectrum



Not interested in others

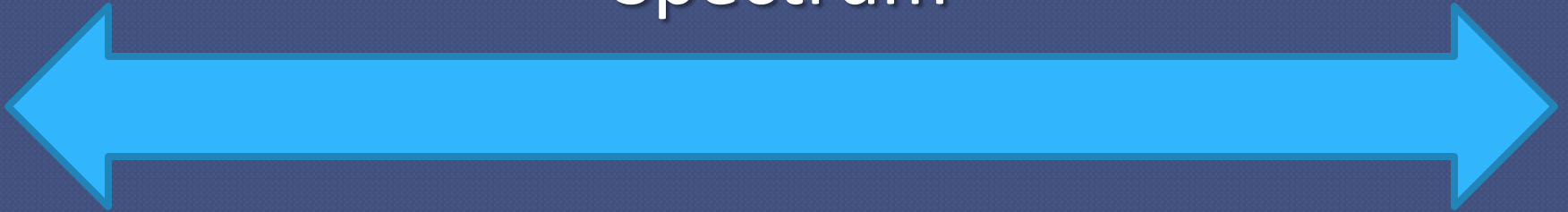
Highly social

Interaction with others
Understanding facial cues
Lacking awareness of social cues

(CDC, 2012; NIH, 2012)

Communication

Spectrum



Non verbal

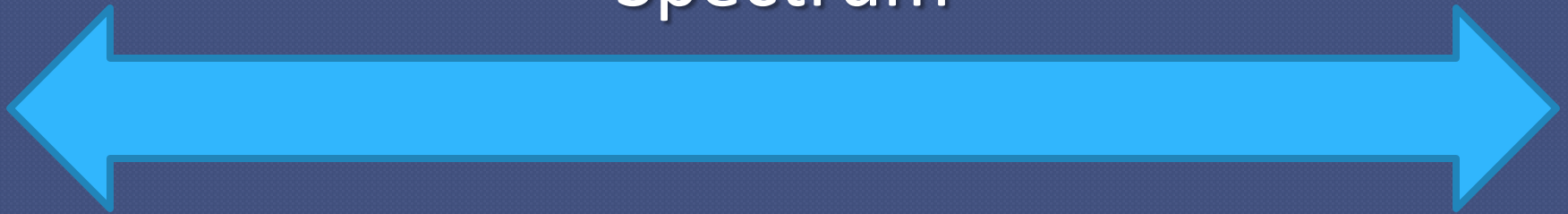
Highly verbal

Repeating words
Following directions
Responding to name
Concrete language understanding
Non-verbal or gestural communication
Unrelated responses to question/requests

(CDC, 2012; NIH, 2012)

Behavior

Spectrum



Intense

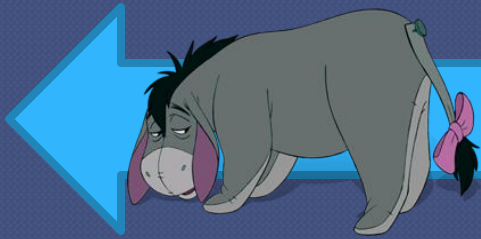
Mild

Personal space
Adapting to change
Predictability & organization
Obsessive & routine behaviors
Atypical behaviors (e.g. spinning, flapping, rocking)

(CDC, 2012; NIH, 2012)

Sensitivities

Spectrum



Avoidance

(Eeyore ↔ Tigger)

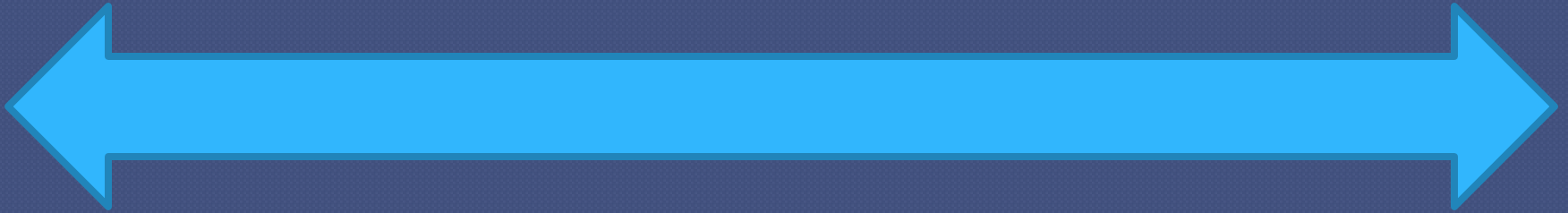


Hyperactive

Joint attention
Response to environment
Withdrawing to over-seeking
Low registering to over-responding

