We truly believe that the ‘Leader in Me’ can be adapted/modified and make a wonderful difference in any student’s life.

Bellerive houses an Autism program and our students range from very high functioning (these students participate with their general education classes for ‘Leader In Me’ lessons and activities) to severely affected (cognitively impaired, non-verbal with significant behavioral concerns) which makes the verbage, abstract ideas and practices of the ‘7Habits’ not meaningful to them. Adapting the 7 Habits is an attempt to make important school habits important and useful for our students.

Instead of Habit 1: Be Proactive “You’re in Charge” , we use Adapted Habit 1: Monitor your Behavior.

We use behavior checklists, after each small group, so that our students can begin to monitor and be in charge of their own behavior and become in tune with how a successful student acts in an academic setting.

Instead of Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind, we use Adapted Habit 2: Using Our Visual Schedules

Knowing what comes next and having consistent, predictable schedules are very important to students with Autism. Using and referencing visual schedules (pictures of each activity the student needs to participate in for the day, in the order they will occur) can provide that tool so that our students can begin each day with a plan and see it through.

Instead of Habit 3: Put First Things First Adapted, we use Adapted Habit 4: First/Then (work first, then play)

Keeping in line with predictability and consistency, we took the visual schedule one step further and made ‘Fist/Then’ boards for our students. This is a visual support that has a picture of the activity the student needs to attend under ‘First’ and then a picture of the reinforcer (preferred item) he/she is working for or next activity they need to attend is placed under the ‘Then’ title. This is a visual for our model of ‘work first, then\_\_\_\_(preferred reinforcer).

Instead of Habit 4: Think Win-Win, we use Adapted Habit 4: Learning to Share and Take Turns

Engaging with others is very difficult for children with Autism. In this adapted habit we are attempting to define what sharing is and the various ways people share (sharing time, toys, food, school items). We also attempt activities where sharing and social exchanges are needed, in order to create positive, winning outcomes for our students.

Instead of Habit 5: Seek First to Understand Then to be Understood, we use Adapted Habit 5: Following Directions

Follow directions is a term all students hear, constantly, though out the school day. We attempt to break down exactly why following directions is important and how it will help in daily activities. Listening, alone, is very difficult for children with Autism. They tend to be very visual learners, therefore using examples, such as cooking (a preferred activity and is meaningful to our students) is important.

Instead of Habit 6: Synergize, we use Adapted Habit 6: Working as a Group

Defining and explaining what working as a group or team entails is the first step in this adapted lesson. Followed by tying in lessons /vocabulary from the previous Habits (following directions, sharing and having appropriate behaviors, hopefully bring together, or synergize, the adapted habits for our students.

Instead of Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw, we use Adapted Habit 7: Finding New Favorite Things

Children with autism usually have very preferred items that they want to engage with during their downtime/breaks. In adapted Habit 7, our intention is to spend time using various toys, interesting items and games, in the correct manner ,and trying to engage the group with those items/toys/games, in hopes of finding other preferred items that the students would enjoy engaging with and working for. These activities, we hope will help give our students more options to ‘Sharpen Their Saws’.