

UNDERSTANDING AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

LEARNING SUPPORT ACTIVITIES • TEACHER RESOURCE

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects individuals in different ways. Students with autism have unique strengths, interests, and support needs. In the ASL classroom, creating a structured, predictable, and inclusive learning environment can help students participate successfully while maintaining high academic expectations.

What Is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) affects communication, social interaction, sensory processing, and patterns of behavior. Because autism exists on a spectrum, no two students will have the same strengths, challenges, or support needs.

What You May Notice in an ASL Classroom

- Preference for predictable routines
- Sensitivity to noise, lights, or visual distractions
- Difficulty with unexpected changes
- Strong interest in specific topics
- Different communication styles
- Challenges with group interactions or turn-taking

Student Strengths

- Excellent visual learning skills
- Strong memory for routines and details
- Honest and dependable
- Deep knowledge of personal interests
- Ability to focus intensely on preferred activities

How Teachers Can Help

- Maintain consistent classroom routines.
- Provide clear visual supports and expectations.
- Give advance notice of changes whenever possible.
- Break larger tasks into manageable steps.
- Allow additional processing time when needed.
- Recognize and build upon student strengths.

Things to Avoid

- Assuming every student with autism learns the same way.
- Making sudden changes without preparation.
- Overloading students with multiple directions at once.
- Focusing only on challenges rather than strengths.

★ Remember

Autism is a spectrum, and every student is unique. The goal is to provide meaningful support while maintaining high expectations and creating opportunities for every student to demonstrate success.