



Teaching children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

1. **Ask the child about their Special Interests** (sharks, cartoon character, movie character, etc.) Incorporate these special interests into the lesson.
2. **Exaggeration** – exaggerate facial expressions, kids with ASD have a hard time reading facial expressions.
3. **Show examples exactly the right way never the wrong way.**
 - children with ASD tend to pick up on irrelevant details, make sure to be extra careful to show your students precisely what you want them to do.
 - While showing a child without ASD the right and wrong way is beneficial it would be detrimental to a child with ASD
4. **Use visual supports** – We will provide visual skill cards for you to use with autistic students. These cards are pictures of different skills that you show to the student before and during the time they are performing the skill.

Children with ASD tend to be visual learners and tend to have difficulty processing auditory information and these visual skill cards will help them understand the skills you're asking them to do.

- **Watch** Picture of face with eyes watching (to watch the instructor)
- **Listen** (picture of face with ear – listen to instructor)
- **Kicking**
- **Bubbles**
- **Front Float**
- **Back Float**
- **Face in water**

- **Hold on to wall**
- **Backstroke arms**
- **Freestyle arms**
- **Noodle on front**
- **Noodle on back**

Visual Skill Cards (we will send to you)



5. Limit language and allow for processing delays

- Students with ASD may take 5-10 seconds or more to process what has been said.
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6. Add Lib

- Every child with ASD is different
- Be child-centered rather than task centered and be ready to make changes to your lesson plan on the fly
- Make sure you are keeping the child happy engaged and learning.

7. Say It, Show It, Do It – Progression

Step # 1 – Say It

Say what you want your student to do. (Ex. How to hold kickboard – thumbs on top, fingers on bottom, arms straight, chin by the water)

Step # 2 – Show It

(if student does not understand or respond to step 1)

First tell the student what you're doing in short sentences and then show them (demonstrate the skill) exactly how to do it.

Step # 3 – Do it

(If the student doesn't respond to step 1 & 2)

Help your student perform the skill by manipulating their arms or legs (does not apply to breath holding or face in the water – always allow student to put their face in at their own will.)

8. Prepare the students for the end of the class

People with ASD have difficulty transitioning between people places and activities. Let the student know midway through the last activity of the lesson that the class is about to be over, do so again at the end of that activity.

Ex. "It time to go, when ____ counts to 5 its time to get out of the pool, 1-5, ok lets get out of the pool, yeah , good job"