Quick Tips for Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Tip Sheet

As educators, you play a vital role in unlocking the potential of every student. This quick guide offers practical, evidence-based strategies to help you support students with autism in the classroom, empowering them to thrive both academically and socially.

Key Facts About Learning Disabilities
Fact 1: Autism is a developmental disability that affects communication, social skills, and behavior.
Fact 2: ASD is a spectrum, meaning every student's strengths and challenges are unique.
Fact 3: Early intervention and tailored support can significantly improve outcomes for students with ASD.

Evidence-Based Instructional Practices
Practice 1: Use visual supports, such as schedules, to provide clear structure.
Practice 2: Incorporate explicit teaching of social skills, modeling appropriate behaviors.
Practice 3: Break down tasks into smaller, manageable steps to promote understanding.

Positive Behavior Supports

Support 1: Provide positive reinforcement for desired behaviors, using preferred rewards or activities.

Support 2: Implement structured routines to minimize anxiety and increase predictability.

Support 3: Use sensory breaks or calming strategies for students who may become overstimulated.

Accommodations for Students with ASD

Accommodation 1: Allow for extra processing time to respond to questions or instructions.

Accommodation 2: Provide a quiet space for students to work or decompress when feeling overwhelmed.

Accommodation 3: Modify assignments or assessments to reduce the cognitive load while maintaining content rigor.

Communication Strategies

Strategy 1: Use clear, concrete language and avoid figurative speech that might be misunderstood.

Strategy 2: Incorporate augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) tools, like picture cards or devices, to support non-verbal students.

Strategy 3: Give students plenty of time to process and respond, ensuring they don't feel rushed.

Building Social Skills

Skill 1: Create opportunities for peer interactions in structured environments, such as small groups or buddy systems.

Skill 2: Teach turn-taking, sharing, and other social norms explicitly using role-playing or social stories.

Skill 3: Use visual cues, such as emotion charts or facial expression cards, to help students understand and express feelings.