

School Safety Best Practices: Tornado Drill



HANDS in Autism®
Interdisciplinary Training
& Resource Center

1130 W. Michigan St.
Fesler Hall, Suite 302
Indianapolis, IN 46202

HANDSinAutism.iupui.edu
hands@iupui.edu
(317) 274-2675

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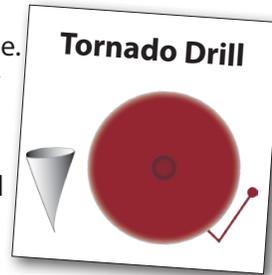


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Try to plan ahead for drills and allow any needed information to be given

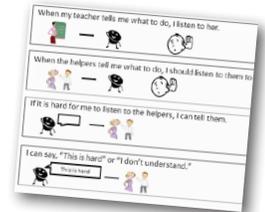
Scheduling

If a drill is known of in advance, this activity can be added to the individual's daily schedule. By seeing it as an activity on their schedule, they may be able to prepare themselves for the actual event.



Social Narrative

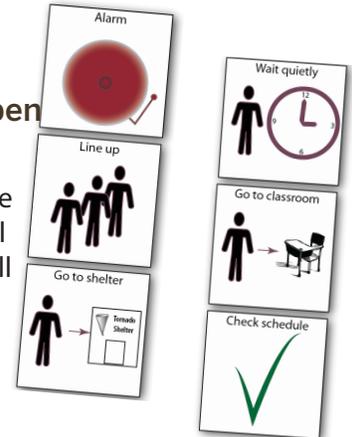
A social narrative could be created and reviewed regularly to help prepare the individual for the event. This narrative would tell them why the event will happen, how it might make them feel, and information on how to respond appropriately.



Help the individual to know what is going to happen

Mini-schedule

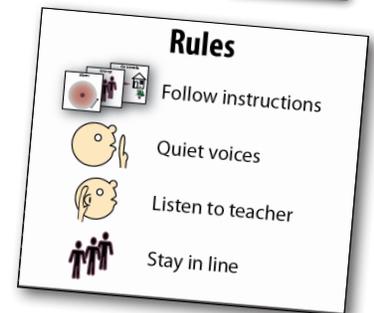
A mini-schedule would lay out the individual steps that would take place during this event. For example: the alarm will sound, we will line up, we will walk to assigned area, we will sit in position, we will walk back to the classroom, we will check our schedule.



Make your expectations clear

Visual rules

Using pictures or words to define the behavioral expectations of this event will allow the individual time to process during this time of heightened anxiety. They can be used as reminders as needed and can be a point of prompting for the adult to help support. For example: follow instructions, quiet voices, listen to teacher, stay in position.



Respect sensory issues

Head phones

Some individuals with ASD may have sensitivities to sound. Therefore, the loud ringing of an alarm may upset them or cause tough behaviors to occur. Headphones may be used to help block that sound for the individual and therefore reduce some anxiety.



Sensory Kit/Fidget bag

You may find that many individuals with ASD seek out sensory stimulation to calm themselves or reduce anxiety. By creating a bag filled with sensory materials, you may enable the individual to meet their sensory needs, thus allowing them to feel less anxious and better able to focus on the task at hand.



Give visual cues for amount of time remaining

Mini-Pulley - Stoplight/Countdown

Helping an individual to understand the amount the time an activity may take will make great strides in lessening their anxiety in that situation. The tools on this pulley are adult manipulated so the time can be estimated by the adult in situations where the time is not set.

Stoplight

Serves as a visual representation of passing time. Green signifies the beginning of activity, yellow shows that the activity is almost finished, and red lets the individual know the activity is complete.

Example: Light shown is green when the alarm sounds. When you think you are part way through sitting in position, add the yellow light and when you are finished and about to walk back to the classroom, add the red light.



Countdown board

Allows for more control over the rate of the activity passing. The numbers 1-5 are taken off or moved as the activity is winding down.

Example: Can be used similarly to the stoplight scenario. Number is taken down for each phase of the event. Line up at the door, take down a number, walk to assigned area, take down a number and so on until each number has been taken down and the individual understands that the event is complete.

Mini-Pulley - First/Then Board

Adding motivation to an undesired activity or stressful situation will help the individual work through that activity for their more desired activity/item. Pictures or simple words can be placed on the board depending on the abilities of the individual.

Example: "First" we have a tornado drill, "Then" you can play a game.

