

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

STRATEGIES FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

Children with autism spectrum disorder and other learning disabilities, such as ADHD, perform better, both academically and socially, if the environment is set up to accommodate their needs. The strategies below can assist with a more conducive environment during Distance Learning at home.

USE OF COMPUTER BASED PROGRAMS

The use of computer-based programs can help to hold the interest of students with autism. We have access to many different programs at Vassiliadis including ST Math, iStation, Prodigy, Math Accelerator, to name a few that can assist to keep students engaged in learning.

WORKSPACE

Create an area conducive for learning. Children benefit from having a space to learn, especially children with autism. Children with ADHD are easily distracted, so being seated facing an adult in close proximity while working works best. Children with special needs are easily distracted, so keep their learning work space away from the windows, doors and distractions in the home.

EXPECTATIONS, LIMITS & RULES

Post rules for your child and review them regularly. Ask your child to take turns reading the rules aloud as part of the daily routine. Make sure they understand your rules and the consequences for not adhering to them. It may be helpful to your child to assist in formulating the rules.

HAVE A PREDICTABLE SCHEDULE

Children, especially children with autism tend to prefer predictable routines. Give advance warning if the daily schedule is going to change. Unexpected changes in the routine can be difficult for the child with autism.

REINFORCE DESIRED SOCIAL SKILLS

Desired social skills such as hand raising, taking turns and sharing as part of the strong learning curriculum. All students will benefit when reminders are given.

PROVIDE BREAKS

Read a story, play a short game, stand up and stretch, or have casual conversation. Sometimes an opportunity to get out of their seat and walk around the room can be very calming for the child on the autism spectrum. Try to be aware of the signs that your child may need a short break. If a student with ADHD seems unusually fidgety or distracted, allow him or her to take a brain break. This one to three-minute movement break allows students to expel pent up energy or anxiety.

FOCUS ON YOUR CHILD'S STRENGTHS

If a child is interested in dinosaurs, baseball, dogs or water sports, he needs the opportunity to exhibit his expertise in that subject. Be sure to discuss these interests with them or use the discussions as a perk.

BE AWARE OF ENVIRONMENTAL TRIGGERS

Loud noises, bright lights, and hot or cold temperatures can disrupt a child's thinking pattern and cause behaviors to intensify. Be mindful of these environmental triggers and eliminate them whenever possible.

FOR CHILDREN WITH ADHD

Consider what is and is not within your child's control before issuing a punishment or redirection. A child with ADHD is often impulsive and unaware of his or her own outbursts or comments. There is a difference between a child who is disruptive and a child with attention issues who is not intentionally troublesome. Therefore, the behavior techniques for an interruption must fit the circumstances. Instead of jumping on the outburst immediately, as in the case of a disruptive child, give the child a silent cue to remind him or her of appropriate behavior.