



STRATEGIES TO ASSIST WITH BEHAVIOUR

Routines

Students with ASD 'rely on the predictability of routines and the preservation of physical order to deal with an otherwise too-unpredictable world'.¹ Routines help to keep stress and anxiety levels to a minimum. However, it is important that classroom routines aren't too rigid, as students need to learn how to accept and manage change.² Begin by putting small changes into familiar routines; for example, have the students select their new library books before the shared story rather than afterwards. When introducing a new routine or changing a familiar routine, give the student ample warning of the change and time to process and adapt to the change.³ This may take time; aim for progress, not perfection.

Timetables and visual cues (see page 71)

Give the student a weekly or daily timetable to increase the predictability of classroom events. A sequence of photos or COMPICs⁴ shows the student what is planned and allows him to check what's next. Young children, and those with more significant intellectual disabilities, may need to have smaller segments of the timetable presented at one time; the timetable might show just the morning session. Older, more able students may be able to comprehend and remember their timetable for the whole week; include the weekend for these students. All students with ASD should have their timetable where they can see and refer to it; use Velcro® strips to attach it to the desk.

M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	Su

If the student has problems with class rules such as not calling out, teach the desired behaviour sequentially and with visual cues. The behaviour 'Put your hand up, wait until I say "Tom", then talk' can be presented as a written list or as a photo of a raised hand; tape this visual cue on the student's desk.

¹(Schuler, 1995, 27) ²(Grandin, 1995) ³(Janzen, 1996) ⁴(Spastic Assoc of Vic, 1998)