

# Making Modifications, Accommodations and Variations for Student Success

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Complete manual available at [www.jimrodsz.com/sped.html](http://www.jimrodsz.com/sped.html)

## Autism or Autistic-Like Behavior

### Characteristics

Autism is a developmental disability, generally evident before the age of three that adversely affects a student's educational performance and significantly affects developmental rates and sequences, verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction and participation.

### Asperger Syndrome

Asperger syndrome is the term applied to the mildest and highest functioning end of what is known as the spectrum of pervasive developmental disorders (or the Autism spectrum). Like other conditions along that spectrum it is felt to represent a neurologically-based disorder of development, most often of unknown cause, in which there are deviations or abnormalities in three broad aspects of development: social relatedness and social skills, the use of language for communicative purposes, and certain behavioral and stylistic characteristics involving repetitive or perseverative features and a limited but intense range of interests.

**NOTE: Maintaining a CONSISTENT ROUTINE is essential for the autistic student. Failure to do so may result in an increase of inappropriate behavior.**

**NOTE: Interpersonal relations can be difficult for the autistic student and can be an area of conflict with others.**

**NOTE: Monitor student for increased levels of frustration at all times.**

### Recommended Accommodations, Modifications and Variations to the Curriculum:

#### Modifying the presentation

- Use concrete examples of concepts before teaching the abstract.
- Relate information to the student's experiential base.
- Reduce the number of concepts presented at one time.
- Provide consistent review of any lesson before introducing new information.
- Require verbal responses to indicate comprehension.
- Provide clear, concise directions and concrete examples for homework assignments.

#### Modifying the environment

- If necessary, use preferential seating.
- Help keep student's work area free of unnecessary materials.
- Use checklists to help the student get organized.
- Provide opportunities for movement.
- Create a communication book for the parent
- Daily comments home to parent and from parent to teacher can help control behavior issues.
- Provide the student with a transition warning before activities begin.

#### Discussions

- Review discussion rules prior to beginning (i.e. raise hand, advise that blurting out answers is unacceptable, making inappropriate comments to other students is unacceptable).

- Make sure that you have the student's attention before asking a question.
- Frame questions such that they are as concrete as possible.
- Ask questions that can be answered with words or a short phrase.
- During discussion, use speech *literally*.
  - It is imperative to avoid the use of idioms, double meanings, sarcasm, and nicknames.
- Provide student a copy of the discussion questions to show the text in conjunction with the verbal questions.
- Break lengthy questions into several concrete questions.

### Worksheets

- Verify student understands assignment instructions.
  - Use both oral and written instructions
- If necessary, provide an assigned work space that minimizes distractions and provides consistency for the student.
- Provide permanent location for student to place completed work.
- Establish a daily routine for the student
  - Should include the activities anticipated for the class session
- Provide the student with worksheets that are uncluttered and give the student ample room for the answers.
- If necessary highlight or color code spaces for answers.

### Assessments

- Highlight test directions so that the student will focus on them (can be in bold print).
- Highlight main ideas in text or lecture notes to help the student study.
- Provide study guide prior to giving test.
- Minimize use of essay tests. Short answer tests are preferable to essay tests. .
- May be necessary to allow student to move from seat in order to maintain self-control.
- Avoid using timed tests.
- Encourage accuracy rather than speed.
- Allow student to take test using alternate methods instead of written (i.e. orally).

### Projects

- Verify student understands assignment instructions.
  - Use both oral and written instructions
- For oral presentations, allow the student opportunities to practice and role-play.
- Provide samples for student to review.
  - Review the positive and negatives with student so they better understand what is expected of them.
- If necessary, allow student to work with a peer.
- Break project down into multiple steps with each step having a specific completion date.
  - Develop calendar with list of specific due dates and provide to student for self-monitoring
  - Frequent check-ins are important to monitor progress towards completion
- Short, frequent assignments are preferable to long-term projects.
- Frequent reminders of due dates during class are important.
  - Give reminders as to where they should be at this particular point in time so students can gauge their progress.
  - Post due dates in a common location.
- Minimize unstructured activities.
  - Provide alternate assignment
- Give the student and parent a checklist about what is due and when it is due.
- Allow alternate methods of project presentation (i.e. PowerPoint, orally).
- Provide and review grading rubric so student knows how they will be graded.

### Reports

- Verify student understands assignment instructions.
  - Use both oral and written instructions
- For oral presentations, allow the student opportunities to practice and role-play.
- Break report down into multiple steps with each step having a specific completion date.
  - Develop calendar with list of specific due dates and provide to student for self-monitoring
  - Frequent check-ins are important to monitor progress towards completion
- Allow student to use desktop publishing application (i.e. Publisher).
- Provide student an opportunity to use an outlining software application for brainstorming and organization (i.e. Inspiration).
- Allow student to use word processing software (i.e. Word)
  - Allow use of speech-to-text and text-to-speech software.
- Provide sample reports for student to review
- Review specific steps to writing a report
  - Provide an outline of required steps with due dates specified

- Provide and review grading rubric so student knows how they will be graded.

