

*\*translated from Malay language original article*

## **Sport Stacking Improve the Social Skills of Autism Students**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), also known as Autism, is a developmental disorder that affects a person's development, particularly in social skills. Autistic students frequently struggle to socialise with others. This is due to their own characteristics, which make them more likely to be solitary and less likely to interact with others. Sport Stacking that can be used to improve the social skills of autistic students. This sport stacking can help autistic students improve their social skills with their peers as well as friends from the general population. Furthermore, the sport can help students improve their social skills with teachers, whether they are special education teachers or general education teachers. Finally, sport stacking is one way for teachers to help autistic students improve their social skills with others. It is hoped that this sport stacking will assist teachers in improving the social skills of autistic students.

**Keywords:** Social Skills, Autistic, Sport Stacking

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### **Introduction to Best Practices**

Autism is a syndrome that affects children's brain function in terms of emotions, behaviour, social communication, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, and cognitive abilities (Rea, LaMotte & Burrell, 2019). According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV (DSM V, 2012), among the attitudes frequently displayed by people with autism are constant isolation and difficulty accepting change because they are too focused on routine things. According to Wijayaptri Ni Wayan (2017), autistic children do not show reciprocal reactions to others, have communication problems, either in speech or socialisation, and have limitations in socialising. A child's social skills are defined as his or her ability to establish interactions with others as well as an awareness of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours by others. Autism is a syndrome that affects how children's brains function cognitively, emotionally, behaviorally, socially, and in terms of fine and gross motor skills (Rea, LaMotte & Burrell, 2019). A successful person's foundation is built on their social abilities. Playing team sports is one method that autistic kids can develop their social skills.

Starting in 2019 and continuing through 2022, stacking sports have been performed in the Special Education Learning Class at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Pernu, Melaka. Students with autism in this school struggle socially with others. The reason for this is their personal attitude of not wanting to interact with other

students. My school's autistic population is primarily due to pupils' inability to communicate with others around them and to adjust to their surroundings.

### **Justification on the Implementation of Best Practices**

Sports competitions are used as a practise to improve the social skills of autistic kids in the classroom. Focus, eye-hand coordination, agility, and social skills are crucial for playing this stacking activity. This is so that students' agility and social skills can be tested as they play the game. At first, autistic children resisted interacting with their peers and only responded to the teacher's queries when necessary. According to Heward (2013), these autistic students would rather be alone than hang out with their peers. When these pupils refuse to participate in classroom activities, teachers who instruct them have a tough time.

The ideal way for this student with autism to interact with others and adapt to his peers was something I tried to figure out in response to this student's autism problem. Children with autism are very self-focused and are unconcerned with anything that occurs in their environment, claim Fariza et al. (2017). However, autistic pupils also possess a variety of abilities not found in people without autism (Liew, 2018). This autistic student has the benefit of being more interested in a certain topic. A student with autism will perform at his best when doing something he enjoys. In order to assist this student interact with his friends, the teacher tries to provide him the chance to play the sport of stacking with others.

### **Implementation Objectives**

The objectives of implementing this best practice are:

1. Improve the level of communication skills of autistic students with people around
2. Improve the level of adjustment skills of autistic students

### **Implementation of Best Practices**

Teachers created a number of planning plans before putting this good practise into action so that they could understand the proper steps to take in order to accomplish the goals. Teachers have made comments to allow this approach to be used to help pupils with autism in order to accomplish these goals. Therefore, there is a need for efficient training techniques to address social skills issues among autistic pupils (Cavanaugh & Rademacherin, 2014). Playing stacking sports as a technique helps autistic students become more socially adept. Here is a strategy for putting these best practises into action.

