

## Coping with COVID-19

# Remote Learning for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder



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The spread of the novel coronavirus has resulted in unprecedented changes to the daily lives of children and families. We realize these changes may be particularly challenging for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), who tend to thrive on consistency, structure, and routine. Many learners with ASD may face challenges related to comprehension, communication, difficulty understanding abstract language, an insistence on sameness, and a greater likelihood of anxiety and depression - all of which may be exacerbated during this stressful time. Many also require specially designed instruction to support their educational needs and daily functioning. As such, the Autism Training and Technical Assistance Project at Illinois State University has compiled autism-specific resources for individuals with ASD and their families as they navigate remote learning. It is our hope these resources can help provide ideas and support families as they develop new routines within their homes.

The following support strategies are designed to meet the unique needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorder during this period of uncertainty. In addition, examples and ready-made resources are included to help caregivers implement these strategies quickly and easily. Links are provided for downloading as well as multiple file-formats (when possible) for manipulation.

These materials represent a variety of examples to model the range of what may be most meaningful across ages and skills. Specific adaptations and additions may be necessary to best meet the varied needs of individual children and young adults.

These strategies are a resource of ideas to help families and caregivers through these unpredictable days and help make remote learning easier. While it might take some time and effort, YOU know your child best. Families and caregivers absolutely have the ability to not only provide a supportive and safe environment but have fun while doing it!

As you consider these resources, initially only choose 1 or 2 strategies to try. It may be easiest to start with a strategy that has been used in the past or find a support strategy to address an issue that is creating the most immediate stress. After a few days or weeks, consider adding another strategy. Don't overwhelm yourself or your child- we don't want to add stress by putting too much in place too quickly. Consider involving the individual with autism in the decision-making process about what strategy would be most helpful.



Support Understanding



Support Behavior



Offer Opportunities for Expressive Communication



Socialize Remotely



Establish a Daily Schedule and Create Routines



Tips for Remote Learning



Identify a Location for Remote Learning



Additional Resources



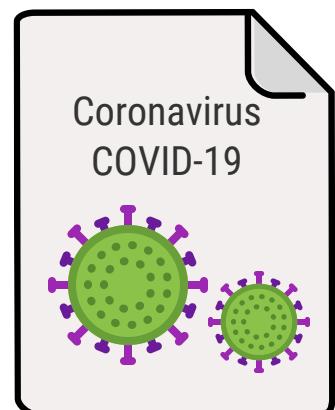
## Support Understanding

Individuals with autism may have varying levels of understanding about the COVID-19 virus, how it spreads, and how to reduce risk of exposure. Below are several strategies to use to provide additional meaning to this complex scenario.

### Describe the coronavirus and current situation

Use concrete language and terms and avoid abstract phrasing. The understanding of abstract phrases and metaphors such as “she is under the weather”, “she caught the virus”, and “he is scared stiff about this” can be difficult for individuals with autism and can create confusion (Lipsky, 2013). Using direct and clear language is recommended. Phrases like “The coronavirus is a type of germ. These germs are very tiny, and when they get inside your body, they can make you sick” may be easier for individuals with autism to understand.

Use a *social narrative*, a story that describes social situations by providing relevant cues, explanations of the feelings and thoughts of others, and descriptions of appropriate behavior. Individuals on the autism spectrum benefit from receiving information in multiple formats, as they often have receptive language deficits. Several examples of social narratives have been developed to give individuals more information about COVID-19, help them understand how to reduce risk, provide insight into how they may be feeling, and offer assurance that those feelings are normal. Reading the narratives to/with the individual with autism regularly across several days is helpful. Revisit often and modify as needed.



### Resources to Support Understanding

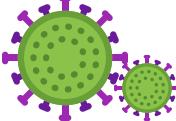
#### Social Narrative Resources:

[How to Write Social Stories by Vanderbilt Kennedy Center](#)  
[Make a Social Story Fact Sheet](#)



# Support Understanding

## Social Narrative Example



### What is the Coronavirus?



The coronavirus is a new virus. Sometimes people call it COVID-19.

A virus can make people sick. When someone has the coronavirus, they may have a bad cough, have a fever, and may have diarrhea. Just because someone is sick doesn't mean they have the coronavirus. There are other viruses that make people sick. The cold and flu are caused by a virus.



If someone has the coronavirus they will have to stay away from other people. They will stay home and rest. They don't want to spread the coronavirus and get other people sick.



