

Top Tips

Approaches to learning for your child with autism in the home environment

Primary

- **Establish a routine** – wake up at the usual time, follow your child's normal morning routine e.g. have a shower, get dressed, eat breakfast, brush teeth.
- **Plan a schedule with your child** – discuss what's going to happen each day and when? The goal is not to try and re-create the school day exactly but to collaborate with them in making a schedule which will support their engagement e.g. first we will do maths and then we can build with the lego. This will offer them a sense of control and comfort. Remember to include break times and lunch times, as well as structured learning and self-directed tasks in the schedule.
- **Structure** - present the new schedule in written or visual form, whichever your child prefers, in order to establish a clear structure and routine for them to follow. Display it in a prominent place where your child can see it and refer to it throughout the day.
- **Environment** - designate a quiet distraction free work space, where they can study daily.
- **Equipment** - have subject specific lesson resources such as exercise books, reading materials, pens, paper etc. nearby to avoid distractions and task avoidance.
- **Lessons Time** – base your day around the materials you have been given by school. Keep lessons to 30 minutes and hold a maximum of 4 per day. Aim to end on a high note and move on. Be realistic about what they can achieve during this time.
- **Encourage learning through questioning** – sit next to them whilst you teach. Ask open ended questions to encourage further discussion such as; tell me more about that, what made you think that? What did you know already that led you to do that question that way? Tell me how you did it? What would you change next time?
- **Timers** - work well, as do clear expectations such as: 'When I check in 10 minutes time, you will have written up to this line.'
- **Make it fun and practical** – engage them in making lunch, cooking activities, sand and water investigations, science experiments such as; dying noodles unicorn colours, making sugar crystals, exploding baking powder and vinegar, growing and gardening activities.
- **Get up and Move** – make time for movement and dance activities such as indoor hopscotch or hula hoops. Balance with quiet times such as child yoga, breathing and relaxation activities and sensory activities.
- **Monitor** - new communications from schools for updates and teacher feedback.
- **Encourage and Reward** – reward time for activities completed. Make sure this is time limited to ensure it remains motivational.
- **Social Interactions** – Encourage daily continued social interactions with family members, and their peers through FaceTime etc.
- **Social stories** – it can be helpful to use social stories or comic strips to support social understanding in a structured way.

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