



Research Based Accommodations for most common disabilities found in our classrooms



A.I.M. LLC
Susan Houser & Bea Fallis



Recommendations for ADHD

- ★ Encourage the student to ask for clarification and repetition of instructions.
- ★ Make sure you have eye contact with the student before speaking to him or giving oral instructions.
- ★ When giving instructions for an activity, provide enough time for the student to accomplish each step before going on. For example, wait until the student has found the correct page in a text before explaining the task.
- ★ Make oral instructions clear and concise. Simplify complex instructions and avoid multiple commands.
- ★ Explain all the instructions clearly before allowing the student to start any assignment. Methods for helping to clarify the instructions for the student and the group include: having the student or another student repeat the instructions to the group; modeling the activity before having students start; or pretending to model the activity and asking the students to try and catch you in mistakes. Make mistakes deliberately, and, when caught, ask, “What did I do wrong? What was I supposed to do?”

Recommendations for Specific Learning Disability

- ★ Give direct, specific instructions that are clear and concise
- ★ Ask the student to repeat the instructions to make sure they were understood
- ★ Break learning into small steps.
- ★ Reinforce verbal instructions with something visual or written, depending on the age and ability of the child
- ★ Give feedback more frequently and remember to value quality over quantity
- ★ Provide prompts, both visual and verbal, when students get stuck
- ★ Engage students periodically during a lesson with questions like, “How is this strategy working for you? Do you need to try something else? If it’s working, try applying it to (math, reading, etc.)”

Recommendations for Autism

- ★ Educational Setting: The child with an autism spectrum disorder requires a highly structured program with an emphasis on the systematic presentation of materials, with a small class size and a student: teacher ratio, which permits considerable personalized attention. Children with autism learn much better in 1:1 or small group instruction because of their difficulties with attention for adult-directed tasks and with understanding and following instructions, as well as the need for behavioral supervision.
- ★ Ideally, we want to help the child with ASD to reach the goals of competence and independence. Because the nature of autism interferes with the learning of pragmatic social and communication skills, the school should consider specific, direct training in functional social skills in the child's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) in addition to academic goals.
- ★ While it is sometimes necessary and desirable to provide 1:1 instruction for the child with autism, particularly during the preschool years if there are speech and attention difficulties, the child with ASD should be encouraged to work in small groups (1 adult to 2 or 3 students) where she can learn and practice the social and communication skills which will enable interactions with other children and adults in the everyday world.

Recommendations for Autism

- ★ Care should be taken to avoid separating the child, either physically or psychologically from social interactions with classmates. If the child has an instructional aide, it is best for that person to facilitate instruction and social interactions in as non-intrusive a way as possible, enabling the child to do the work himself with adequate support, thereby fostering independent functioning over the long term.
- ★ The child's preference for sameness, insistence on rigid routines, and the tantrums or meltdowns that may result when she is frustrated or overwhelmed, are all evidence of the anxiety which is common to persons with autism. While respecting the child's need for the comfort, the learning environment should be structured so as to help the child accept changes gradually over time.
- ★ Maintaining "sameness" and/or adherence to their "rules" or standards are ways for them to keep from being overwhelmed by stimuli, and to attain a sense of security that comes from being able to predict what's going to happen next. Sometimes carrying an object from one task to the next is a way of smoothing the transition to another activity or location. Another transition facilitator can be the use of various sensory or movement activities.

Recommendations for Autism

- ★ **MAKE IT VISUAL!** Because most persons with ASD are much better visual than auditory learners, it is strongly recommended that facilitating transitions as well as general classroom instruction should be accomplished using visual materials which are paired with clear, concrete, concise verbal instructions. For example, one way for a child to comprehend the flow of activities at home and at school is to use a daily calendar in both settings, with a drawing or photo plus the word for each activity. These can be discussed in terms of what he just did, what he's doing now, and what he's going to do next, thereby facilitating his sense of continuity, structure, and security. If there is a change in the usual daily routine (such as seeing his speech therapist in a different setting, or going on a school field trip), a special picture/word card can be given to the child to hold as the day's events unfold, with discussion before, during, and after the event. The use of words along with pictures can be important since some individuals with ASD process and understand written words more easily than the words they hear.
- ★ The visual schedule technique can also be applied on an impromptu basis to just 3 or 4 classroom activities occurring in a short period of time by making simple, informal sketches of the sequence of activities and having a space for the child to check off each activity as it's completed before going on to the next. It's a good idea to intersperse favored tasks with those which are more difficult for the child, and to end with something she really enjoys.

Accommodations for Speech/Language

- ★ When teaching or speaking to the student, face him, speak slowly, pause between phrases for processing time, and limit sentence length and complexity. Give the student an opportunity to request repetitions or clarifications.
- ★ Be aware of the linguistic complexity of the language you use in instructions, questions, and test items. Encourage the student to ask you to restate and clarify instructions and questions that he found difficult to understand.
- ★ Be aware of when the student has become inattentive or looks confused. Repeat what you have said or attempt to clarify and simplify instructions.
- ★ Teach the student to request repetition or rephrasing of instructions, questions, or statements when necessary. Additionally, encourage the student to ask you to paraphrase test questions when needed. He may know the content but not understand the question.
- ★ If, when called on, the student does not appear to know the answer to a question, repeat it verbatim. If the student still does not appear to know the answer, rephrase the question using simpler language.

Accommodations for Serious Emotional Disturbance

- ★ Provide student with a well-structured, consistent academic setting with well-defined expectations and firm limits, which are enforced non-punitively and with predictability.
- ★ Goals to help her develop behaviors that facilitate academic success, such as completing assignments and participating in class, should be considered. Behavior improvement suggestions and techniques should be reviewed by student's teachers periodically in order to ensure optimal success. Frequent reinforcement should be given for achieving target goals. Provide activities where success is inevitable in order to help increase self-esteem and sense of competency. Reinforcement should include verbal praise, and rewarding appropriate behavior to a greater degree than reprimanding inappropriate behaviors.
- ★ When school staff observes student becoming sad, anxious, angry or frustrated, role-modeling of appropriate behavioral responses and assistance in identifying precipitants of the stress may also be effective. She will need access to an adult to have a private discussion about her feelings.

Accommodations for Serious Emotional Disturbance

- ★ Focus of work should be on quality over quantity. Accommodations to reduce the number of problems required for completion are often an effective solution for students with SED. Alternatively, teachers could provide student with extra time to complete work, although this strategy is often ineffective for unmotivated students.
- ★ Divide assignments into short attainable units
- ★ Reduce the amount of homework assigned, particularly in math, to avoid overwhelming the student and causing her to shut down. It would be better to get some quality work than none.
- ★ Give student access to a supportive environment (i.e., Special Education class) when she needs any kind of help and pair with supportive peers
- ★ Encourage attention to daily structure rather than future events to help student focus on school work instead of worrying about external stressors
- ★ Model realistic acceptance of mistakes
- ★ Avoid over-sympathizing
- ★ Emphasize strengths when correcting or evaluating work

Questions or comments?

Susan Houser - susan@aimllcconsulting.com

Bea Fallis - bea@aimllcconsulting.com

www.aimllcconsulting.com

www.sparkassessmentcenter.com