To protect myself, I will wash my hands. I will put soap on my hands and scrub my palms, the back of my hands, my fingers and count to 20.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 ,20



When I am done counting to 20, I can rinse the soap off with water and dry my hands. I can use hand sanitizer if I can't wash my hands. I will be washing my hands a lot to keep germs away. I also will keep my hands away from my face. If I have to touch my face, I will remember to wash my hands first. I don't want to get germs on my face. I won't touch my nose or my eyes unless I have just washed my hands. And then, I will wash my hands again.



6 feet apart



I also need to stay away from other people. It's okay to be near people that I live with, but I can't see friends right now. I can't see friends because I want to protect myself and not pass germs to my friends. If I do see another person, I will stay 6 feet away.

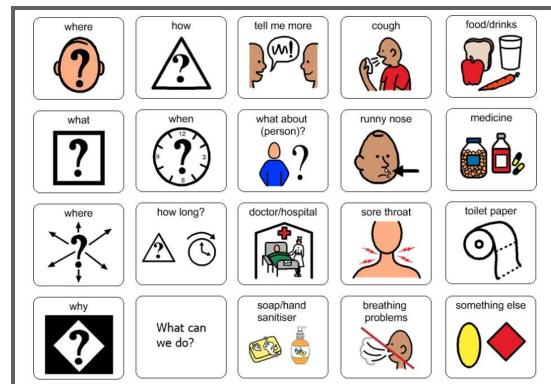


## Offer Opportunities for Expressive Communication

Children and young adults may have difficulty articulating how they feel about the many unexpected changes. Fear, frustration, and worry may be expressed through challenging behavior like tantrums, refusing to take part in family activities, or withdrawal. For individuals with ASD, communication difficulties may be coupled with expressive communication delays, limited verbal or nonverbal skills, difficulty with perspective-taking, and/or social communication deficits.

### Consider providing expressive communication supports

When stress and anxiety levels increase, many individuals with ASD who use verbal language may lose the ability to access their words and, instead use their behavior to communicate. Recognize that an increase in challenging behaviors may be an expression of anxiety or fear. Consider asking your child's teacher about the strategies implemented in the classroom that support expressive communication. There are many communication support strategies that can help when there may be a breakdown in expression.



### Promote social communication

Promote social communication and personal independence. Try to set up highly preferred activities in hard-to-reach places, in clear containers with labels that have words or pictures identifying what they are. This encourages children to intentionally communicate their wants. At the same time, if you want your child to continue practicing skills (for example, making own snack), increase easy access by leaving materials within easy reach or setting up clear labels and stations for them.

### Resources to Offer Opportunities for Expressive Communication



## Offer Opportunities for Expressive Communication

### Ways to support expressive communication

**Have you heard about me?**

YES  NO

Check to see how your child feels when they hear about the coronavirus.

And how do you feel when you hear my name?

Relaxed Confused Worried

Curious Nervous Scared

**I can understand you feel...**

Draw it here

...I would feel the same way

This section contains a worksheet titled "Have you heard about me?". It features two options: "YES" and "NO", each with a checkbox. A line connects the "NO" option to a text box containing the question "And how do you feel when you hear my name?". Below this are six emotion icons: Relaxed (smiling), Confused (neutral), Worried (frowny), Curious (neutral), Nervous (frowny), and Scared (frowny). To the right is a large outline of a child's head with a small coronavirus character holding a paint palette and pointing to the head, with the text "Draw it here" nearby. At the bottom is the statement "...I would feel the same way".

What do I want to eat?

Choice board to help communicate food selection.

The choice board consists of a central question "What do I want to eat?" above eight food icons arranged in a grid. The icons are: a person silhouette, an apple, a taco, a strawberry, a pretzel, a banana, a slice of cheese, a bunch of grapes, and a slice of bread.



## Establish a Daily Schedule and Create Routines

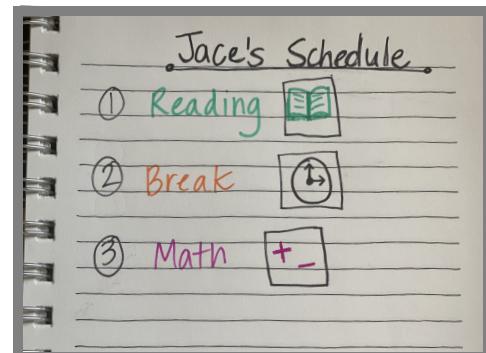
It is helpful for all children and adults to establish a new routine with a defined schedule and structure for the day. A daily schedule organizes the child's environment and creates predictability. For individuals with ASD, change, transitions, and new routines might be hard. Creating a schedule will allow the individual to see what is coming next throughout the day and may help to lessen some challenging behaviors that may emerge due to a lack of routine.

