

Power Cards

What are Power Cards?

The use of power cards is a visual priming strategy that uses a child's special interest/character/hero to help make sense of social situations, routines, the meaning of language and the unwritten social rules (Gagnon, 2001). It consists of a short scenario presented on a single sheet that is written from the perspective of the character/hero as well as a small card, referred to as a power card, which recaps how your child can use the same strategy as the character/hero to solve a similar problem. The power card may then be referred to by your child when needed.

Why might you use Power Cards?

- May increase child's motivation and learning by incorporating a special interest/preferred character
- May assist with generalization
- May capitalize on your child's visual learning style
- May assist with understanding complex ideas and concepts
- May be used to teach a variety of skills

When could your child use Power Cards?

Power cards may be used as a proactive strategy (meaning *before* a difficult situation occurs) when your child has difficulty understanding routines or rules in social situations (for example, closing the door while going to the washroom). The purpose of a power card is to incorporate your child's special interest to elicit desired behaviour/skill through motivation.

Things to consider when using Power Cards

- Identify a specific skill for the power card to address
- Identify your child's special interest
- Read the power card together with your child and discuss its contents
- Others may read the Power Card so that they can support the strategy
- Your child should be reinforced for appropriate use of the power card as well as the skills outlined in the power card

Before implementing any strategy, remember to:

1. Assess: What is your child currently able to do?
2. Goal: What is a specific goal for your child to work towards?
3. Strategies: How will you teach to reach the goal?
4. Monitor: How will you know if the teaching strategies are working?

*Disclaimer: These materials have been prepared for information purposes only.

Power Cards

Samples:

Picture of Firefighter Here

Firefighters Can Dress Quickly

Firefighters receive calls to save people every day. When they receive a call they have to act very fast. Firefighters like to dress very quickly so they can get to their important jobs.

Firefighters didn't always know how to dress quickly but they came up with a plan. Now they can dress very quickly because they follow the '1-5 Go' Plan. Firefighters want children to try this plan when they get dressed at school. If you have trouble getting dressed to go outside at school you can try it too just like firefighters.

Here's how you can try the firefighters' "1-5 Go" Plan at school:

1. Indoor shoes off
2. Outdoor shoes on
3. Coat on
4. Hat on
5. GO

You can try this too and be as fast as a firefighter when getting dressed to go outside!

Picture of Firefighter Here

Firefighters' "1-5 Go" Plan:

1. Indoor shoes off
2. Outdoor shoes on
3. Coat on
4. Hat on
5. GO

References

Gagnon, E. (2001). *Power cards: Using special interests to motivate children and youth with asperger syndrome and autism*. Kansas: Autism Asperger Publishing Co.

Additional Resources

Myles, B.S., Trautman, M., & Schelvan, R. (2004) *The hidden curriculum: Practical solutions for understanding unstated rules in social situations*. Kansas: Autism Asperger Publishing Co.

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