Home Learning Tips for Students with ASD

Top tips

- Try and keep a predictable routine each day, for example, having mealtimes at the same time, going out for some exercise at the same time each day.
- Try and keep the time your child wakes up to the same each day. This will help prevent sleeping difficulties.
- Show your child what is going to happen in the day, either using visuals or writing if your child can read; see' Guide to Using Visual Timetables' and 'Symbols for Home Visual Timetable' documents.
- Allow regular opportunities for your child to move. This could be doing something indoors like Just Dance or yoga for kids videos on YouTube; see the Yoga document.

If your child is dysregulated from the change of routine you can try:

- Reducing demands, e.g. expecting less work.
- Making sure they have lots of opportunities for sensory activities and movement.
- Having a calm quiet space where your child can withdraw. You could create a quiet corner in your house (e.g. drape a blanket over a couple of chairs to create a den) this is your child's space and they should be left alone when they are there.
- Reduce your language. If your child is very upset use only one word at a time and speak in a calm voice.

Pield Heath House School (2020)

Structure

Children with ASD often thrive on routine and structure. Keep in mind that students will need frequent breaks to decompress, find sensory input, or simply take a break from learning.

- Visual timetable
- Now and Next
- Reward Charts
- Timers – sand timers from Amazon / phone timer / clock / online timer
- Enable the student to have autonomy over their day. It may help to let the student make their own schedule. Let them pick what they want to do first or chose how they want to learn. Giving the student control gets more buy-in from the child. It will also empower and motivate them.

Environment

- Set up a designated work area

- Set this up at the start of each day, and pack away once home schooling has finished
- Clutter and distraction free environment so that they do not overwhelm the brain. This includes distractions at home and distractions in the room of the person you may be communicating with via computer program.
- If the student doesn't like to see their own face on a video chat, ask the teacher or therapist if they turn the camera off or cover with a post-it note. Having too many faces on the screen can be very distracting, try 'spotlighting' the main screen so it's just the teacher / presentation on view.
- If possible, workspace to not be in bedroom so the student can distinguish between schoolwork and home
- Model expectations if parents and carers are also working from home, set up your workstation like their learning area and take breaks, eat lunch together. At the end of the workday, spend family time together.

Tasks

- Use a range of multimedia learning options – work sheets, activities, Zoom calls, videos etc
- Tailor work to the student's special interests
- Use the home environment to your advantage – life skills are a great area to develop during this time.
- Try breaking tasks down into small, do-able tasks that can be completed and checked off the list. Too much work at once is overwhelming. Also, many students will need to be shown how to do a task the first several times until they can do it independently. If this is a physical task, it may even require hand-over-hand assistance.
- We've collated some home learning tasks here: SEND Home Learning Ideas Jan 21.docx
- Incorporate physical exercise into the day. 'People with a disability who need a continuous care are not counted towards the gatherings limit for exercising outside' and 'If you (or a person in your care) have a health condition that routinely requires you to leave home to maintain your health - including if that involves travel beyond your local area or exercising several times a day - then you can do so. More information at: National lockdown: Stay at Home - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Use technology - Technology-aided instruction can help students on the autism spectrum learn a range of skills including learning language, literacy and numeracy. It can also help them understand task requirements, communicate their concerns and complete tasks. The Learning App Guide to Autism and Education provides parents with reviews for several apps grouped by skill areas and age groups.

Sensory Regulation

- Movement breaks - Physical movement is crucial for students with autism and should be done daily. Repetitive physical movements like jumping, pedalling a bicycle, or swinging can soothe your child while providing the sensory input needed to sit still and learn.
- Have sensory resources available (fidget toys, blu tac/play dough, wobble cushions etc)
- Create a "safe spot" filled with soothing items like books and music that your child can use to decompress. You can also use this spot as a reward or if your child is having a meltdown or struggling to <u>transition</u> from one task to another.
- Pied Heath School have created this ['Activities to effectively support students with ASD at Home'](#) which includes some great sensory diet ideas:

Wellbeing

- Check in with trusted staff
- Although students on the autism spectrum often experience difficulty in social situations, many say peer support can help make school a more positive experience. During the COVID-19 shutdown, classmates or friends can provide encouragement and information on learning tasks. This may decrease uncertainty and increase students' confidence. Consider: whole class Zoom assemblies / check in with friends / whole class ice breakers/activities
- Everyone is going through a really difficult time at the moment, so try to remember to be kind to yourself.
- If appropriate, students may benefit from being introduced to KOOTH, which is a wellbeing app that provides anonymous and personalised support for young people. [Home - Kooth](#)

Government Guidance

[Children of critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](#)