| ELLA'S Daily SCHEDULE |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 8:00                  | Morning Routine      |
| 8:30                  | Free Play            |
| 9:00                  | Learning Activities  |
| 10:30                 | Snack & Germ Busters |
| 11:00                 | Crafts or Journal    |
| 11:30                 | Movement Activities  |
| 12:00                 | Lunch                |
| 12:30                 | Outdoor Activities   |
| 1:30                  | Read                 |
| 2:00                  | Learning Activities  |
| 3:00                  | Optional Choice      |
| 4:00                  | Games and Puzzle     |
| 4:30                  | Free Play            |

Putting in place a new schedule, particularly when things are quickly changing, means things won't be perfect, and that is okay! Schedules don't need to be fancy, laminated or have velcro. Use a format that works for your child. Some students use picture schedules or written schedules. Use a schedule that is best for your child. The most important thing is to develop a clear structure and routine that can be easily understood. Post the schedule on the wall, place it on a table where work is completed, or in another easy-to-access place and let it guide the day.

### Consider creating a schedule

Develop a modified version of the child's typical school routine that is adapted to the home environment. Start with the first class or subject and structure an at-home 'remote learning day' routine that follows the order of the child's typical school day. This is also dependent on each child.



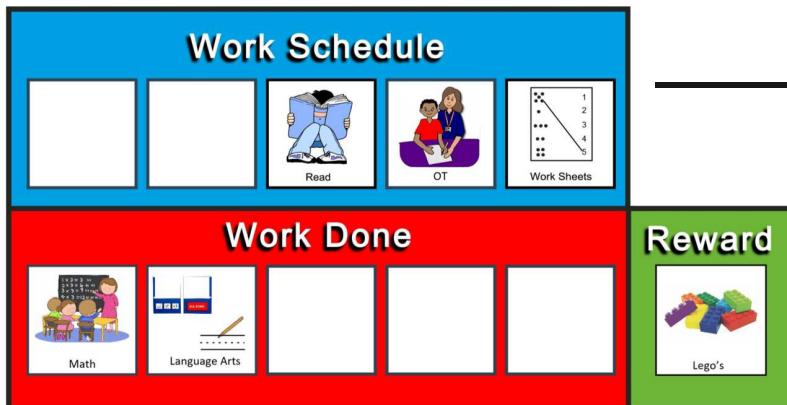
When developing the schedule, list the activity or the expectation. Be sure to balance structured activities with fun things to do, hard tasks followed by easier and more enjoyable activities. Be sure to go over the schedule each morning and review it during the day to show what is coming next. As activities pass, provide an opportunity to check off completed activities and tasks. And, don't forget; it will take time to get used to the new schedule!

| Time           | Task                                    |
|----------------|---|
| 8 a.m.         | Wake Up                                 |
| 8-8:30 a.m.    | Read                                    |
| 8:30-9 a.m.    | Make Coffee and Set Up Work             |
| 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | Work                                    |
| 12-12:30 p.m.  | Lunch and Do One Small Cleaning Project |
| 12:30-4 p.m.   | Work                                    |
| 4-5:30 p.m.    | BREAK TIME! Fun Stuff Only              |
| 5:30-6:30 p.m. | Work Out                                |
| 6:30-7:30 p.m. | Home Projects                           |
| 7:30-8:30 p.m. | One to Two Cleaning Projects            |
| 8:30-10 p.m.   | Relaxation Time                         |
| 10-11 p.m.     | Read                                    |
| 11 p.m.        | Sleep                                   |



# Establish a Daily Schedule and Create Routines

## Example Schedules



Work schedule outlining activities to be completed on top row. When task is completed, child pulls off icon and puts in Work Done. Reward earned when all tasks are completed.