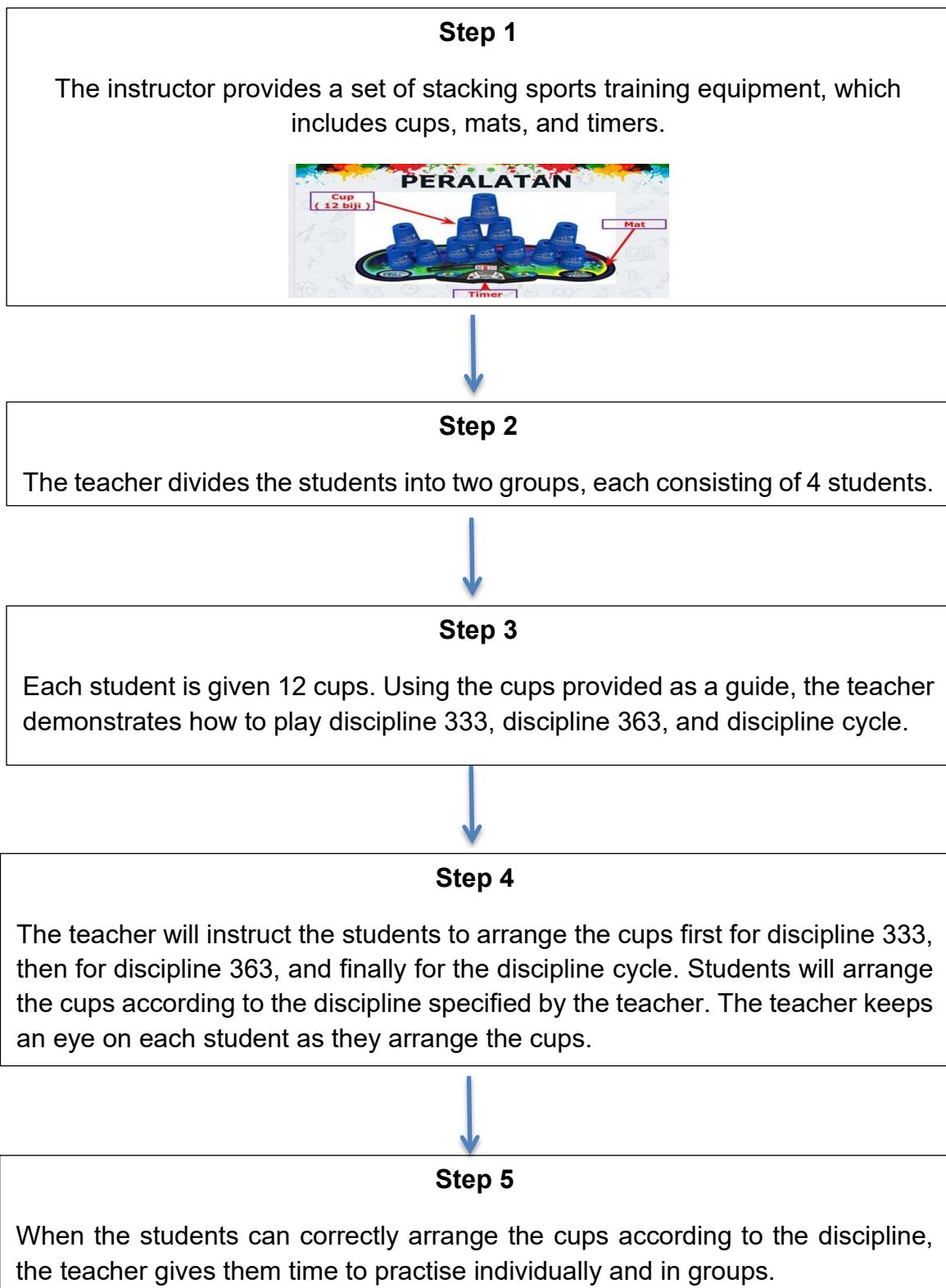
#### **Phase 1: Identifying Issues**

The instructor used a document checklist to make the identification of this issue. The teacher saw that the autistic student found it difficult to interact with his peers and preferred to remain by himself.

## Phase 2: Best Practice Action Planning

The measures that must be followed to accomplish the teacher's objectives have been planned before the practise is conducted. The sport of stacking is utilised as a strategy in teacher-school best practise to help autistic students develop their social skills. Here are the procedures for putting my school's best practises into practise.

