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ASD Tips

Consultant – Author – Presenter



Motivators

Self-motivation is very difficult for someone with ASD especially when they can't see the "payoff" at the end. Having a special goal to work towards has been the best motivator for our students.

The goal:

- Must be easy to reach
- Very frequent
- Have meaning to the ASD individual

The most useful motivator is access to his/her special interest/obsession. It can be used in many ways.

Ideas to try:

Use a motivator as a:

- Reward for work completed
- Goal for accomplishing work
- Goal for accomplishing more work than expected
- Down time/quiet time
- Include their special interest as part of research assignment



For Example if the Special Interest as Part of Assignment

Special Interest = **String**

English: research where string was first invented



Maths: numbers, how long, areas, circumferences etc

Music: what instruments use string

Examples how to use special interest

- Reading about favourite subject/special interest
- Talking about favourite subject (this must be time limited)
- Access to computer
- Access to favourite internet site

Why to NEVER use their special interest as a punishment for non-cooperation:

- Their special interest keeps them calm
- Their special interest allows them to release emotions
- Their special interest is relaxing
- Their special interest allows them to relax enough to face the new challenges

If you take away their special interest and use it as a punishment it rarely works as a behaviour modification method and could result in escalating behaviours.



Example

I was recently observing a boy whose special interest is a climbing frame in the school yard. He loved to play on the equipment and was the only time he engaged spontaneously and appropriately with the other children. The school decided if he didn't complete his class work he would miss out on 5 – 10 minutes on the climbing frame. To make it even more stressful he had to stand and watch the other children play without him. The school quickly realized the strategy wasn't working and asked for my advice. I explained removing special interests as a punishment rarely worked. It would be better to reward him with extra time on the equipment when he completed his class work.

