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# Mediated Learning Experiences and Children with ASD

## **Mediation through horse therapy- case study Vlad**

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## Vlad:

- grade 7<sup>th</sup> C, class for children with severe intellectual disabilities and ASD, 14 years old
- high level of anxiety, many difficulties regarding following instruction
- low level of verbal expression, especially regarding emotions
- in case of frustration, often the response is a crises, when he refuses to cooperate, screams and needs 1-15 minutes to calm down, depending on the source of frustration
- high level of manifesting mimesis – he wants to copy all that his colleague Alex does
- limited interactions with animals and open environment in the past



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## Mediated learning experiences

- we followed the S-H-O-H-R model
- mediators: the teachers, the colleagues (children), riding instructor, horses
- activities: horse therapy
- context: once a week group activities (1-2 hours) in a horse riding centre
- duration: a whole school year (aprox.35 weeks)



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## **We used horse therapy to help him develop:**

- emotional control
- taking turns
- following orders
- body control
- verbal expression





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**First steps: frustration, refuse, fear, screaming while waiting on a bench**





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Vlad observes Alex and other colleagues riding  
The teachers leave the horses and the colleagues “mediate”





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**Second steps:** we use Alex, his colleague as “mediator”, as Vlad wants so much to do what Alex does

Although he is very anxious and afraid, Vlad accepts to be put on the horse back and rides, but only with Alex riding along





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**Next steps:** Vlad goes up the horse without protesting and follows any verbal instruction given by teachers or the riding instructor, but **ONLY** if he can see Alex next to him and copy what he does





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Vlad waits on the bench without any crises, while Alex is riding, then he agrees to ride with other colleagues (not very happy, but calm)





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Vlad rides with other colleagues, does exercises and follows instructions while Alex is no longer in his sight ( Alex is busy, playing with the dogs)





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**Final step: confidence and body control, enjoying riding**