| School Work   |   |  |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Monday  | Tuesday   | Wednesday  | Thursday   | Friday   |
| Math<br><input type="checkbox"/> Math book or sheets  | Math<br><input type="checkbox"/> Math book or sheets  | Math<br><input type="checkbox"/> Math book or sheets   | Math<br><input type="checkbox"/> Math book or sheets   | Math<br><input type="checkbox"/> Math book or sheets   |
| Reading<br><input type="checkbox"/> Comprehension book<br><input type="checkbox"/> Sylvan Workbook<br><input type="checkbox"/> Kumon Reading (3)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Spelling | Reading<br><input type="checkbox"/> Phonics Workbook<br><input type="checkbox"/> Kumon Writing (2)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Word Study & Phonics<br><input type="checkbox"/> Kumon Sentences | Reading<br><input type="checkbox"/> Comprehension book<br><input type="checkbox"/> Sylvan Workbook<br><input type="checkbox"/> Kumon Reading (3) | Reading<br><input type="checkbox"/> Word Study & Phonics<br><input type="checkbox"/> Spelling<br><input type="checkbox"/> Kumon Writing (2)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Phonics Workbook | Reading<br><input type="checkbox"/> Comprehension book<br><input type="checkbox"/> Sylvan Workbook<br><input type="checkbox"/> Kumon Sentences<br><input type="checkbox"/> Kumon Reading (3) |
| Exercise<br><input type="checkbox"/>  | Exercise<br><input type="checkbox"/>  | Exercise<br><input type="checkbox"/>   | Exercise<br><input type="checkbox"/>   | Exercise<br><input type="checkbox"/>   |
| Science<br><input type="checkbox"/> Workbook (DK)   | Science<br><input type="checkbox"/> Human Body Book   | Science<br><input type="checkbox"/> Workbook (DK)  | Science<br><input type="checkbox"/> Human Body Book  | Science<br><input type="checkbox"/> Workbook (DK)  |
| Life Skill<br><input type="checkbox"/> Art Workbook<br><input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving Book<br><input type="checkbox"/> Chores   | Life Skill<br><input type="checkbox"/> Art Workbook<br><input type="checkbox"/> Chores  | Life Skill<br><input type="checkbox"/> Art Workbook<br><input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving Book<br><input type="checkbox"/> Chores          | Life Skill<br><input type="checkbox"/> Art Workbook<br><input type="checkbox"/> Chores   | Life Skill<br><input type="checkbox"/> Art Workbook<br><input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving Book<br><input type="checkbox"/> Chores  |
| Leisure<br><input type="checkbox"/> Choice  | Leisure<br><input type="checkbox"/> Choice  | Leisure<br><input type="checkbox"/> Choice   | Leisure<br><input type="checkbox"/> Choice   | Leisure<br><input type="checkbox"/> Choice   |

Choices:  Read for 20 minutes    Board Game    Card Game    Arts/Crafts

Weekly Schedule outlining remote learning. Check off when activity is finished.



Written daily schedule with hand drawing and posted on fridge.



# Establish a Daily Schedule and Create Routines

## Example Schedules



First Then Visual  
Schedule HD iPad App.

Written remote  
learning schedule  
on dry erase  
board.

| Wednesday  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> calendar                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Email    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8:45 - 9:15 - Language Arts      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> check in |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 9:15 - 9:25 - Break              |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 9:30 - 10:00 - Health            |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 10:00 - 10:10 Break              |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 10:15 - 10:45 Band               |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 10:45 - 10:55 Break              |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11:00 - 11:30 Lit comp           |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11:30 - 12:30 Lunch              |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12:30 - 1:00 Art                 |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1:00 - 1:30 Coach Wood           |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1:30 - 2:00 Science              |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2:00 - 2:30 OT (type) and choice |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2:30 - 3:30 - Dinner prep        |  |
| PLAY VIDEO Games   |  |
| 3:30 - 4:00  |  |

| TYCE'S Daily SCHEDULE |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 8:00                  | Morning Routine      |
| 8:30                  | Free Play            |
| 9:00                  | Learning Activities  |
| 10:30                 | Snack & Germ Busters |
| 11:00                 | Crafts or Journal    |
| 11:30                 | Movement Activities  |
| 12:00                 | Lunch                |
| 12:30                 | Outdoor Activities   |
| 1:30                  | Read                 |
| 2:00                  | Learning Activities  |
| 3:00                  | Optional Choice      |
| 4:00                  | Games and Puzzle     |
| 4:30                  | Free Play            |

Written remote  
learning schedule,  
check-off when  
activity is done.



## Establish a Daily Schedule and Create Routines

### Tips for keeping a regular routine

With being home each day, it could be easy to stop keeping a regular schedule or throw off normal sleep habits and eating times. Do your best to keep your day as similar to usual as possible. Consider keeping the same morning and evening routines, the same lunchtime, and include breaks. The schedule will help create new routines. Routines can provide increased comfort for individuals with autism and teach independence.

### Build in time for physical activity

Incorporate physical activity breaks, including fine and gross motor activities to encourage both physical and mental well-being. You can also use this time for family connection by doing activities outside together – choose an activity your child enjoys or try an at-home workout (search YouTube for family-friendly workouts and yoga classes). Schedule and plan these breaks and model a habit of regular daily physical activity.

