



EFFECTIVE SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM PARTICIPATING IN REMOTE LEARNING – 1/13/21

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Behavioral Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

It is not atypical for students with ASD to display behavioral difficulties in response to disruptive changes in their life given their difficulty adapting to change, understanding and using language, and understanding abstract concepts.

Choice Making

- Choice making allows control over one's environment, empowers individuals, and eliminates power struggles.
- Can be done with objects, pictures, or words.
- Increase structured choices, which are choices that the adult controls. E.g., "Which worksheet do you want to do first" This or ____?"

Visual Check-Ins

- Use visual supports such as a visual emotions thermometer to help students identify their emotions, the intensity of their emotions, as well as to self-regulate
- Use at the beginning of each task/class and periodically throughout the day or when needed
- The goal is to prevent behaviors from escalating, so adults should step in and address the issue before the student escalates and unable to implement their coping skills.
- At low levels of frustration/agitation, adults should prompt the student to an appropriate coping skill such as 3 minutes in the "cozy corner", belly breaths, or a brief walk.

Increase Task Engagement

- Increase structured choices
- Arrange the child's visual schedule so that preferred activities follow nonpreferred tasks
- Teach how to request a help or break. Provide "break cards" or "I need help cards" if unable to effectively verbalize. Agitation can adversely impact communication skills so a child that may typically have verbal skills may struggle more during these times.
- If already frustrated, consider temporarily reducing demands to increase compliance
- Acknowledge efforts no matter how small
- Implement an incentive system, like a token system or a token board
- AVOID providing time outs or ignoring task avoidant behaviors



Improve Transitioning

- Cue to signal upcoming transitions.
- Cue and use visual timers to structure the time given for activities and the time left.
- Avoid transitions from high to low preference activities. Transition to neutral activities, transition objects, or “finished boxes” instead.
- Structure transitions and down time.



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