

Tips for teaching children with ASD

20 tips for teaching students with ASD (Years 9-12)

1. Don't sweat the small stuff! Be flexible in areas such as school attendance, uniform, timetabling and social expectations.
2. Remember that inappropriate and difficult behaviour can often be linked to high levels of anxiety.
3. Avoid overloading the student with verbal instructions. Give one instruction at a time. Allow the student sufficient time to process and respond to the request.
4. Avoid phrasing an instruction as a question. Instructions should be given as a command that offers no alternative. This does not imply that instructions must be given in an overly stern or loud voice.
5. If a student becomes loud and agitated, be calm, limit gesture, speak quietly and try to engage eye contact. Do not attempt to reason or rationalise with the student when he is upset; save this for when he is calm. Focus on what he should be doing.
6. Make full use of resources such as the internet, educational software and documentaries so that students can teach themselves.
7. Provide the student with extra support to help him organise class materials.
8. Always give the student advance warning of changes in routine.
9. Appeal to the student's interests, hobbies and obsessions by incorporating these into classroom activities, homework and assignments.
10. Provide a resource room, computer room or library for the student to access when feeling overloaded.
11. Remember that parents know their child best. They are a great source of information.
12. Use visual cues or written lists to support verbal communication whenever possible.
13. Take the time to try to understand each student's particular sensory issues.
14. Be explicit. The student may not focus on what you consider to be obvious.
15. Help the student become aware that other people have thoughts and feelings that are different to his own.
16. Provide the student with opportunities to improve social interaction skills with role play that practices appropriate social behaviour in a variety of everyday situations.
17. Structure and routine are important but allow for some flexibility in the student's routine so that he learns to cope with minor changes in a supportive environment.
18. Appoint a staff member who is committed to the welfare of the student to act as a mentor and social coach.
19. Allow for alternate assignment formats and assessment methods.
20. Remember that social and life skills are just as important as academic learning.