



7 Essential Tips to Encourage Self-Regulation

1. Use routines

- Set up a crystal-clear daily structure before the day begins and decrease the power struggles. Learn to cut down on directing with words and begin to choose and use words sparingly. A little goes a long way.

2. Change the environment rather than the child

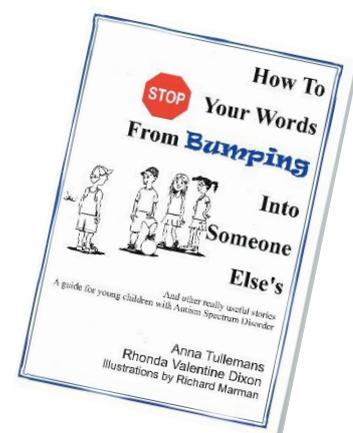
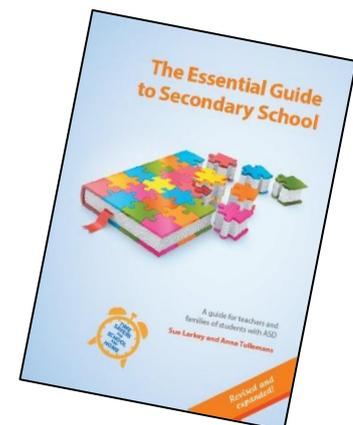
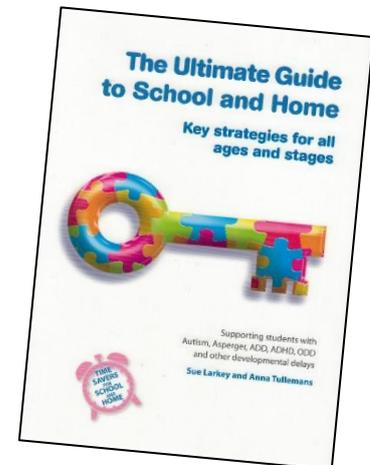
- Make physical, concrete changes. Change what needs to be changed such as location of furniture, colour, lighting, clothing, chaos etc. People on the autism spectrum are especially sensitive to sensory conditions such as sound, lighting, physical touch and so on. This way the environment rather than you dictate the rules and the child can enjoy more independence.

3. Follow through with follow up

- Use the routines and rules you set in motion and then make sure they are doing what they are supposed to. By doing so, you are not the 'bad guy', and they will have to deal with the natural consequences of their actions. They respond well to follow-up as they think in concrete terms rather than abstract ones. This can be your salvation and teaches the children/students what will happen in the real world. Natural consequences can be difficult for them to comprehend therefore responses and behaviour may get worse before it gets better.

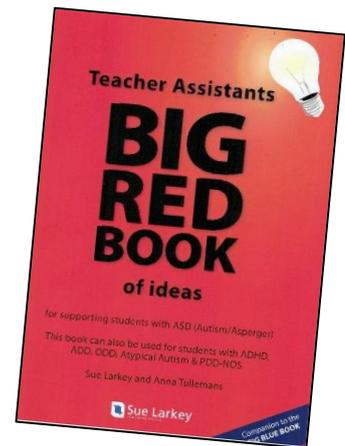
4. Ground yourself not the kids with ground rules

- Keep your credibility and your word with your children. Though it's hard at times, stick-to-it is your key to long term success. Children on the spectrum can actually enjoy grounding and time-outs due to their egocentric nature so be careful.



5. Negotiation is not just for adults

- When creating rules for your children, do so **with** them, not just for them whenever possible. This way they will buy into the process and will be more likely to cooperate. The rules are great for children on the autism spectrum as it helps them stay anchored. They will also surprise you many times with their comprehension of what is actually going on. Even if they are non-verbal, this does not mean they are not understanding or communicating.



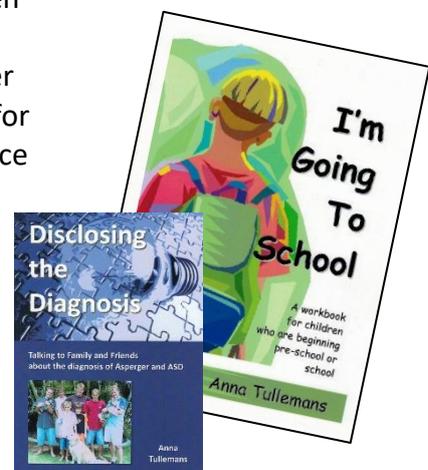
6. Break tasks into small chunks

- Try not to overwhelm them. By breaking down the tasks into do-able tasks you are ensuring their feeling of success and raising their own self-esteem. The more they have mastery over their environment the better they will feel about themselves. This should begin as small as need be with small decisions, small responsibilities etc and work up to larger ones. When deciding on the type of task to complete, try to use the seemingly insignificant activities that fill each child's day. Life skills are very important to integrate at an early age. Social stories and visual cues can be quite helpful as a reminder. You can place pictures and/or text on a place they normally see so they can easily access this. It's good to put words next to pictures so they can learn to associate the meaning.



7. Give children 'the head of the table'

- Let them be in charge of their responsibilities, even though it's tempting, avoid taking over the responsibility. In the short term it may seem easier but that's only if you want to continue doing this for them, even when they are over 20! You can balance your decision to give the responsibility back by maintaining a supportive and caring attitude rather than being the 'bad guy'!



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