(Brown & Dunn, 2010; Whitney, 2011)

Community Participation



Predictable, familiar

Unpredictable, unfamiliar

MUSEUMS

Lights & noises

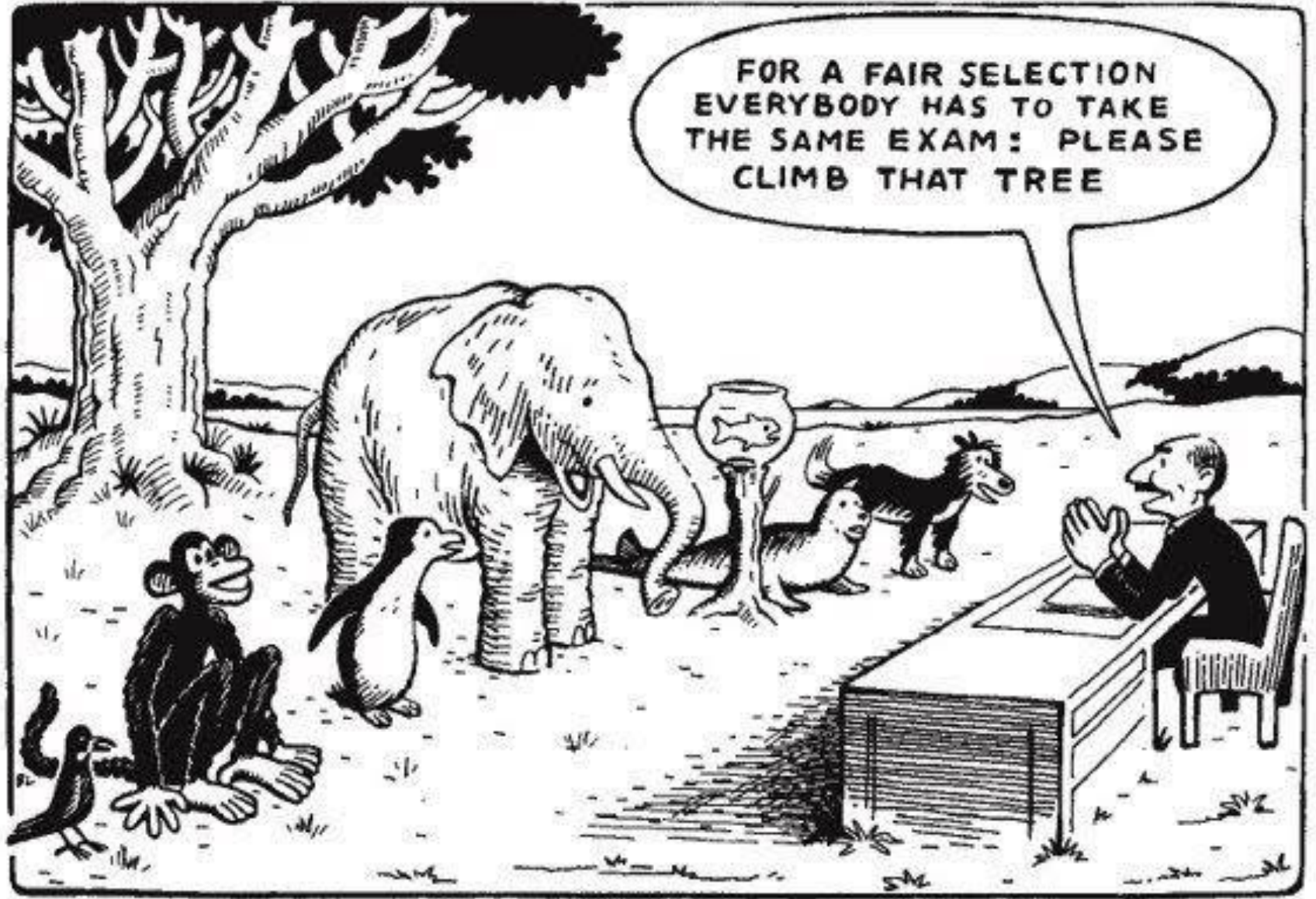
Crowds & SPACES

Visual stimulation

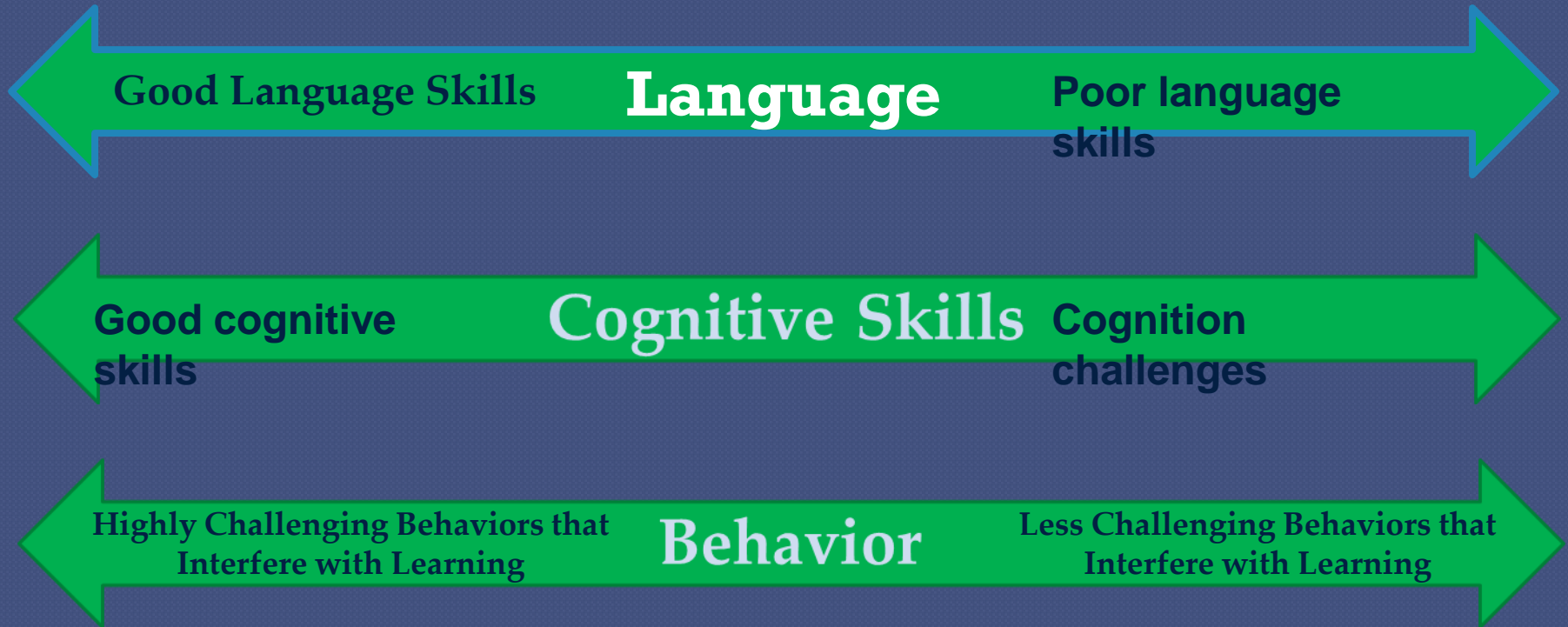
Intensity of information

How do students with autism learn?

