

Autism / Social Communication Differences

What you might see:

You might see a child who:

struggles to keep track of belongings or stay organised without reminders.

finds it hard to start tasks independently.

needs support to break larger tasks into smaller steps.

may not realise how long a task will take or how to pace themselves.

may lose attention, especially if the activity isn't of interest.

focuses on one small part of a task and forgets the rest.

finds it difficult to move from one activity to another without warning.

finds it hard to remember instructions while doing a task.

loses track of what they were doing without prompts.

finds copying from the board or following multi-step tasks challenging.

becomes confused or distressed by unexpected changes.

feels unsure about what to expect during group work or new situations.

Executive Function

What you can try:

- Maintain clear and consistent classroom routines, including transitions, supported by a visual timetable that is regularly updated and used to prepare them in advance for any changes to staffing, routine or transitions.
- Provide support at key transitions throughout the day or at key transition points.
- Use objects of reference, photographs or symbols to communicate transition times, expectations and to reinforce the daily schedule.
- Allow extra time for them to process receptive language.
- Use task boards and visual supports to set clear steps for task completion, promote independence, clarify expectations and support transitions.
- Provide an individual workstation for focused tasks where appropriate.
- Use a systematic approach to tasks (e.g. work trays) to increase engagement and reduce anxiety around work completion.
- Provide graphic organisers to support independent work (e.g. writing frames, mind maps, checklists) and simplify language where needed.
- Use individual interests to increase attention to less preferred activities and embed preferred activities where possible.
- Offer choices about tasks or how to complete them (e.g. using a choice board).
- Break learning into small, achievable steps.