

Autism Hub

making a difference

Giving instructions

- Reduce noise and visual distractions before giving an instruction.
- Start by using your child's name to help gain their attention.
- Shorten your sentences, speak slowly and clearly and focus on important words.
- Encourage your child to repeat instructions to themselves or to you or to give you a gesture or indication they understand. After waiting for a response, it is ok to repeat the instruction or say it another way.
- Break instructions into smaller parts, give one at a time, with time in between to allow your child to respond.

Increasing visual support

- Include real objects, materials or pictures to support your spoken words.
- Include hand gestures, signs or facial expressions to support your spoken words.
- Include images, drawings or pictures to demonstrate words, instructions or steps in a task.
- Use timers to set the length of a task or learning session e.g. 5 minutes.
- Have visual supports such as timetables and schedules ready before starting a task.

Doing activities

- Setting routines for learning activities helps children to learn how to complete an activity.
- Break down tasks into smaller steps and teach one at a time.
- When doing a task clearly explain:
 - **What** you are going to do (e.g., we are going to read a short story together).
 - **Why** you are going to do it (e.g., we are looking for the main characters).
 - **Provide an example** (e.g., read a simple story first and point out the characters together).
 - **Support practice.**
 - Do the learning task together teaching the steps of the activity as you go. Be clear about when and how the activity will end.

Building understanding

Supporting a child's understanding of instructions and expectations can help them to participate and engage in activities and learning.

Using technology

- Consider demonstrations using video modelling – film yourself or another member of your family doing the task first.
- Photograph the steps in a task or the student completing the task as a guide for the next time.
- Film or voice record instructions, and/or answers. This will allow your child to play the instructions back as many times as necessary.
- Use laptops, tablets and apps and to assist with tasks – explore built in features of programs such as Microsoft Word.

