Title: Understanding Atypical Behaviors: *Ian's Walk* by Laurie Lears

**Grade Level:** Kindergarten – 2nd Grade

**Required Materials:** The picture book, *Ian's Walk* by Laurie Lears, marker, whiteboard or chart paper, writing utensils and paper for the students

**Lesson Duration:** 40 minutes

**Rationale/Goals:**

Students will listen to a story about a boy with autism and describe the main characters in the story. Students will answer comprehension questions about the story. They will develop an understanding for the atypical behaviors exhibited by people with autism and participate in a discussion about how it is okay to be different. Students will discuss and draw (and/or write) about what they could do if they went for a walk with someone who wanted to walk their "own way."

**Objectives (Learning Outcomes):**

Students will:

- Identify and describe the main characters in the story
- Develop an understanding about atypical behaviors exhibited by people with autism, and that it is okay to be different
- Describe how a major event changes a character's attitude

**Common Core State Standards Addressed:**

*Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details*

- K.3: With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story
- 1.3: Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details
- 2.3: Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges

**Anticipatory Set:**

- Allow each child a chance to share one of their favorite things that they like to do when they go for a walk (search for bugs, collect rocks, talk, smell flowers, etc). Encourage students to share even if another student already shared their same idea. Put tally marks next to repeated ideas.
- Discuss how there are many different things that people like to do when they go for a walk. Some things many students like to do and other things only one or two students like to do. Ask the students if it is okay to do
something different when you go for a walk. Discuss that there is no right or wrong way to take a walk (unless of course you are not being safe).

**Methods/Activities (Instructional Procedures):**

**Teacher Input:** Read the story *Ian’s Walk* by Laurie Lears, stopping periodically to ask questions.
- Who are the main characters? Describe Ian. Describe Julie.
- How does Julie feel about Ian’s way of taking a walk?
- How does Julie feel about losing Ian?
- How is the walk different on the way back? Why do you think so?

**Guided Practice:**
- Students turn to the student next to them and tell the student what they could do if they went for a walk with someone who wanted to walk their “own way.”
- Give the students an opportunity to share out some of their ideas.

**Independent Practice:**
- Students draw a picture (and/or write) to show what they could do if they went for a walk with someone who wanted to walk their “own way.”

**Checking for Understanding/Assessment:**
Students will be assessed informally by teacher review of work samples as well as probing questions during class discussions and independent work time.

**Closure:** Students simultaneously stand up and “forehead share” their pictures (put their pictures on their foreheads and turn slowly around) or volunteer to read their writing to the class.

**Optional Follow-Up Activity:**
Survey the students to learn about their interests, skills, and talents. Ask questions such as “What do you like to do for fun?” or “What are some of your favorite things?” Use the information that you learn about the students to build connections between the students through similarities. Use the sample student survey “About Me” from *Just Give Him the Whale!: 20 Ways to Use Fascinations, Areas of Expertise, and Strengths to Support Students with Autism* by Paula Kluth and Patrick Schwarz.
Title: Varying Needs: Looking After Louis by Lesley Ely

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 2nd Grade

Required Materials: The picture book, Looking After Louis by Lesley Ely, butcher paper, writing utensils and paper for the students, music (any)

Lesson Duration: 40 minutes

Rationale/Goals: Students will listen to a story about a boy with autism and answer comprehension questions about the story. They will develop an understanding of how students’ varying needs require varying responses and amounts of support from the teacher. Students will discuss and draw (and/or write) about a time when they received “special treatment” because they needed extra support or help.

Objectives (Learning Outcomes):

Students will:

• Ask and answer who, what, where, when, why, and how questions to demonstrate understanding of key details in the story.

• Develop an understanding of how students’ varying needs require varying responses and amounts of support from the teacher.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details

K.1: With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text

1.1: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text

2.1: Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

Anticipatory Set:

• Ask the students to share verbally what they like to do at recess.

• Help the students to notice that some people like to do the same things and some people like to do different things.

• If you have done the “Literature Lesson Plan for Ian’s Walk by Laurie Lears,” then remind the students that it is okay that some people like to do different things. We are still the same in many ways.

Methods/Activities (Instructional Procedures):

Teacher Input: Read the story Looking After Louis by Lesley Ely, stopping periodically to ask questions.

• Why do you think some of the students look after Louis?

• What do the students do when Louis repeats what they say?
• Why do you think the teacher was not mad when Louis repeated, “Sit up straight, everybody?”
• When did Louis seem to be happy?
• How does the girl feel when Louis is allowed to go out and play soccer during class time?
• Why do you think the teacher let him go out to play soccer during class?

Guided Practice: Great time to discuss what it really means to be *fair.*

• Have a discussion about what the girl meant when she said, “I think we’re allowed to break rules for special people.” Discuss that being fair means giving the supports needed to achieve success. For example: Is it fair that some people get to sit in a wheelchair? Wear glasses?, etc.
• Students get into small groups and draw/write on butcher paper examples of “special treatment” that is really just giving additional supports to those who need them.