### Add household chores to the schedule

Schedule time for cleaning and housework. Chores are a great way to encourage progress in daily living skills. This may be an opportunity to take advantage of extra time at home together, where you can demonstrate and teach more independent living skills and offer abundant praise and reinforcement for successes.

### Create a weekly calendar

When everyone is home indefinitely, understanding more concretely days that are “learning” days rather than “family” days can help decrease anxiety and give children a sense of order. Maintaining a regular schedule during the closure will also make it easier for your child to transition back to school when it re-opens.

### Be patient and realistic

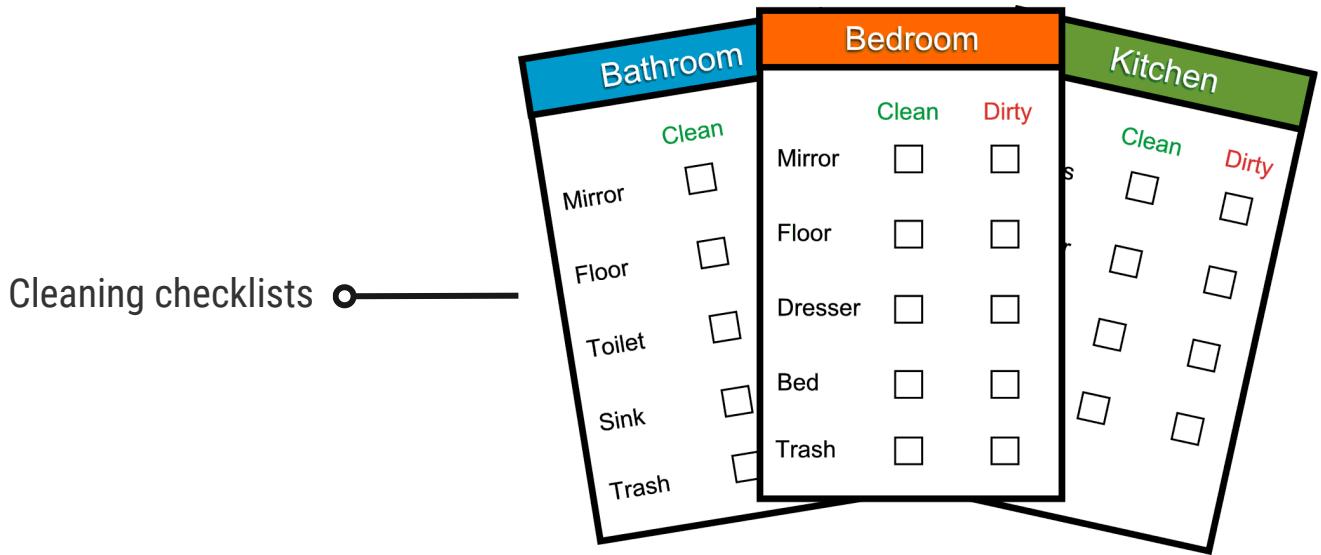
Start small, with more ‘loose’ structure, if that feels less overwhelming. Involve your children in planning for their learning and creation of the schedule when possible. And, remember to schedule breaks – for everyone – throughout your day.





# Establish a Daily Schedule and Create Routines

## Example Visuals



Monthly calendar  
indicating No  
School, Remote  
Learning at home

| APRIL 2020                            |  |  |  |   |  |                                       |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| SUNDAY                                | MONDAY   | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY  | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY   | SATURDAY                              |
|                                       |  |  | 7<br>No School or<br>remote learning             | 8<br>Remote Learning<br>at home                 | 9<br>No School or<br>remote learning             | 10<br>Remote Learning<br>at home      |
| 5<br>No School or<br>remote learning  | 6<br>No School or<br>Remote Learning<br>at home  | 7<br>No School or<br>Remote Learning<br>at home  | 8<br>No School or<br>Remote Learning<br>at home  | 9<br>No School or<br>Remote Learning<br>at home | 10<br>No School or<br>Remote Learning<br>at home | 11<br>No School or<br>remote learning |
| 12<br>No School or<br>remote learning | 13<br>No School or<br>Remote Learning<br>at home | 14<br>No School or<br>Remote Learning<br>at home | 15<br>No School or<br>Remote Learning<br>at home | 16<br>No School                                 | 17<br>No School                                  | 18<br>No School or<br>remote learning |
| 19<br>No School or<br>remote learning | 20<br>No School<br>Remote Learning<br>at home    | 21<br>No School<br>Remote Learning<br>at home    | 22<br>No School<br>Remote Learning<br>at home    | 23<br>No School<br>Remote Learning<br>at home   | 24<br>No School<br>Remote Learning<br>at home    | 25<br>No School or<br>remote learning |
| 26<br>No School or<br>remote learning | 27<br>No School<br>Remote Learning<br>at home    | 28<br>No School<br>Remote Learning<br>at home    | 29<br>No School<br>Remote Learning<br>at home    | 30<br>No School<br>Remote Learning<br>at home   |  |                                       |

• Remote learning for April

No School in April. Remote learning at home.

