

Promoting Independence at Home

Getting through a daily schedule can be a challenge, and having a child with ASD provides additional and often times unique challenges! Below you will find some helpful tips to help promote greater levels of independence at home.

Provide Structure- Your child with ASD will be more successful and independent at home if you provide a more predictable, structured home life.

- Use visuals: Use a computer program, personal photographs, magazine images, or pictures of different parts of your child's day. This can help your son or daughter become more independent.
 - *Visual schedules* come in lots of formats: Monthly (in the form of individual calendars), weekly, daily, and mini schedules (ex. Going to the bathroom, morning routine, preparing to eat) help organize your son or daughter's day and make it easier to see what is coming next!
 - *Provide choice* within a daily schedule. For example, use pictures to show choices in clothing to wear, what program to watch on TV, and what will be for dinner. At first, limit choices to two or three.
 - *Label or color code* where personal possessions go (ex. red hamper holds dirty clothes and green hold clean clothes, orange shelf for books/purple for DVD's/yellow for games).
- Establish clear routines and expectations for activities and transitions.
 - *Prepare your child for upcoming change.* For example: Tell your son or daughter "In 5 minutes we are going to be finished with TV and go to the grocery store". Each person needs a different amount of time to prepare for change! For some children, providing a visual aid ahead of time may also assist them with transition (ex. Timer).
 - *Teach and use items to signal when an activity will be completed* (timers, clocks, etc). Some people with ASD have a difficult time understanding how quickly time passes. Using timers or clocks may help the person with ASD predict when their activity will be complete.
 - *Individual work areas/systems* create an organized space that helps your child to focus on what they are doing.

Teach Daily Living Skills At Home- You are your child's first teacher. You have the opportunity to increase your child's ultimate level of independence by teaching daily living skills! It's never too early to begin. Here are some strategies that can be easily implemented at home:

- *Social Stories* describe specific situations and tell your son or daughter "what to do" in those situations. The child reads the story before the situation comes up. The child can read the story as many times as necessary. Sometimes, parents add visual supports, or read the story to their son or daughter.
- *Video Modeling* can be used to teach many skills. Before your son or daughter performs a skill, you show a video of their peers or themselves doing the skill correctly. You show the video to your son or daughter before they are supposed to perform the skill, each time until they are able to do the skill on their own.
- *Self-monitoring* is often used with older (mid-to-late elementary school) students. Your son or daughter can assess their performance on a task and then reinforce himself or herself based on whether they did what they were supposed to.

For more information, please visit:

www.autisminternetmodules.org

Create an account for free to access online modules on how to support your son or daughter with ASD in the home, community, and at school using many of the strategies discussed on this tip sheet.

<http://www.tinsnips.org/Pages/makeandtake.html>

This website provides links to PDF's with visuals for a variety of activities

<http://teachersandfamilies.com/open/backpack.html>

Tips for creating a routine for your child to follow during loading, worktime, and reloading their backpack at various grade levels.

<http://www.thegraycenter.org/social-stories>

A website created and dedicated to informing the public about social stories and explaining the steps for creation.