

PARENTAL HELP AND IDEAS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH AUTISM.

1. Stick to a timetable.

Children with ASD often thrive on routine and structure. Having a daily visual timetable that is accessible at all times, maybe stuck on a table they will work at or on their bedroom door. Provide a session timetable as a list (E.g. provide a list for each 2 hour window) on paper that the student can refer to and cross items of the list as they are complete. While it may be hard for you to stay structured, this choice will pay dividends of comfort and ease of your home schooling day. It may be useful for the student to use a timer on their phone to help them organise the learning and manage to stay focussed.

2. Provide frequent brain breaks.

While you should stick to your timetable as much as possible, chances are your child with ASD will need frequent breaks to decompress, find sensory input, or simply take a break from learning. Where possible build these into the timetable. E.g. 30 minutes of Maths and then 10 minute brain break. The following website has some ideas which may be useful:

<https://minds-in-bloom.com/20-three-minute-brain-breaks/>

3. Incorporate physical exercise.

Physical movement is crucial for students with autism and should be done daily during the homeschool routine. Repetitive physical movement such as jumping, running on the spot, dancing, etc can soothe your autistic child while providing the sensory input needed to sit still and learn. The curriculum for physical education is up to you, and all forms of exercise are acceptable! There are many useful sites available to support students with Physical Education at home including Joe Wicks PE lessons. He is streaming his live classes from his You tube channel **The Body Coach**.

4. Encourage your child to be involved.

Empower your autistic child to make decisions about their education and help put them in a natural position of leadership. This will increase their confidence and help them develop critical thinking skills. Sit down with your child and discuss the timetable asking them for their input, e.g. when do you think you can concentrate best, which subjects do you enjoy/ not enjoy so these can be separated through the day. Encourage them to do some research around resources for subjects, ensuring they remain safe online, they can develop their IT skills looking for relevant websites.

They can then share these with friends online or by phone which helps to maintain their friendships.

5. Use visual cues where possible.

Students on the Autistic spectrum usually struggle with their auditory memory and benefit from having information supported with visuals. Visual activities can include demonstrating including online instructions, visual information through information sheets and looking at information in books. Visual support for recapping/revision can include mind maps and spider diagrams. Information cards with key words/information on one side and explanations on the other. This allows students to self-check answers.

6. Work with any fixed interests/obsessions not against them.

It is very common for students with Autism to become obsessed with a certain subject, object, or theme, such as computers, trains, animals, etc. Whilst home schooling you can use these interests to engage your child – they don't have to be a hindrance or something that distances you from your child. Fixations are a window into their mind! Where possible find an aspect of your child's current favourite topic that can relate to your lessons. If that's not possible give time to engage with (discuss with you, play with, complete a mini topic work) as a mini reward between the more academic lessons.

7. Additional support.

If you are still struggling please look at the following sources of support:

The National Autistic society website is.

<https://www.autism.org.uk/>

Additionally they have a helpline. Details available on the following link.

<https://www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines/main/contact.aspx>

Social stories and comic strip conversations can be used to help students with ASD understand why they have to do something they may not want to do or help them develop greater social understanding. More details are available from this link.

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx>

the Educational Psychologist linked to school are providing further advice and support via a helpline for parents.

help line: **0161 276 0115 - Monday to Friday 09:00-12:00**