

Educational Tips for Teachers having students with Autism by Daniel S. Durany

Teach us the “Fundamentals of Life”

My advice for teachers is not all about teaching the subject in school, but more emphasis on teaching us the fundamentals of life. Several examples about teaching the fundamentals of life: students taking the information from classroom and impacting people’s lives in the world today, information engraved and implemented during our everyday lives, or teaching everyday life skills to be successful in society. When teaching involves the fundamentals of life; the easier this becomes to building trust and likely increases the desires of enhanced learning for a child with autism.

Teach with meaning & value long-term; not short-term

I learned quite a bit academically in school such as quadratic formula, periodic table, taking three years of French, and many others. However, when a teacher taught something with value and meaning in everyday life, it made a lasting impact in my heart. From a student’s perspective teach something that is meaningful everyday life.

Focus on what the child with CAN DO instead of CAN’T DO

It is much easier to teach children by finding out their capabilities; instead of finding what they are incapable of doing. Teachers should strive to strengthen their capabilities first because strengthening their capabilities will help them want to work harder on overcoming their inabilities.

Multi-Tasking likely means Multi-Trouble

Multi-Tasking is a very difficult concept for an autistic person. However, a person with autism can excel at a very high level by constantly reminding themselves to take tasks one step at a time.

Tackling situations one step at a time will make the situations much simpler to overcome and not overwhelming for an autistic person. My advice in general for guys is to leave the multi-tasking to the women.

How We Learn Best

Majority of people with autism are visual and tactile learners. A simple indicator for teachers to remember is that we think in pictures, not in words because words come & go. Pictures make it easier for them in their ability to decode information.

Another idea for teachers in finding out if they are a visual learner is spotting their eyeballs. If the child whose autistic answers the questions with their eyeballs looking straight up to ceiling, they are visual learners enabling them the ability to process information.

More Accommodations, Less Modifications

If we provide students with autism more accommodations and fewer modifications, teachers and parents will get an idea if their child/student is maximizing their full potential.

Accommodations are about changing the method of how the curriculum is addressed. An example for testing accommodations is taking the test in a room alone. The curriculum on the test is the same for everyone else, but the difference is location for the child taking the test. People with autism who have difficulty hearing well in the classroom might need someone to interpret in sign language or handouts to read for that day's curriculum.

Modifications are making changes in the curriculum. Examples of modifications would have three multiple answer choices to choose from instead of four choices. When homework assignments are for twenty math problems, ask the autistic student to answer just five to ten problems.

Clear & Concise Communication

People with autism have a tough time picking up on communication that deals with sarcasm or slang words. If a teacher isn't clear and concise with her communication, then this will be difficult to build any solid rapport with them. A simple way for teachers to remember being clear and concise with their communication is by the quote, "Say What You Mean; Mean What You Say!" People with autism have the tendency to take what others say literally.

Another reason for clear and concise communication is difficulty reading nonverbal cues such as body language, gestures, postures, and eye contact. It is much easier for a person with autism to read another person's verbal cues than nonverbal cues.

Say It, Show It, Role-Play, and Repetition

No two people with autism are exactly the same. I am a firm believer that the way we teach, encourage, nurture, and provide confidence to kids with autism will help them be successful people. Here is teaching format to provide teachers for kids with autism to succeed, "Say It, Show It, Role-Play and Repetition."

If teachers follow this formula with them, I firmly believe that any person whose autistic can succeed in anything he or she sets their mind on. This will help teachers gauge how they learn best.

All four of these formats are beneficial to the child. If the child is able to pick your messages verbally, they are likely to be auditory learners. By showing them how to master specific skills, then they are more likely to be kinesthetic learners. Role-Playing will help kids who are autistic to look at the various perspective and situations from others. Repetition will help them provide a routine in knowing how to sharpen or master a specific skill.