

Why Structure and Routine is Important

When your world is very chaotic and confusing, there is a lot of uncertainty which leads to anxiety. Children with ASD or a Learning Disability require a very concrete, literal and predictable world to feel secure. Something can have a specific meaning in one situation and mean something totally different in another. For this reason many children have a strong need to control all activity and interaction around them. To help deal with this insecurity and anxiety, we have to decrease the uncertainty in their lives. The following strategies can help do that:

1. Providing accurate and easily understandable information about COVID-19

There are lots of visual stories you can choose from either on our web site or the internet.

2. Build structure into daily routine

The more structured and predictable the daily routine is, the less uncertainty there is for the child.

3. Using a Visual Schedule.

If possible, provide visual (pictures or written) schedules so children can see what is coming up next and what they are doing. This provides predictable order to their day. This alone can drastically reduce anxiety.

4. Keep Your Routine Habits the Same.

Keeping familiar routines throughout the day uses less brain effort eg. keep the same personal care rituals. This adds predictability and certainty to the child's world.

Hand Washing Tips for People
With Sensory Difficulties
<https://www.sensoryintegration.org.uk/News/8821506>

NHS hand washing song
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9VjelWLnEg>

Workbook for children about
hand washing
<https://www.schuelke.com/gb-en/news-media/LD-Hand-Hygiene-Course-handout.pdf>

Baby shark Hand washing Song
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72cNRdyyan8>

5. Transitioning between Tasks

Children with ASD or LD often have difficulty switching their brain activity between different tasks. They do much better if they have warnings or reminders when the one activity is ending and another is beginning, especially if the current activity is a favourite activity. To ease transition difficulties, try to:

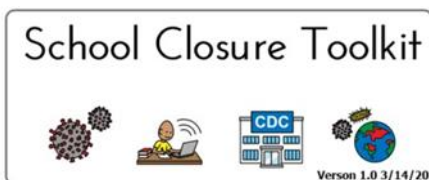
- ★ ensure that the child always knows what will be coming up next (e.g. watch TV then



bath) - try using - *Now & Next Cards*

- ★ give the child five, three, and one-minute reminders that the activity is going to end and they will move on to the next activity. Use timers if it helps.

6. More Resources



























https://1.ead.me/bbTE3n?fbclid=IwAR0v2tMb8KiDBSRH1jvW4B4xNnR7HEGadMt4hE5wNPc55Mhc_lgzzPaeIxE



Using Alarms

Set different alarms throughout the day. Keep the same ones every day to create a routine. You can use different songs to mark different points in the day. Eg. start the morning routine with a good morning song.

Home Learning Schedule			
 8:00	 breakfast	 2:00	 learning time
 9:00	 exercise	 3:00	 life skills
 10:00	 shower / hygiene	 4:00	 tech time
 11:00	 learning time	 5:00	 dinner
 12:00	 lunch	 6:00	 quiet activity
 1:00	 free time	 7:00	 bedtime