



ECHO Session Date: 2/19/2026

Thank you for presenting your student at ECHO Idaho – K12 Supporting Students with Autism session. Please keep in mind that your School District policies and Health Services procedures, medication administration protocols, process guidelines, remain the guiding principles to your practice.

After review of the case presentation and discussion of this student’s case among the ECHO Community of Practice, the following suggestions have been made:

Student Grade Level: preschool

Summary:

This early elementary student (kindergarten–2nd grade) diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, and oppositional defiant disorder (though documentation is pending). He spends the full day in general education with 1:1 paraprofessional support and an active IEP and BIP. The student is academically bright, highly verbal, and socially confident, with strong interests in Minecraft and Transformers, but becomes verbally and physically aggressive when he perceives rule violations or experiences frustration—particularly during writing or drawing tasks. Despite multiple accommodations (visual supports, shortened assignments, early transitions, frequent breaks, communication logs) and strategies such as tracing, structured reinforcement, sensory tools, and removal for safety when dysregulated, he escalates to screaming, hitting, throwing objects, eloping, and seeking highly preferred items following incidents. Evaluations indicate strong cognitive abilities; OT services were not warranted, and speech evaluation was incomplete due to unsafe behaviors. Additional contextual factors include parental conflict, alternating households, possible sleep disruption, and prior DDA involvement discontinued for safety concerns. The school seeks further strategies to support emotional regulation, improve safety, and help the student recognize and manage emotional precursors to escalation while maintaining placement in general education.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Regulation Before Academics

- Regulation is the foundation for learning. Academic instruction should continue, but with reduced load and increased scaffolding while regulation skills are strengthened.
- If there is no true academic disability, academic skills will come — and often quickly — once his nervous system is more regulated.
- Consider temporarily reducing academic demand and perfection-triggering tasks.
- Focus on widening his window of tolerance before layering in instructional expectations.



Strengthen Co-Regulation & Address Toxic Stress

- Ongoing parental conflict and possible adversity may be contributing to dysregulation.
- A child with autism and high stress requires very strong co-regulation.
- Continue leveraging the highly effective 1:1 adult.
- Build predictable, safe relational routines throughout the day.
- Provide parent resources (when possible) around resilience and regulation (e.g., ACEs-informed parenting materials).
- When communicating with caregivers, ensure outreach includes regular positive updates and strength-based observations, not only concerns.

Preventative, Scheduled Regulation Supports

Shift from reactive crisis response to proactive structure:

- Schedule outdoor time or alternate-setting breaks throughout the day.
- Predictably embed heavy work, movement, and sensory supports.
- Use regulation spaces (inside or outside classroom) as planned supports — not only after escalation.
- Reduce environmental complexity where possible.

Revisit Occupational Therapy

Consider re-evaluating OT eligibility with focus on how sensory processing and regulation difficulties are impacting educational access and participation.

Functional Communication & Flexibility Training

- Continue Emotional ABCs (building vocabulary for internal states).
- Gradually layer:
 - AIM (Accept, Identify, Move)
 - Unstuck and On Target (flexibility curriculum)
 - A structured shaping program (e.g., “My Way”) to reinforce communication over explosive behavior.
- Provide massive reinforcement for small regulation attempts (e.g., “Oh man, I got it wrong”).

Behavioral Consultation & Reward Scaffolding

- Consider reaching out to [Sesta](#) behavioral specialists for support.
 - They can help refine reward scaffolding; which behavior to prioritize first; and preventing the escalation, quick recovery, reward cycle
- Clarify what the most disruptive/safety-threatening behavior is and focus intervention there first.

Adjust the Reward System

- Avoid reinforcing dysregulation by providing immediate reward after major escalation.
- Use predictable, rule-based systems.
- Consider structured contracts if appropriate (especially if rule-bound thinking is strong).
- Ensure reinforcers cannot become weapons or escalation tools.

Identity-Based Behavioral Framing: Leverage Transformers

Since he strongly identifies with Transformers, especially Optimus Prime, this can be a powerful behavioral anchor. Optimus Prime is known as a compassionate warrior-philosopher who protects others and acts with justice and restraint. You could use this question: “What would Optimus do right now?”



Safety Planning

- Environmental safety review (doors, supervision patterns)
- Clear elopement response protocol
- Water safety education plan