Table 2  
*Best Practice Planning*



### Phase 3: Implementation of Best Practices

To ensure that the teacher meets the goals that have been set, the teacher has implemented the planning that was planned in phase 2 throughout this third phase. The prepared schedule can assist teachers in making the method more organised. The method will be implemented for three weeks. Each week, three days are held, namely Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, with each session lasting 60 minutes at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Pernu in Melaka. The following are the steps for carrying out the activity:

Table 3  
*Implementation of Best Practices*

Week	Time	Activities	Notes
1	10.30-11.30 a.m (Tuesday-Thursday)	a) Discipline 333 is taught to students. b) Students must demonstrate to the teacher how to organise 333 disciplines. c) Students participate in 333 different sports, both individually and in groups.	Every time the activity is carried out, the teacher will make observations
2	10.30-11.30 a.m (Tuesday-Thursday)	a) Discipline 363 is taught to students. b) Students must demonstrate to the teacher how to organise 363 disciplines. c) Students participate in 363 different sports, both individually and in groups.	
3	10.30-11.30 a.m (Tuesday-Thursday)	a) Discipline cycle is taught to students. b) Students must demonstrate to the teacher how to organise cycle disciplines. c) Students participate in cycle different sports, both individually and in groups.	

### Phase 4: Collect and Analyze Data


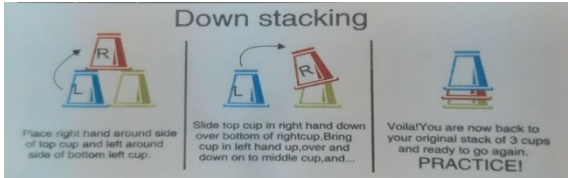
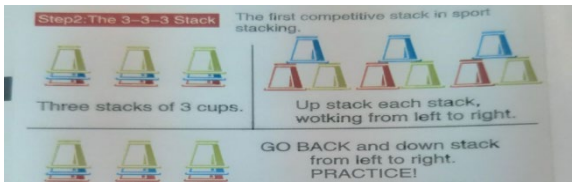
Data collection is critical because it will show whether the implemented method is successful or should not be used. As a result, teachers used the observation method in this best practise, which lasted three weeks. Teachers want to see the social skills problems of autistic students, so they use the observation method to collect data. According to Noraini Idris (2010). The observation method allows the teacher to see the big picture of a situation.

### Phase 5: Best Practice Reflection

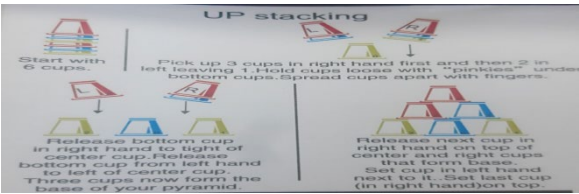
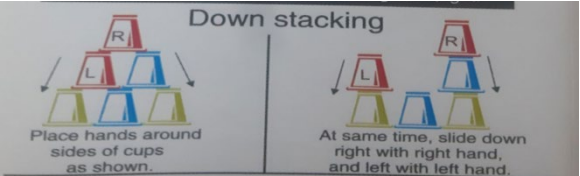
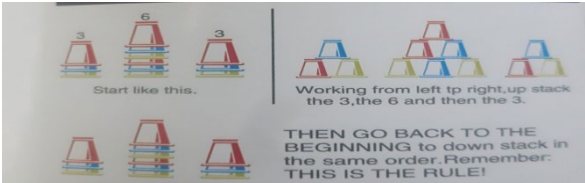
Teachers discovered strengths and weaknesses while carrying out the practise after reflecting on it. As a result, teachers will improve so that it can be practised by other teachers.

