

# Strategies for Teachers Working with Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Role play/model situations (so students can see instead of just being told)
  - May also video tape so students can see
- Be consistent
  - Make sure to keep expectations the same, every time someone is inconsistent it takes 8 times of being consistent to “undo” the inconsistency
- Foreshadow changes in Schedules
  - Make it visual by using a symbol or writing it down
- Use “rules” to enforce concepts
  - Many students are rule orientated but don’t overuse rules, for example you may say the rule in \_\_\_\_\_ grade is that you stand in line with your hands at your side.
- Match Student work time to their performance time
  - If they are able to attend a task for approximately 15 minutes have that much work for them to do (not a lot more or less)
- Use alternatives to writing in order to demonstrate competence
  - May use magnetic words/letters, word processing device, dictating responses, or use symbols
- Teach Social Skills as part of curriculum
  - Remember there is no such thing as “common sense”
- Understand cycle of tantrums/meltdowns and try to prevent
  - If you know something is going to set them off, don’t do it, teach student how to handle situation before putting them in it
- Schedule in down time
  - May be a 30 second “break” or a 15 minute break depending on student, could be sensory or just a walk
- Have realistic expectations
  - Not everyone is social all of the time, not everyone is on task all of the time!
- Success builds Success
  - Start a new skill in an area of success first

- Share success between home and school
- Focus activities on turn taking/ self management
  - Use visuals to assist (ex. Wait card)
- Pick a goal and focus on one for each activity
  - Is the goal the academic content, independence, or socialization
- Maintain Structure
  - Try to stay as consistent as possible with a routine
- Offer Choices when possible
  - If two assignments need to be complete give student the choice of which one to do first
- Use a variety of stimuli in lessons
  - Use visuals and hands on materials when possible
- Understand the function of a behavior
  - Look for the reason behind the behavior, not just the behavior itself
- Use social stories, role playing, or videotaping to make abstract concepts concrete
  - Try to think of picturing things in your mind or giving a definition of something, if you can't you need to make it more concrete (ex. Showing what emotions look like, having a wait card, showing what "there" is)
- Teach in a variety of settings for generalization
  - Introduce a new skill in a variety of places so that the student can see it applies to more than one setting
- Match visual supports with verbal instruction
  - Example: hold up a math book when telling class to get out book, write page numbers on board
- Allow for "wait time" to receive a response
  - Average processing time is 30-60 seconds, repeating won't improve comprehension, you need to "wait"
- Use If/Then and First/Then statements
  - Example: First complete your math then it's recess
- Autism is a reason, never an excuse
  - Look for the function of a behavior and go from there!
- LESS IS MORE when it comes to verbal

- Even if a student is very verbal, talking too much creates anxiety and makes things more difficult
- Stay Positive 😊