

LEARNING SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Autism Spectrum Disorder Teacher Guide

Purpose

Practical classroom strategies, accommodations, printable learning support ideas, and assessment options designed specifically for ASL teachers working with students who have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

What is ASD?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that may affect communication, social interaction, sensory processing, and behavior. Students with ASD are capable learners who often thrive with predictable routines, clear visual supports, sensory-aware environments, and instruction that connects to their specific interests.

Student Strengths

- Strong visual thinker
- Detail-oriented
- Excellent memory for patterns
- Deep focus on areas of interest
- Honest and direct communicator
- Logical, systematic thinker

Teaching Strategies

- Use consistent routines and visual schedules
- Give advance notice before transitions
- Use clear, literal, concrete language
- Incorporate special interests into lessons
- Offer a predictable signing space and consistent seating
- Provide sensory breaks as needed

Learning Support Activities

- Visual sign schedules and routine cards
- Social stories for new signs or classroom situations
- Sign vocabulary sorted by interest topics
- Structured turn-taking sign practice
- First-then boards for task sequencing

Assessment Ideas

- Observation checklists
- Video responses
- One-on-one assessments in a quiet, familiar space
- Predictable, low-pressure assessment format

Things to Avoid

- Sudden, unexplained changes to routine
- Vague or figurative language without context
- Forced eye contact or physical contact
- Assuming lack of eye contact means lack of understanding

Remember

Every student is unique. Use these strategies together with each student's IEP, Section 504 Plan, school policies, and professional judgment. The goal is not to lower expectations, but to provide meaningful access to learning.