### **Reading**

- Verify student understands assignment instructions.
  - Use both oral and written instructions
- If reading is an area of difficulty, utilize books on tape ([BookShare.org](http://BookShare.org)) or text-to-speech reader to reduce external stimuli.
- Provide reading materials at the student's ability.
- Insure they are age appropriate as well.
- Minimize graphics in reading material for students who are visually distractible.

### **Writing**

- Verify student understands assignment instructions.
  - Use both oral and written instructions
- Use graphic organizers to assist with organization of writing task.
- Allow student to use word processing software (i.e. Word); especially if there is an aversion to writing out assignment.
- Allow use of speech-to-text and text-to-speech software.
- Allow the student to use graph paper instead of lined paper (encourages neatness for some).
- Allow student to use writing instrument of choice (including color).
- If student has motor problems, allow the use of a pencil with rubber grip or a larger sized writing instrument.
- Allow alternate means of completing the assignment.
- Example: allow the student to dictate or record their responses instead of writing.
- If student has motor problems, allow the use of a pencil with rubber grip or a larger sized writing instrument.
- Allow student to use desktop publishing application (i.e. Publisher).
- Provide student an opportunity to use an outlining software application for brainstorming and organization of thoughts for writing (i.e. Inspiration).
- Provide samples for student to review.
- Review positive and negative aspects of the writing with the student so they have a better understanding of expectations.
- Review steps specific to the type of writing you are expecting the student to accomplish.
- Provide an outline of required steps.
- Provide and review grading rubric so student knows how they will be graded.

### **Group Work**

- Allow the student to participate in groups that will insure success.
  - Small groups are preferable to large.
  - Help establish group rules and process for project completion.
  - Do not move student from group to group because of group conflicts.
  - If student becomes frustrated or aggressive, allow for a time out to regain composure.
- Continually monitor group progress to insure student is participating and no conflicts are arising.
- When necessary, prepare the group members to include and help the student.

### **Note Taking**

- If motor difficulties are involved or it is a day of high frustration, allow peer to take notes using carbonless paper.
- Provide slotted note guide so student can fill in the blanks and concentrate on the lecture or discussion.
- Provide student with a copy of the notes from the overhead (or allow student to copy the notes when you have finished each sheet).
- Provide printed copy of notes.
  - Have student highlight key points on printed copy of notes rather than copying or recording lecture notes.
- Provide student with an outline of key points prior to the lecture.

### **Presentations**

- Verify student understands assignment instructions.
  - Use both oral and written instructions
- Utilize visual aids to provide cues for student during the presentation (i.e. sign showing which part they should present next).
- Teach presentation techniques.
  - Model what you want the student to do during the presentation.
- Develop a detailed presentation checklist for student to follow and insure all aspects of the presentation are completed.
- Allow student to use alternative methods for presentation.
  - PowerPoint, visual presentation, videotaped presentation, graphs, maps, pictures, etc.
- Break presentation into smaller segments, each with specific due dates for self-monitoring.
  - Frequently monitor progress towards completion.
  - Allow presentation to be delivered in small chunks to help with anxiety.

### **Other Information for Autism spectrum**

- Provide pre-teaching experience on vocabulary and practice the activities in the sequence prior to the lesson in class.
- Provide a supportive peer assistant of the same gender to work together on the activities.
- Slow the pace of activities to allow for student's participation.
- If necessary, allow a teacher associate to assist with and/or conduct activities with the student.
- Review the routines ahead of time and provide a consistent structure and organization.
- Seat the student in close proximity to the teacher.
- Allow for non-competitive participation.
- Present multi-modality lessons so the student can receive the information visually or tactually.
- Allow for extra time outside of the school day to allow the student to practice in a quiet, non-distracting environment.
- Provide an area and opportunity for quiet.
- Establish a walking area to allow physical release in a quiet and safe area.
- Provide consistent structure and organization.
- Label areas for specific activities and consider color coding as a means of categorization.
- Establish a seating arrangement in cooperation with the student, maintain consistency.
- Provide digital rather than face clocks whenever possible.
- Provide a physical outlet such as a "squeeze ball" to enable a longer seating period for the student.
- Routines should be consistent and clear.
- Work with guardians and try to establish consistency between school and home—think ahead about fire drills, natural disaster drills, etc., plan a consistent routine for the student and a peer helper.
- Communicate with teacher associates in advance; whenever possible another adult familiar with the child should be in the classroom to help.
- Establish consistency and some form or advanced organizer to help student become attentive to transitions, i.e. cues, signal, music, lights