

www.autismhelp.info

Transfer of learned skills

Points to note

- Children with autism are often rigid in their way of thinking. He can have great difficulty transferring the skills learnt in one setting to another, similar setting.
- Problems with memory recall lead to difficulty searching the memory for useful information. Unless they are specifically cued, children with autism lack the ability to spontaneously search their memory for knowledge that can be transferred to a new situation.
- The child may be unable to display certain skills at school yet they can perform them independently at home, or vice versa.
- This inability to generalise skills can be a big problem if the child's teacher is unaware of just how rigid the child can be.

What you can do

- It is important to always generalise what is being taught with a range of examples and situations. Children with autism need to be given the opportunity to learn the same thing in different situations to encourage flexible thinking and transference of skills.
- Practice each new skill with a range of practical examples in different settings. Then move on to more complex ideas.
- There needs to be good communication between home and school. Keep a record of skill development in a Communication Book and send it home with the child each day. Newly acquired skills can then be practiced at home.
- When a new skill has been learnt, reflect on the learning experience by talking about what has been learnt and how this skill might be used in the future.
- The student should also be given the opportunity to enjoy what he has learnt. Reflect on the child's achievement, pointing out he is happy, proud etc.