## Best Practice Implementation Steps

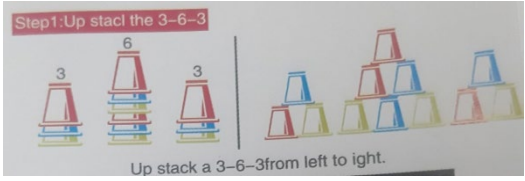
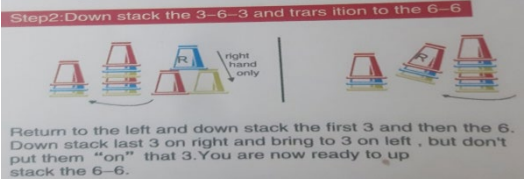
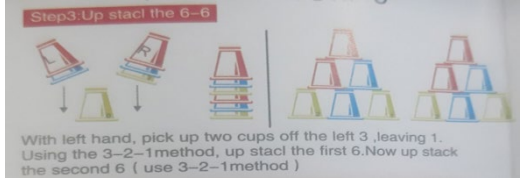
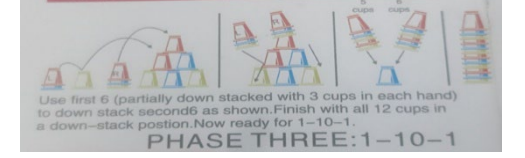
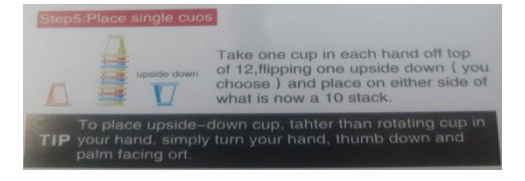
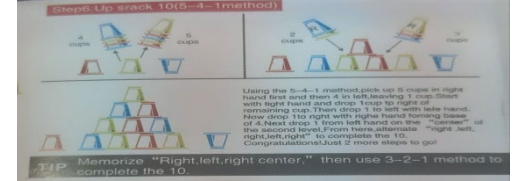
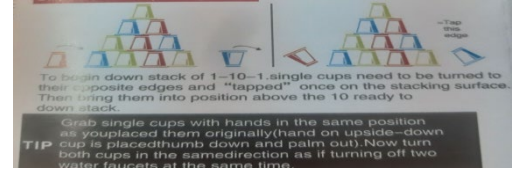
### A) Discipline 333

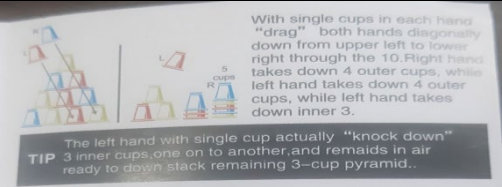
STEPS	DESCRIPTION
<p><b>UP STACKING</b></p>	 <p><b>UP stacking</b></p> <p>Start with 3 cups.</p> <p>Lift top cup with right hand and set next to bottom cup.</p> <p>Lift middle cup with left hand and place on top.</p>
<p><b>DOWN STACKING</b></p>	 <p><b>Down stacking</b></p> <p>Place right hand around side of top cup and left around side of bottom left cup.</p> <p>Slide top cup in right hand down over bottom of right cup. Bring cup in left hand up, over and down on to middle cup, and...</p> <p>Voila! You are now back to your original stack of 3 cups and ready to go again. <b>PRACTICE!</b></p>
<p><b>START THE GAME</b></p>	 <p><b>Step 2: The 3-3-3 Stack</b></p> <p>The first competitive stack in sport stacking.</p> <p>Up stack each stack, working from left to right.</p> <p>GO BACK and down stack from left to right. <b>PRACTICE!</b></p>

### B) Discipline 363

STEPS	DESCRIPTION
<p><b>UP STACKING</b></p>	 <p><b>UP stacking</b></p> <p>Start with 6 cups.</p> <p>Pick up 3 cups in right hand first and then 2 in left leaving 1. Hold cups loose with "fingers" under bottom cups. Spread cups apart with fingers.</p> <p>Release bottom cup in right hand to right of center cup. Release bottom cup from left hand to left of center cup. Three cups now form the base of your pyramid.</p> <p>Release next cup in right hand on top of center and right cups that form base. Set cup in left hand next to it. Set last cup (in right hand) on top.</p>
<p><b>DOWN STACKING</b></p>	 <p><b>Down stacking</b></p> <p>Place hands around sides of cups as shown.</p> <p>At same time, slide down right with right hand, and left with left hand.</p>
<p><b>START THE GAME</b></p>	 <p>Start like this.</p> <p>Working from left to right, up stack the 3, the 6 and then the 3.</p> <p>THEN GO BACK TO THE BEGINNING to down stack in the same order. Remember: <b>THIS IS THE RULE!</b></p>