Independent Practice:

• Students draw/write about a time when they received “special treatment” because they needed extra support or help.

Checking for Understanding/Assessment:

Students will be assessed informally by teacher review of work samples as well as probing questions during class discussions and independent work time.

Closure: Students will take their papers and slowly walk around the room until the music stops. Whoever they are standing next to when the music stops is their sharing buddy. Each student shares what he or she drew or wrote with his or her buddy. Repeat as many times as desired.

Optional Follow-Up Activity:

Have the students sit in a circle on the carpet. Remind the students that Louis “almost smiled” when he was given the compliment, “Great game, Louis!” After giving the students examples of compliments, have the students think about a compliment that they can give the person sitting to their right that might make the student “almost smile.” Ask for a volunteer to start. Begin “passing the compliment” around the circle and continue until all students have had a turn. (This activity was adapted from Joyful Learning: Active and Collaborative Learning in Inclusive Classrooms by Alice Udvari-Solner and Paula Kluth.)
Title: **Fascinations**: *Pedro's Whale* by Paula Kluth and Patrick Schwarz

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 2nd Grade


Lesson Duration: 40 minutes

Rationale/Goals: Students will listen to a story about a boy with autism who is fascinated by whales, and the students will answer comprehension questions about the story by participating in collaborative conversations. They will develop an understanding about how some students develop fascinations with things, and that teachers and students can use these fascinations to connect with and help the student. Students will create representations of their personal fascinations.

Objectives (Learning Outcomes):

Students will:

- Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about a story in small and larger groups.
- Develop an understanding of how some students develop fascinations with things, and that teachers and students can use these fascinations to connect with and help the student.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Speaking and Listening Standards: Comprehension and Collaboration

Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade level topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

K.1: (a) Follow agreed-upon rules for discussion (e.g. listening to others, and taking turns speaking) (b) Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges

1.1: (a) Follow agreed-upon rules for discussion (e.g. listening to others with care and speaking one at a time) (b) Build on others’ talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges (c) Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.

2.1: (a) Follow agreed-upon rules for discussion (e.g. gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, and speaking one at a time) (b) Build on others’ talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others (c) Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.
Anticipatory Set:

- Have students think of their favorite animals. Have students get up, walk around, and find someone who likes the same kind of animal that they do. (Tell students ahead of time that it is okay if they do not find someone with the same favorite animal, you will pair them up).
- Have them partner up with that student and share why they like that animal and if they like the animal a little (they just think it is cute) or a lot (they have pictures on their bedroom walls, they read books about it, etc.) This is to introduce the topic of fascinations.
- Help the students to notice that some people like the same animals and some people like different animals. Some people like their animal a little and some people a lot. This is all okay.

Methods/Activities (Instructional Procedures):

Teacher Input: Read the story *Pedro’s Whale*. Focus on collaborative conversations by using sentence starters such as “I agree with __ because…”

- Why do you think Pedro cried when the teacher took away his whale?
- Why did the principal tell the teacher to give Pedro back his whale?
- What are some of the ways that Pedro’s whale helped him?
- Do you think giving Pedro back his whale was the right thing to do? Why? Or why not?

Guided Practice:

- Discuss as a class, “Should all children be allowed to have any toy in class?” Use sentence starters such as “I dis/agree with __ because…”

Independent Practice:

- Students think about a fascination that they may have, and choose how they want to represent their fascinations (drawing, clay sculpture, poem, or skit).

Checking for Understanding/Assessment:

Students will be assessed informally by teacher review of work samples as well as probing questions during class discussions and independent work time.

Closure: Students walk around the classroom to see the other students’ representations of their fascinations. Those who chose to create skits act their fascinations out in front of the class.

Optional Follow-Up Activity:

“Brainstorm as a group” is an activity suggested in the back of the book *Pedro’s Whale*. Choose one student in the class who has a fascination, and have the students help brainstorm some ways that you can use the student’s fascination to calm, teach, or amuse the student.
Title: Sensory Overload: Why Does Izzy Cover Her Ears? Dealing with Sensory Overload by Jennifer Veenendall

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 2nd Grade


Lesson Duration: 40 minutes

Rationale/Goals: Students will listen to a story about a girl who is dealing with sensory overload and answer and ask comprehension questions about the story. They will develop an understanding of what it means to have sensory overload. Students will work in groups and individually to draw/write what they would do to help someone like Izzy who has sensory overload issues.

Objectives (Learning Outcomes):
Students will:

• Ask and answer questions about key details in the story.
• Recount or describe key ideas or details from the story.
• Develop an understanding of what it means to have sensory overload.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:
Speaking and Listening Standards: Comprehension and Collaboration
K.2: Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.
1.2: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally through other media.
2.2: Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally through other media.

Anticipatory Set: This lesson can be used as a science lesson too!