Resources to Establish a Daily Schedule and Create Routines



## Identify a Location for Remote Learning

In addition to creating and using a schedule, try fostering an environment that allows for engagement in specific activities.

### Consider the environmental arrangement

Design specific areas where activities and remote learning will take place. This will help define what activities take place in which location. It might be helpful to label the area and materials so there is an understanding of what activities will occur in each location. Labeling provides another way to add structure and routine to the area. Set aside parts of your living space where academics can occur and a different space for recreation activities.



For some learners, it might help to keep their schoolwork in their backpack and keep it in the area designated for remote learning. If your child has strong tactile sensory interests, keep a few sensory toys that they can interact with in a specific area. This way, you can make sure that these toys are regularly sanitized, and you can teach your child how to regulate sensory needs.

[Resources to Identify a Location for Remote Learning](#)



## Support Behavior

Behavior is a form of communication. Some individuals with ASD may not be able to verbally express their fear, frustration, and anxiety about the many changes and/or their health, so these expressions may be demonstrated through other means. Research shows that during times of high anxiety, our ability to use spoken language to reason is reduced. Providing access to visual supports can help a student learn to self-regulate during a difficult time. Even individuals who use spoken language might engage in challenging behavior when their stress and anxiety levels increase. It's important to look beyond the behavior to identify what the child is trying to tell you.

### Ways to support behavior during remote learning

Provide positive reinforcement



Identify multiple rewards and provide positive reinforcement for good and appropriate behavior. Use behavior specific praise.

Respond calmly if challenging behavior occurs



If your child is engaged in challenging behavior, it is important to stay calm. If you express anger or frustration, it may result in more challenging behavior from the child. Remaining calm will provide the safety and support as the child learns to calm themselves.

Select a strategy that can help prevent challenging behavior



Some examples include Rule Cards, Choice Boards, First-Then, Social Narratives, I'm Working For board, a timer, and positive reinforcement.

Help the child understand their emotions and teach them to self-calm



Self-regulation is the ability to manage emotions and behavior in accordance with the demands of the situation. It's important to teach the child the coping skills they need to learn to calm. Model coping skills and positive self-talk.



### Reinforcement and Motivation

Asking your child to do schoolwork at home can be challenging. It helps to have something to motivate the child to get their work done. You can do this by arranging the child's schedule so that remote learning tasks come before the fun activities (for example, "First schoolwork, then outside play"). You can also set up an incentive system for your child to work to earn something. As adults, we work for a paycheck and that paycheck is our reinforcer. Give your child the same opportunity to work for something they want. Here are ideas on how to use reinforcement at home:

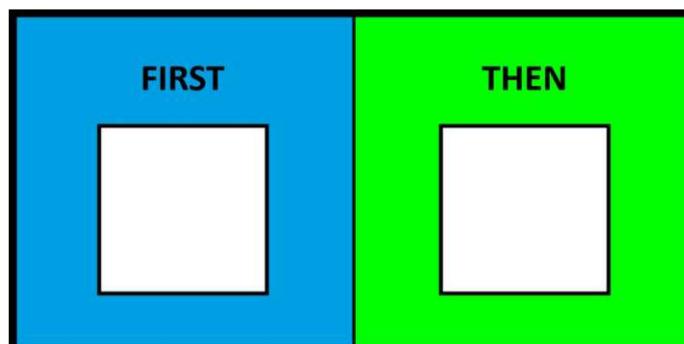
#### **Identify many reinforcers based on child's preferences**

*Identify reinforcement and offer rewards:* Make sure you have reinforcers your child wants to work for and have enough of the reinforcers to last through the upcoming weeks. For example, if your child likes building legos, allow them to work for a few minutes and then have time to play legos. It's helpful to use a timer. A kitchen timer or set an alarm on your phone works great. Most children like a visual time so they can see how much time remains.

*Timing:* When the child has finished remote learning tasks, give the reinforcer right away. You want to immediately reinforce because if the child has to wait for it, they will be less likely to do their work next time. You may also want to consider increasing how often the reinforcer is delivered throughout the day to increase the behaviors you want to see more.

