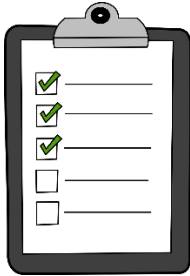


5 Tips for Engaging Students with Autism in Online Learning:



1. Keep things interactive: Allow students control of the screen to play games, turn pages of online texts, and show you examples of their work. Plan opportunities for them make choices (e.g.: which online text to read, whether to type or speak their responses). Consider what everyday items from students' homes can be incorporated into learning (e.g.: find me something green).



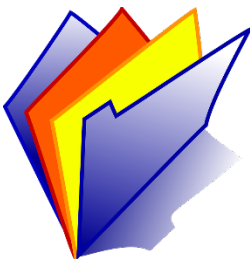
2. Provide predictability and familiarity: Provide students with an overview of the session before you begin (what will you be doing and for how long?) and display a visual schedule on your screen. Where possible, try to recreate some of the familiar routine from their classroom (e.g.: if you started carpet sessions with calendar or a song every day, consider how to continue this during online instruction). If your students use a token board in the classroom, think about how to incorporate one into your online visuals.



3. Encourage parent participation: Reach out to parents where possible to find out what the student has been doing. (What are their greatest achievements? Are they struggling with anything?) This can be incorporated into lesson planning. Discuss appropriate student rewards in advance. Where possible, ask parents to be present to support the use of technology.



4. Focus on praise and encouragement: You may need to exaggerate facial expressions and gestures to convey emotions when teaching online. Remember to speak slowly and keep instructions simple. Consider how to offer students virtual reinforcers (e.g.: online shared games, online coloring, sharing music or movie clips). This could include incorporating a regular character (e.g.: puppet) into your sessions that the students will look forward to interacting with each time.



5. Stay organized: Plan instruction and materials ahead of time to keep things moving smoothly. If you are teaching a group, create a structured opportunity for the students to greet each other at the beginning of the activity and then share expectations for group participation (e.g.: can they call out answers? will they be taking turns?). Keep sessions short and try to end the activity while students are still engaged.