

Classroom Intervention- top tips for a happy autism friendly classroom

Structure is the prosthetic device that affords people with Autism better understanding, opportunities for independence, and is a form of positive behavioural support.

Here are a few helpful, low cost handy tips to help you on the road to a happy, Autism friendly classroom.

Golden tip 1: Reduce Distractions

Minimise posters, clutter and open storage shelves. Use light coloured curtains to reduce visual distractions from outside, and close the door to reduce outside noises. Try not to seat learners with autism right next to an open door or uncovered window.

Golden tip 2: Use Routine

Maintaining predictable routines can help learners with autism know what is expected of them and when, and can influence independence.

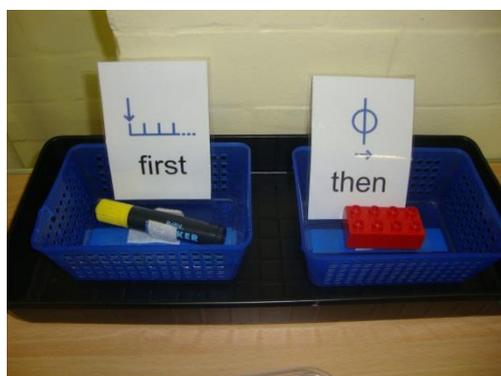
Singing the good morning song lets them know that it is time for morning ring and the start of the day. Throw a beanbag to 'find out who is in school today.'" Talk through the schedule for the day and put it up on the board.

Golden tip 3: Use visuals

Learners with autism are thought to have much stronger visual processing skills than auditory processing skills

Golden tip 4: Use Schedules

Learners with autism like order and detail. They feel in control and less anxious when they know what to expect. Reading is not a pre- requisite as schedules can be created using objects, photos, symbols/line drawings as well as words and follows the left to right or top to bottom pattern. Schedules must be placed in full view and updated regularly.



A simple First/then schedule showing the child that he must first do writing then he can have his Lego.

Golden tip 5: Concrete and Visually Mediated Communication

Try to keep your spoken language simple and concrete when you are speaking to learners with autism. e.g. "Put coat on" instead of "Run and grab your coat please". Remember that our children are literate thinkers so they will run to their coat!

Use visual mediation to improve understanding- Using sign language or pictures.

Golden tip 6: Transition and Change

Transition is any move from one thing/activity/place to another. Warn before an activity is due to end, give a warning. Play is finishing in 5 minutes; swimming will finish in 5-4-3-2-1. Use something visual like an egg timer so the learners can see the time counting down.



A time timer that is used to show the child how much longer he has until his activity has finished.

Golden Tip 7: Use rewards

People with autism are more motivated by tangible rewards than social rewards. Using a food, favourite toy or activity is more successful than high fives or "You make me so happy".

Golden Tip 8: Create a quiet space

Easy access to a quiet, calming space can be very valuable to learners with autism. Often a table that is covered by a heavy, dark blanket is enough for the child to use throughout his school day.



Golden Tip 9: Manage break time

For learners with autism break time can be a challenging and difficult time of the day. Poor social skills and difficulty managing in unstructured settings can all contribute to meltdowns, fights with other children, anxiety and escape behaviours.

Choosing what will be done before break and role playing different play situations (asking for a turn, asking for space), will make play less stressful for everyone.