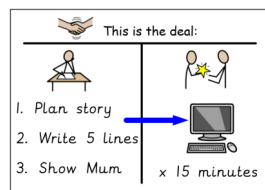


Rewards and Motivators:

When supporting children with ASD to learn, we often have to ask ourselves "What is in it for the child?"

The child may not have the intrinsic motivation that their peers have. Therefore, they will need an extrinsic motivator. Choice boards/Deal Cards can be used to let the child choose their reward for completing any task. Some children will respond very well to stickers or even food. Families will know their children better than anyone else and will be able to choose an appropriate motivator. The motivator will have to be worth the child completing the task.



Workstation:

If you decide to try home-schooling activities with your children; carefully consider where you will work.

Can you set up a workstation somewhere quiet, with limited distractions? Some children benefit from the TEACCH approach, which can be adapted and used at home: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vkymZzmq4jw>



Visuals:

Where possible, making learning as visual as possible. Many children, with or without ASD, are visual learners. We know visual supports help provide children with structure and routine, and encourage independence. You can adapt learning to include your child taking photos, creating a short videos, or using real-life objects. This helps to make learning fun and more memorable. A great website which is offering a 30-day free trial is: www.widgitonline.com/offer Use code WIDGIT30 to download free, ready-made resources which are linked to the curriculum and planning.

Confidence:

Often children with ASD lack confidence, and fear failure. Pitching activities slightly below where they are working can be a great way of ensuring they are successful, which will increase their motivation to engage with home learning.



Final Message:

The ideas above are a guide to what is out there, and intended to be helpful if you are finding it hard to settle into a routine or are stuck for ideas. We are not affiliated with any of the links or companies we have suggested, and the information we've provided is currently correct, to our knowledge.

As ever, use the ideas which work and discard those which don't!

Most of all, try to enjoy this extra time together and use it to try activities which are fun for everyone. We hope your home-schooling journey is varied, interesting and enjoyable!

Tips for Home-Educating children with ASD during the coronavirus outbreak:

Firstly, please don't worry too much about how much learning time you're managing to have at home. Everyone will need time to adjust and become comfortable, or at least familiar, with being at home so much more than usual.



Under these circumstances, it is unlikely that anyone will be able to replicate the structure which gives the school day its routine (through necessity!) - but there are some things which can make children feel more secure, and reduce anxiety, if you feel you'd like to tackle some learning.

You may already be aware of some or all of these strategies, but it could be helpful to have them all in one document. We cannot recommend a blanket approach, as every child is different, but hope that these ideas will help you formulate your own child's activities.



Top Tips

Create your own home-schooling rules:

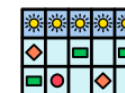
Children with ASD likes rules. Can you work together, as a family, to create a set of home-school rules which are realistic and fair, and which everyone can *sincerely* sign up to (and which everyone honestly and realistically intends to follow)?

Does your child need to be dressed in school uniform to build in a visual reminder that it is still term-time and we need to do some school work? Would this help them feel ready for learning, or be a trigger?



Create and use your own visual timetable:

Create a visual timetable to help provide structure for your child each day.



Start with activities such as breakfast, getting dressed and doing teeth.

School subjects may include Reading, Phonics (if appropriate), English and Maths Skills, some physical activity, a creative art task, and plenty of free time or choosing.

Don't feel you need to spend an hour on each, as if your child were in school. A few minutes on each will allow them to keep and improve their skills and avoid forgetting everything.

Where possible, try to include some outdoor time in the garden.



Some children will require their day to be broken down, further, into smaller chunks using 'Now and Next boards'.

Some apps which can be used to support the use of visual timetables include:



Choiceworks



My Own Interactions



FTVS HD

Try a Quarantine Journal or Project:

If any subject is a trigger for your child, or if they are struggling to do “school work” at home, you could suggest the idea of a Quarantine Journal, where they write/type/dictate their thoughts about what is happening in the world, how they feel, stick in photos to show their individual and wonderful views of the world, include pictures of the family, clippings from newspapers, press flower petals, describe what is happening in the garden, etc. Spring is a wonderful season for this, with so many changes going on in nature.



Many children can be coaxed into using their Reading/Writing/Maths skills without even realising it - by researching an area of their own interest. Perhaps this is a good time to start a ‘quarantine project’, where they choose an area or interest to investigate.

Worksheets are OK!

Some children hate the boundless possibilities of “projects” but get a huge amount of satisfaction from worksheets and repetition.



If your child loves worksheets and gets a sense of success and achievement, build these in – maths and grammar worksheets which help children embed concepts they’ll already have been learning at school are great for this. Twinkl and other online providers are allowing free log-ins at this time. You’ll find lots, if you google your child’s key stage or the concept they want to work on, which you can print or even work on, online.

Include Life Skills:

This is a perfect time for children to focus on Life Skills.



Parents and carers could involve children in the following kinds of activities: cooking, washing up, making a cup of tea (with adult support), making beds, laying the table, putting the washing machine on, loading the dishwasher, pairing socks, hanging washing on the line, making shopping lists, washing the car, putting out the bins.

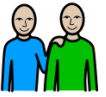
This may also be a time to support your child with learning to tell the time or looking at how to use money.



Clearly, you will need to tailor this to the age and ability of your child but this is a great time to support and promote independence.

Include Social Skills:

There may be some time over the coming weeks and months to focus your child’s attention onto Social Skills. As we know, many children with ASD can struggle to understand emotions. They may have some emotional vocabulary such as happy, sad and angry; but this might be a good time to try and extend this to other feelings. The website below has a free game which can support this. <https://do2learn.com/games/feelingsgame/index.htm>



Board games, and games such as “Guess Who” or “Happy Families” are also a great way of supporting with learning how to wait, turn-take, find appropriate language, and how to deal with winning and losing.



Timers:

You may find your child is struggling to move from one activity to another. A timer gives children a visual sign that the activity is only meant to last for a set amount of time. This is motivating if the child does not want to do the task as it means they can see that the task is not going to go on forever. A timer also allows the child to see when it is nearly time to move on to the next activity. They also help children learn the concept of time. You can use kitchen timers, phone timers, sand timers or timers on your watch.



Include plenty of brain breaks and choosing time between tasks if these are motivating to your child.

Time:

A lot of children with ASD struggle to concentrate and/or have weak working memories. This means that it is often better to chunk tasks into small manageable blocks. Some children can only concentrate for several minutes at a time. Brain breaks (where children have some exercise) e.g. 3 laps of the garden, 50 jumps on the trampoline, help to break up tasks and can often extend the total amount of time the child will spend on a task.



Wherever possible, link to your child’s own interests:

This is the idea of child-led learning. Anxiety can cause a need to control. And, as with any project, your child is more likely to engage in a task if you can link to their interests. For example, dinosaurs can be used to teach counting and colours, or as a hook for a History/Science/Geography project.



Build in choice:

Anxiety and feeling out of control can be helped by offering choice, where children are allowed to feel they have some control over their lives or routines. Therefore, where appropriate, offer choice. Not too many choices, as this can be overwhelming, but giving your child a choice as to whether they would rather do Maths or English first, may be enough to reduce anxiety, feel empowered and in control, and motivate them to do one of the tasks.