**Reinforcement  
should be  
IMMEDIATE**

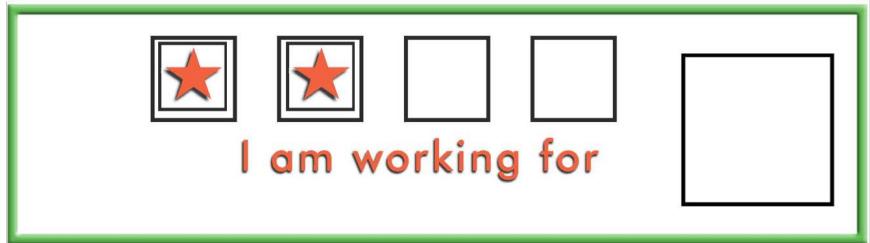
*First-Then:* A first-then board shows the student what they need to do first and then, what they will do next. Usually, the first activity is work and the second activity is something the child wants to do. This follows the Premack principle, where first you have to do something in order to get something. The child learns (pretty quickly) when they complete their work, then they get the reinforcer they wanted.





## Support Behavior

*I'm Working For* chart: This is a token system where the child earns tokens (pictured here as stars) towards a reward of their choice. The tokens can be something the child likes or enjoys such as a favorite toy or character from a show or movie. This can be utilized in remote learning by having the child earn a token after each completed activity on the schedule.



*Punch Card*: A punch card is another individualized support. A caregiver can give out punches for expected behavior or task completion, and after a certain amount of punches, the child earns a reinforcer. Sometimes getting the punch is motivating and rewarding.



A few different systems have been overviewed. Set up a clear system that has immediate, tangible rewards after the completion of a desired behavior. This can be done in small steps like the First-Then board. Or the system can be more complex, such as earning tokens throughout the day that add up to a certain menu of rewards at the end of the day like screen time, cuddle time or a recreational activity of their choice.



### Create Rules for Remote Learning Time

Many students with ASD rely on rules and routines to keep their environment predictable and to help understand what is expected. Consider developing rules to help define expectations during remote learning. Identify 3-5 rules that describe the expected behavior. Be specific when describing the behavior - use concrete language. Be sure to post the rules visually so you can teach them to your child and reference them when a reminder is needed. It's important to point or gesture to the rules instead of using a verbal prompt. And REINFORCE when you see your child following the rules.



## Support Behavior

### Review your child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) to identify supports

One of the biggest challenges parents and caregivers may face is managing challenging and severe behavior. Whether it's a child refusing to do schoolwork at home, or throwing a full-blown tantrum, it might be easy to find yourself at a loss for an effective way to respond.

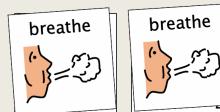
If your child has an effective behavior plan that can be successfully used in the home setting, families and caregivers should continue to implement the plan as written. If there are concerns or questions about how to implement the plan, reach out to your child's teacher or case manager to identify ways to create a safer environment and problem-solve proactive behavior support strategies that can be implemented during this time.

If your child with ASD has any aggressive behaviors, ensure that your family has a plan in place so that everyone at home knows what to do if they ever feel unsafe. This might mean creating a "safe space" in your home where they can go (for example, their bedroom).

We are experiencing an unprecedented moment in history and for a family with a child with severe and challenging behavior, the circumstances are that much more difficult and dangerous. The primary goal for families is to keep everyone as safe as possible and to avoid any need for medical attention, considering the current situation in our hospitals. Hopefully, the many examples to support behavior can help prepare for and potentially avoid a behavioral crisis and allow everyone to feel safe during this time. Keep the main thing, the "main thing" - family, safety, and emotional and physical health #1.

Calming strip to help child take deep breaths. You can model taking deep breaths, too. This is a great idea for everyone to practice.

I will take 5 deep breaths



3

4

5

Resources to Support Behavior



## Socialize Remotely

Individuals with ASD are more susceptible to social isolation and loneliness, and this may be worsened by shelter-in conditions. Positive social support is important for everyone during this period, and individuals with autism may need more explicit facilitation to ensure that social connections continue. Caregivers may need to check in to help identify who close friends are and help develop a plan about how to connect. Consider sharing contact information with a teacher to pass to a classmate. With many options available via text messaging, FaceTime, Google Hangout/Meet, and other apps, the individual needs to figure out which forms of socialization will work best: if you hate phones, don't call people. This might be a time when the individual learns to be creative and try things that aren't immediately comfortable. Try to vary how you communicate: don't just use video chat or only text. Use all the resources at your disposal.