C) Discipline Cycle

STEPS	DESCRIPTION
<p><b>UP STACK 363</b></p>	 <p>Step 1: Up stack the 3-6-3</p> <p>Up stack a 3-6-3 from left to right.</p>
<p><b>DOWN STACK 363</b></p>	 <p>Step 2: Down stack the 3-6-3 and transition to the 6-6</p> <p>Return to the left and down stack the first 3 and then the 6. Down stack last 3 on right and bring to 3 on left, but don't put them "on" that 3. You are now ready to up stack the 6-6.</p>
<p><b>UP STACK 6 6</b></p>	 <p>Step 3: Up stack the 6-6</p> <p>With left hand, pick up two cups off the left 3, leaving 1. Using the 3-2-1 method, up stack the first 6. Now up stack the second 6 (use 3-2-1 method)</p>
<p><b>DOWN STACK 6 6 TO 1-10-1</b></p>	 <p>Step 4: Down stack the 6-6 and transition to the 1-10-1</p> <p>Use first 6 (partially down stacked with 3 cups as shown). Finish with all 12 cups in a down-stack position. Now ready for 1-10-1.</p> <p>PHASE THREE: 1-10-1</p>
<p><b>PLACE SINGLE CUP</b></p>	 <p>Step 5: Place single cups</p> <p>Take one cup in each hand off top of 12, flipping one upside down (you choose) and place on either side of what is now a 10 stack.</p> <p>To place upside-down cup, rather than rotating cup in TIP your hand, simply turn your hand, thumb down and palm facing out.</p>
<p><b>UP STACK 10 (5-4-1)</b></p>	 <p>Step 6: Up stack 10 (5-4-1 method)</p> <p>Using the 5-4-1 method, pick up 5 cups in right hand first and then 4 in left hand. 1 cup (left) with right hand and drop. Top to right of remaining 10. Then drop 1 to left with left hand. Now drop 1 to right with right hand forming base of 4. And drop 1 from left hand on the "center" of the second level. From there, alternate "right, left, right, left, right" to complete the 10. Congratulations! Just 2 more steps to go!</p> <p>TIP: Memorize "Right, left, right, center," then use 3-2-1 method to complete the 10.</p>
<p><b>TURN &amp; TAP SINGLE CUPS</b></p>	 <p>Step 7: Turn &amp; "tap" single cups</p> <p>To begin down stack of 1-10-1, single cups need to be turned to their opposite edges and "tapped" once on the stacking surface. Then bring them into position above the 10 ready to down stack.</p> <p>Grab single cups with hands in the same position as you placed them originally (hand on upside-down cup is placed thumb down and palm out). Now turn both cups in the same direction as if turning off two water faucets at the same time.</p>

	
<p><b>DOWN STACK 10 AND END 363</b></p>	

**Best Practice Implementation Pictures**



The autistic student participated in the 333 discipline with his peers.



The autistic student participated in the 363 discipline with his peers.



The autistic student participated in the cycle discipline with his peers.



## Effectiveness from the Implementation of Best Practices

### Observations

Prior to the implementation of this practise, it was discovered that autistic students lacked communication with their peers and were poor adapters. Typically, autistic students prefer to be alone and avoid communicating with others. It was discovered that after implementing the practise of playing this sport stacking, this autistic student began to communicate with others and was good at adapting when he was among other students. Teachers discovered that this sport stacking can improve the social skills of autistic students.



**Picture 1**

Sports Stacking team events allow autistic students to communicate.

**Picture 2**

Students with autism can interact with peers from other schools.



**Picture 3**

Students with autism demonstrate sports stacking to students in the first stream.





## Conclusion and Recommendations

Children with autism have a wide variety of social skills. Children with autism do, in fact, struggle to comprehend and utilise social skills in appropriate ways (Adam et. Al, 2004). Their lack of proficiency in this area of social skills makes it challenging for them to learn new things, which in turn lowers their level of everyday satisfaction. Best practises must thus be put into action to assist autistic children in developing their social skills so that they are more likely to engage and communicate with others like other typical kids. In conclusion, after effectively implementing this best practise, autistic students' social abilities with others around them have changed somewhat. These best practises have significant implications for teachers, students, and their parents. After witnessing the effectiveness of this module on autistic students, teachers see the need for ongoing implementation of best practises.

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