

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Strategies for Educators, Employers, and Parents of Individuals with Symptoms

Special adaptations to teaching, supervising, and parenting can create spaces in which individuals with symptoms of ASD thrive. Set forth in the table below, they apply principles such as structure, predictability, moderation, and concreteness to learning, working and living. Adults with symptoms may also benefit from including these strategies in self-care.

Symptom	Adaptation
Sensitivity to Sensory Stimuli	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designate quiet spaces or "sensory corners"• Avoid bright lighting sources• Minimize visual clutter• Provide flexible seating options to accommodate sensory needs
Unusual Social Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporate stories involving social interactions to identify positive social skills• Communicate expectations about social behaviors• Model appropriate social behaviors• Use software applications to develop social skills
Difficulty Regulating Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderate exposure to new stimuli• Provide periodic outlets for self-expression (e.g., opportunities to offer viewpoint, or to ask and/or answer questions)• Supply/allow "fidget" tools that ease anxiety
Repetitive Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporate hands-on activities into learning and work• Allow breaks for movement
Interference with Executive Functions (planning, organizing, and problem solving)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish daily routines• Post/display daily schedule• Present projects in smaller, more manageable stages or units (discrete "trials")
Challenges with Abstract Reasoning (mathematics, science, literature)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illustrate concepts using concrete objects and observable events
Difficulty Concentrating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimize visual clutter• Supply noise-cancelling headphones to reduce auditory distractions
Delayed Language Development (speech, articulation, vocabulary, grammar)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate with short, well-articulated sentences and simple vocabulary• Repeat oral instructions and other prompts (e.g., questions about subject matter)• Provide a visual display of instructions or prompts for reference• Model correct use of grammar