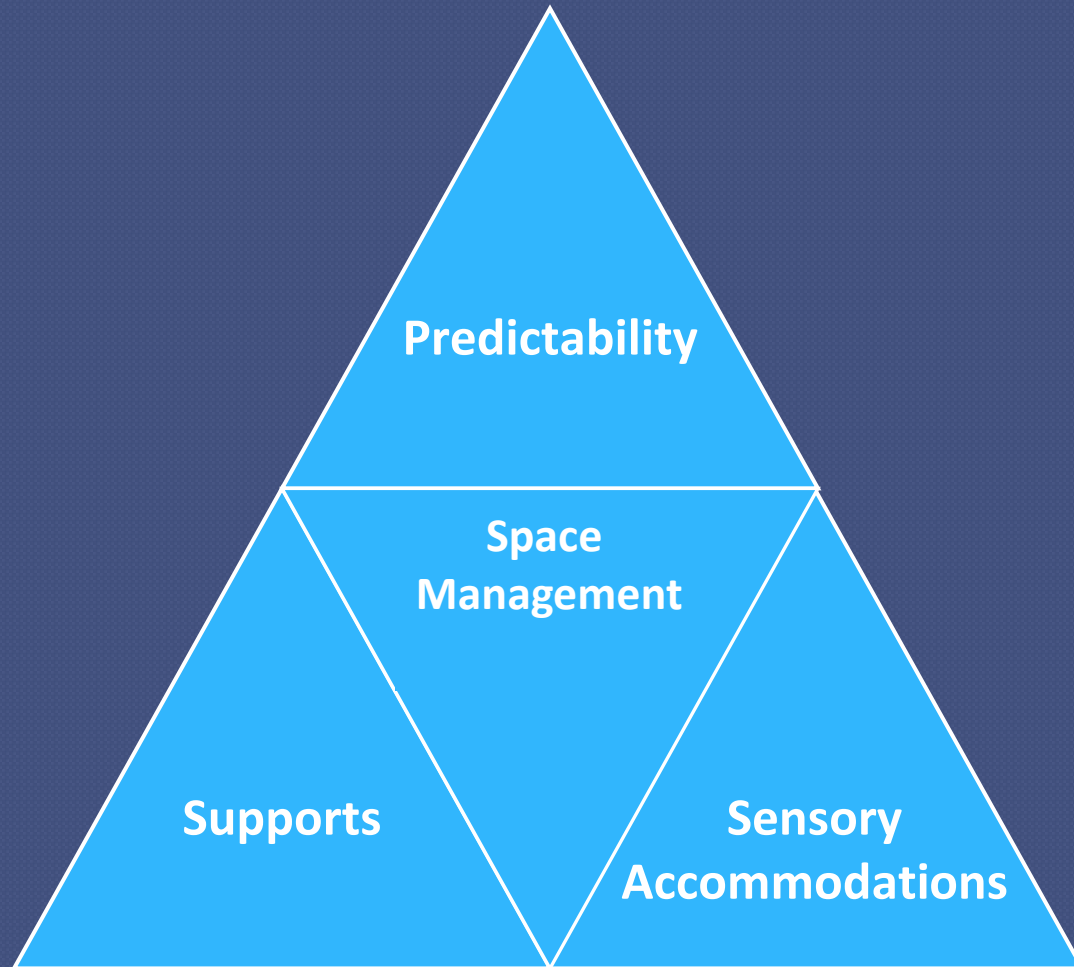




The Autism Spectrum



Program Modifications



Space Management

- Meet group in quiet space.
- Plan path to avoid highly over stimulating areas.
- Have a Plan B. (Identify a quiet space where an adults could take a student who is overwhelmed by lights, noise, crowds, etc)



Sensory Accommodations



Assess the sensory qualities of your environment.

Predictability

To help students who may have difficulty shifting attention or changing activities.

- Advance warning of changes or transitions.
- Use consistent language and procedures during transitions.
- Follow visual schedule.

Supports

Visual Schedules-picture or written schedule-helps make an experience predictable.

Video preview of events or activities

Highlight and Repeat targeted concepts/vocabulary

Break down directions one step at a time.

Give extra wait time for responses

Split into smaller groups.

Visual Schedules

National Postal Museum



Read about a **Mail Carrier**.



Look at a **Mail Truck**.



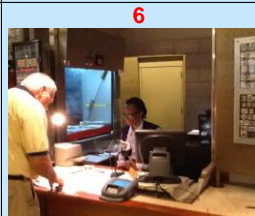
Mail Carrier **uniform**.



Scan a barcode.



Write a **postcard**.



Buy a **stamp**..



Visual Schedule

- Provides predictable timeline/sequence of events
- Targets learner outcomes-concepts, vocabulary
- Provides communication system-students may respond to questions or initiate questions by pointing or referring to schedule
- Behavioral support-cross off steps as they are finished

Making a Visual Schedule

- Clear picture focuses on targeted concept.
- Consistent format for pictures/text
- Indicate sequence by numbering or format
- Bold targeted vocabulary
- Plastic sleeve or lamination allows for circling or crossing off steps

Strategies to support people with ASD

- **Visual Schedules**-picture or written schedule-helps make an experience predictable.
- **Video preview** of events or activities
- **Highlight and Repeat** targeted concepts/vocabulary
- **Break down directions** one step at a time.
- **Give extra wait time** for responses
- **Split into smaller groups.**
- **Hands on activity.**
- **Identify attention and transition signals.**
- **Make Rules Explicit and Positive.**



Questions to ask before a school visit

- Date/Time/Length of time in attendance/attention span
- Age/grade/size of the class or group
- Any specific theme/link to curriculum/high interest topics
- How many teachers/volunteer helpers will be with the group
- Are there any students in the class with disabilities that need a special accommodation (physical/learning); how many students)
- Are there any types of behavior to be aware of
- What prompts or procedures are students are familiar with