• During this set, briefly “overload” the students’ senses by talking too quickly or loudly, spraying the class with a strange scent before they enter the room, or flipping through pictures very quickly (be mindful of students who have sensory sensitivities and choose accordingly).
• Ask the students if anyone knows what the five senses are. Write or draw pictures to represent each of the five senses.
• Discuss the “overload” the students just experienced. Briefly explain that some people, including the main character in this story, have very strong senses and may experience a sensory overload often.
**Methods/Activities (Instructional Procedures):**

**Teacher Input:** Read the story *Why Does Izzy Cover Her Ears? Dealing with Sensory Overload* by Jennifer Veenendall, stopping periodically to ask questions (questions adapted from the suggested questions at the back of the book).

- Do you think Izzy was trying to be bad when she threw tantrums and went under the table to hide?
- What are some of the things that make Izzy feel scared, mad, or uncomfortable?
- What are some of the changes that Izzy’s teacher made to help Izzy?
- What are some of the tools that Izzy uses to calm herself?
- What are some questions that you have about the story? Were there any details in the story that you do not understand?

**Guided Practice:**

- Have a discussion to begin to brainstorm answers to the question, “How would you help Izzy if she were in your class?”
- Students get into small groups and draw/write (on butcher paper divided into five sections labeled with the five senses) examples of things they could do to help Izzy if she were in their class.

**Independent Practice:**

- Each student chooses one of the senses and creates a poster by drawing/writing one way they would help Izzy. (Make sure the students write their names on the papers.)

**Checking for Understanding/Assessment:**

Students will be assessed informally by teacher review of work samples as well as probing questions during class discussions and independent work time.

**Closure:** Half of the students will fold up their papers any way they wish (paper airplane, origami, crumbling into a ball, etc) and place them in a basket. The other half of the students will randomly select a folded paper from the basket. They go find the person who made that poster, and give the poster to the poster creator who then talks about the poster he or she made. The process is now repeated with the other half of the students.

**Optional Follow-Up Activity:**

Have students think of examples of an uncomfortable experience that they have had for each of the senses. For example, tasting a mushroom, hearing a fire alarm, touching sandpaper, sunlight in their eyes, smelling a dirty diaper. Discuss how some people with autism have some super strong senses and are bothered a lot by things. *Remember to emphasize the word “some.”*
Title: **Friends Who are Different**: *My Best Friend Will*
   by Jamie Lowell and Tara Tuchel
Grade Level: Kindergarten - 2nd Grade
Lesson Duration: 40 minutes
Rationale/Goals: Students will "read" the pictures of the book prior to listening to the story read aloud. Students will listen to the story about a girl who has a friendship with a boy who has autism. Students will answer comprehension questions about the story, and develop an understanding of what it is like to have a friend who is different. Students will collaboratively and individually chart ways that they are the same as their friends and ways that they are different from their friends.

Objectives (Learning Outcomes):
Students will:
- Use the illustrations in a story to describe and better understand the characters, setting, and plot.
- Develop an understanding of what it is like to have friends who are different from themselves.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:
Reading Standards for Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
K.7: With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g. what moment in a story an illustration depicts).
1.7: Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.
2.7: Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

Anticipatory Set:
- Point out the title of the book and have the students look at the picture on the cover. Ask the students what they predict the story will be about.
- Without reading the words, do a quick “picture walk” through the story. Tell the students to silently “read” the pictures.
• Afterwards, ask the students to tell you some things they noticed in the pictures. Be sure to discuss the kind of friendship the two main characters seem to have.

**Methods/Activities (Instructional Procedures):**

**Teacher Input:** Read the story *My Best Friend Will* by Jamie Lowell and Tara Tuchel. Afterwards, ask these questions:

• What does the girl like about her friend Will? Remember to emphasize the true reciprocal friendship they have.
• How is Will different from his friend?
• How is Will the same as his friend?
• Are Will and the girl good friends to each other? How do you know?

**Guided Practice:**

• As a whole class, make two brainstorming charts by having each child contribute to at least one chart. One chart is titled “My friend and I are the same in these ways...” and the other chart is titled “My friend and I are different in these ways....” Encourage students to chart more than just physical similarities and differences.

**Independent Practice:**

• Each student folds a piece of paper in half and writes, “My friend and I are the same in these ways...” on the top of one half and “My friend and I are different in these ways....” on the top of the second half.
• Have each student choose a friend and either remember the name in his or her head or write the name on the bottom of the paper.
• Students write/draw a list of the characteristics that are the same and different between themselves and their friends.

**Checking for Understanding/Assessment:**

Students will be assessed informally by teacher review of work samples as well as probing questions during class discussions and independent work time.

**Closure:** Give students a chance to share their ideas. Add any new ideas to the charts created during the earlier brainstorming session. Be sure to discuss that it is perfectly normal and okay to be different in some ways from your friends.

**Optional Follow-Up Activity:**

Good way to get students to find similarities.

Play the game “Ways we are the Same.” Students fill in the five boxes (using words or pictures) with facts about them relating to the topics: eye color, hair color, number of siblings, favorite food, and favorite sport. Students walk around and try to find someone who has a matching box for the same column. That person writes his or her name inside the matching box.