

Skill Area(s):
 Nonverbal Language
 Perspective Taking
 Behavior/Stress

Power Card Strategy

Book: Power Cards: Using Special Interests to Motivate Children and youth with Asperger Syndrome and Autism

Level: beginner, intermediate, advanced

Goal: students can relate to their "obsessions" while learning rules

Materials needed: paper to create a power card (can be similar to a trading card)

Activity: The Power Card Strategy is a way to use a child's special interest to motivate children and youth. Since many children with Asperger Syndrome and autism tend to have highly developed special interests, this strategy is especially beneficial for this population.

- Briefly, the Power Card Strategy is a visual aid that incorporates the child's special interest to teach appropriate social interactions, including routines, behavior expectations, the meaning of language and the hidden curriculum. It is effective because it takes into account the unique characteristics of children and youth with Asperger Syndrome and autism.
- The Power Card Strategy consists of two parts:
 - 1.) a brief scenario or character sketch describing how the hero solves a problem
 - 2.) the POWER CARD which recaps how the child can use the same strategy to solve a similar problem

For example, Nancy, a nine-year-old girl with a diagnosis of autism has a great deal of difficulty when she loses a game. This behavior was demonstrated in a variety of situations at school as well as at home. The following scenario was created featuring the Power- Puff Girls, Nancy's special interest.

The Power-Puff Girls Play a Game
By Katherine Keeling

The Power-Puff Girls like to play games. Sometimes they win the game. When they win games the Power Puff Girls feel happy. They might smile, give each other a high five or say "yea!" But sometimes they lose the game. When they lose games the Power-Puff Girls might not feel happy. They might take a deep breath, say "good job" to their friend or say, "maybe next time."

The Power-Puff Girls" want every one to have fun playing games. They want you to remember these three things when playing games the Power-Puff way:

1. *Games should be fun for everyone.*
2. *If you win a game you can; smile, give a high five, or say, "yea!"*
3. *If you lose a game you can: Take a deep breath, say, "good job" to your friend or "maybe next*

A laminated POWER CARD with the steps to play a game like the Power-Puff Girls was also developed. This card consisted of the three steps listed in the scenario and a picture of the Power-Puff Girls.