

School Accommodations Checklist

Many autistic people struggle to know what they can ask for when offered help. For this reason we often suggest the use of an accommodations checklist. This is something that a school could provide to the autistic person or parent to offer different kinds of accommodations/adjustments. Below are some ideas of things you may consider putting onto such a checklist.

- Active/alternative seating. This could be Swiss balls, wobble stools, spinning chairs etc. or a beanbag in a quiet corner.
- Standing desks
- Allowing movement while doing school work. For those who focus best while moving.
- Seating away from strong smells
- Fixed seating arrangement (i.e. not changing the seating arrangements)
- Flexibility on allowing them to leave the room or go to a quiet space when they need some time out.
- Fidget toys
- Flexibility with the uniform if there is an aspect of it that may cause overstimulation.
- Headphones or earplugs
- Option to work solo when group work is happening.
- Alternative means of communication: this could be a card system for indicating that they need help or have a question. Where they put a green card out when they need help for example. This means they don't have to raise their hand or draw too much attention to themselves. If the school uses devices, having the option for the child to email or message the teacher questions instead of saying them out loud. Or having a piece of paper for them to write on to communicate.

- Checking on the student once everyone is settled into their work to see if they have any questions or if they understood what was expected of them.
- Giving them a timetable/routine so they know what's going to be happening
- Giving them warnings at different intervals that a transition is going to happen.

For at home or after school:

- Have relaxed expectations after school. Don't require them to speak or answer lots of questions.
- Give them time to wind down and do something they enjoy
- Get them out of their uniform. Often times uniforms are overstimulating without the person really being conscious of it.
- Understand that their meltdowns aren't bad behaviour, they just don't have another outlet for the extreme overload they are experiencing.
- Consider getting sensory tools like a weighted blanket, headphones, fidget toys etc.
- Talking to the child themselves when they're calm about what they're struggling with at school, because sometimes there's a problem that wouldn't even occur to the adults around them