Schedule time to connect with others via online platforms to attend spiritual services, play chess, participate in socially engaged gaming, complete online schoolwork, or virtually volunteer are ways to safely promote social interaction and stave off isolation. With several examples provide support around using apps that can foster connectedness.

### Writing

- Write an actual letter
- Share compliments or kind words with friends
- Let friends know if you're struggling and need support
- Offer help whenever possible: it can boost your mood
- Create challenges with your friends (photo challenges, cooking challenges, etc.)
- Use your extra time to reach out to people you miss or haven't had time to see lately

### Video

- Video chat Facetime, Google Hangouts, Zoom meeting, etc.
- Watch parties: start a movie or TV show at the same time
- Online games: try online cooperative games
- Have dinner with friends over video
- Try changing up your video background: if you want to simulate a coffee shop date, make your house look like a coffee shop

[Resources to Socialize Remotely](#)



## Tips for Remote Learning

- Communicate and collaborate with your child's classroom teacher as you plan for instructional time, if possible.
- Be familiar with the goals and objectives that are included in your child's IEP.
- Think about your child's strengths and needs. Always begin with successful activities.
- Incorporate activities that your child is good at mixed with activities you might be teaching for the first time.
- Incorporate activities that your child is good at mixed with activities you might be teaching for the first time.
- Deliver positive reinforcement as often as you can. Reinforce for sitting, trying, following through, finishing, and even just staying with you.
- We teach math (counting, adding, subtracting, etc.), reading (identifying and naming letters, letter sounds, sounding out words, reading simple words and sentences, etc.) and writing (copying letters, writing name, etc.) But, there are *many* additional skills that can be targeted during this instructional time. A few ideas include:
  - Imitation skills, put-in tasks, copying, matching, sorting, labeling pictures, following directions, pointing to pictures, learning how to play with toys, turn-taking, communication skills, fine motor skills (stringing beads, copying or tracing shapes, using scissors, tracing/writing letters) listening to a story, answering questions after a story, learning how to play a game, role play social skills, everyday functional skills (grooming, cooking, cleaning) and really anything you would like your child to learn that would support independence.





## Tips for Remote Learning

- Use items around your house – Below are examples that might elicit additional ideas:

### *For Early Learners:*

Use a bowl and spoon to practice imitation, use socks to practice matching, use cans of food to give directions (examples: put on chair, put in sink, put on table), use family photo albums to point to pictures, and use cups to practice stacking.

Don't be afraid to play during academic time! Planned PLAY is a way for us to show our early learners how to use toys, how to share, how to take-turns, etc. We know this is how our early learners acquire skills. Keep in mind some students may need specific instructions on how to play or specific modeling demonstrating the desired play skills. Other students may need full support through the movements until they acquire the skills needed.

### *For Intermediate Learners:*

Practice writing family names, phone numbers, point to pictures in magazines, practice following directions around the house and consider daily living skills for such as: picking up toys, washing dishes, putting away the dishes, folding towels, etc.

### *For Advanced Learners:*

Read new recipes, read a chapter of a favorite book, make an outline and draw pictures to share with the rest of the family, write letters, and consider daily living skills such as laundry, cooking, yard work, etc.

**Don't underestimate yourself. You know your child better than anyone.**

[Resources for Tips for Remote Learning](#)



## Additional Resources

### Resources from National ASD Organizations

Links to national websites with evidence-based ASD resources, including COVID-19 specific resources for families, educators, administrators, and community partners.

Autism Collaborative Centers of Excellence (ACCE)  
[Online Webinar Series for Parents, Teachers & Caregivers](#)

Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules (AFIRM)  
[Supporting Individuals with Autism through Uncertain Times](#)

Autism Science Foundation  
[COVID Resources for Families](#)  
[COVID Resources for Researchers](#)  
[COVID Resources for Service Providers](#)

Autism Society of America  
[Coronavirus: Response & Resources](#)

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)  
[Resources for Teaching Remotely](#)  
[Webinar: Teachingin Online Duiring COVID-19](#)  
[COVID-19 Considerations for Special Education Administrators](#)

Ohio Center for Autism & Low Incidence (OCALI)  
[Resource Gallery of Interventions To Support Families During the COVID-19 Crisis](#)

UC Davis Health & Mind Institute  
['Help is in Your Hands'](#)

VCU Autism Center for Excellence  
[Resources for individuals with ASD and their Family Members during the COVID-19 Closure.](#)

Waismen Center  
[Dealing with Covid-19 Resources for Special Educators, Therapists, & Families](#)

For questions or additional resources,  
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