AFIRM Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules

The National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence & Practice
NCAEP • BRIDGING SCIENCE AND PRACTICE

CSESA
The Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

The National Professional Development Center
on Autism Spectrum Disorder: TESELA

Family Implemented TEACCH for Toddlers
TEACCH strategies that fit into your day

Support Active Participation and Social Connection

Students with autism may need support understanding what is expected during online learning sessions. Social communication challenges are characteristic of students on the autism spectrum and noticing social cues is even harder to do on an online learning platform than it is in a classroom. Without some explicit instruction and reminders of what is expected, students with autism may be disengaged with online learning and have limited interaction with their teacher and peers.

Even though students may not be interacting with classmates and friends in person as much, or at all, it is important that they stay connected socially. Positive social support is important for everyone during this period, and individuals with autism may need more explicit facilitation to ensure that social connections continue. Families may need to check in with their child and/or teachers to ensure social interaction is happening as part of online learning. This can occur through paired or group virtual projects, social Zoom lunches facilitated by a teacher, online social skills groups, or after school clubs held virtually (e.g. movie maker club, martial arts via video chat).

Outside of school, social interaction can occur via text or direct messaging, and/or building in opportunities for daily social contact with family, friends, neighbors, or others via FaceTime, What's App, Google Hangout, Marco Polo, or other apps. Scheduling time to connect with others via online platforms to attend religious services, play chess, participate in socially engaged gaming, or virtually volunteer are ways to safely promote social interaction and limit feelings of isolation.

Resources include:
Digital Etiquette
Social Narrative: Online Learning Expectations
Self-Management
Reinforcement
Social Games via Zoom

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Digital Etiquette

Although learning is taking place on a computer or device outside of the school building, it is important to remind our children that remote learning is still school time. Using the computer for school is different than using it to communicate with friends. Below are some general reminders about digital etiquette (or netiquette) for children participating in online

Image credit: August de Richelieu, Pexels

remote learning. Please check with your child's teacher to see what specific rules they have established for the class.

1. **Join your classroom every day and be on time:** Even in an online classroom, attendance is important. Remember to log on to your computer/device at the time set by your school, teacher, or parent.

2. **Consider what you are wearing:** If you are using video/webcam to participate in online learning. