

Classroom Modifications for Students with Autism

For the student is having trouble **STARTING** work:

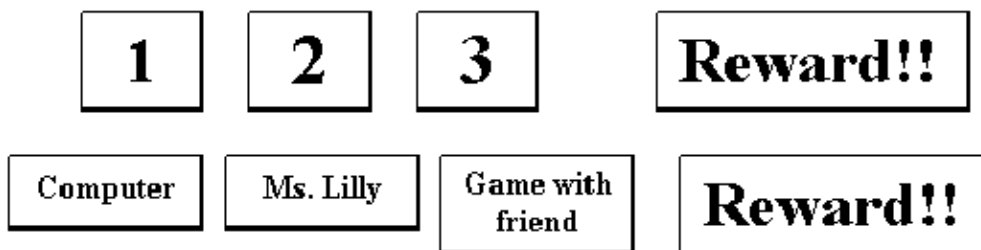
- Use a timer to show him how much time he has to complete the task.
- Provide a visual that states the beginning steps of the task (i.e., write name on paper, write date on paper, start with #1).
- Provide a visual reminder of the reward and remind him that he has to finish his work first.
- Identify if the work is overwhelming for him and use designated strategies.
- Model the work first, if necessary.

For the student who is **OVERWHELMED** by work:

- Break tasks into smaller pieces. For example, he has to complete half of the math problems, and then take a break before completing the second half.
- Cross out items that he does not have to complete.
- Transfer items that he has to complete to separate piece of paper so he does not even see the whole task.
- Fold paper in half to cover some of the items.
- Offer to share the responsibility. For example, during reading you can read every other page.

For the student who has trouble **COMPLETING** work:

- Provide a visual work/reward system so he is aware of what work has to be completed before he can get his reward. This can be done with pictures or in writing. Example:



- Allow him to choose his reward to make sure that it is motivating at the time.
- Provide a folder that has one pocket labeled "work to do" and one pocket labeled "work completed" so the student can see that the work is decreasing and there is an end in sight.
- Provide a "finish later" folder for students who may be upset about leaving their work before it is completed. This should be used when the student has to transition at a certain time, such as to therapy or specials.
- Provide a written list of work so he can check off as the work is completed.

Other academic supports:

- Highlight or color code the relevant information.
- Reduce auditory and visual distractions. For example, help the student keep his desk clear of clutter.
- Use timers any time the student needs an awareness of time or a warning for when the activity is completed.
- Provide written rules rather than continue to provide verbal prompts.
- Use a dry erase board or post-it note for a quick written instruction.
- THINK VISUAL!!!!!!

Social, Play, and Leisure Supports:

- Use cue cards to remind the student what he can say or ask in social situations.
- Use turn taker cards (my turn/your turn) to help the student take turns with peers.
- Write lots and lots of social stories!!
- Use scripts and role plays to practice social situations.
- Facilitate interactions between your student and his peers during unstructured time.
- Take advantage of the natural environment by pointing out social cues on a daily basis. For example, if another student gets hurt and is crying, point this out to your student saying "Sally is hurt! She is crying because she is sad. What should we say to her?"
- Create any visual supports that may assist during social and leisure situations. For example, rule cards or visuals for board games and outside activities.
- Provide information to the peers about how they can interact with your student.

Sensory supports (always seek OT feedback before using these strategies):

- Use headphones to muffle sounds or with calming music to help keep a student focused.
- Use sensory strategies outlined by OT on consistent basis (i.e., sensory diet or brushing protocol.)
- Provide deep pressure to help calm student (i.e., pressure on shoulders, arms, or hands).
- Take regular movement breaks. Even just a walk in the hall can help a student with restless energy.
- Incorporate heavy work activities into the day. For example, push, pull, or carry activities that are also functional work tasks.
- Allow access to a break area.
- Provide "fiddle" materials when needed to help the student maintain attention during class or to keep his hands busy.
- Allow student to change classes before the bell rings to avoid noisy transition in the hallway.