

## Top Tips for Using Schedules with Students with Autism

1. **Break tasks** down into smaller achievable tasks with realistic timeframes. If possible, give the student a checklist to mark off as they do each step or move to a finish box so they can see the progress.
1. **NOTE:** some students do not like working with timeframes as this can create more anxiety. Work out what works and stick with this. I still recommend breaking down the tasks and using a checklist
2. Let them **finish!** Allow the student extra time to get the task done. It is important to finish one task before going to another.
3. **Independence.** Allow students to self-monitor and move from one task to another without prompts.
4. **Slow it down!** In these uncertain times be realistic about what is achievable for yourself and the student. Don't say you are going to things which you don't do, as this is confusing for the student. Choose what is most important and try to complete these tasks
5. Use their special interests to motivate and engage – students with autism are motivated by their interests e.g. include when they can have time doing something, they love to motivate them to do fewer interesting tasks
6. Schedules show visually what is happening and when, which results in less behaviour as they have less need to fight for control
7. Be careful how you use words, students with autism are quite literal which can mean they misunderstand you. Avoid words like **could, would, can** as they perceive them as a choice e.g. "Can you start work" can be seen as a choice. It is better to say "It is time to start work now"
8. Include visuals on the schedule to increase understanding
9. If possible, 'preview' the next day, week, month. Knowing ahead of time what is happening when will give a mental framework of what is happening when. I know this can be hard in these changing times, but having the framework gives a system to indicate changes.
10. Check in regularly – for example go through schedule in the morning, after morning tea, lunch, afternoon and end of the day. i.e. We have finished 1, 2, 3, NEXT we have to do 4, 5, 6
11. Incorporate breaks. Make sure to include different types of breaks this can include
  - Body breaks (movement)
  - Sensory Breaks (access to sensory tools) - Brain Breaks (Creative, Movement, Mind or Joke breaks)
  - Social Breaks (connect with friends virtually, play a game with family member)

Lily Class parents note:

12. Talk about “plans which have changed”. It is important to always let the student know any changes and what they will be doing instead. I find the language **Plan B** is always helpful e.g. we are using the computer at 10.00, but Plan B if the internet is down is playing Lego.
13. Use post it notes or columns to help prioritise what work needs to be done. I recommend having notes for Urgent, Important, Urgent but not Important, Important but not Urgent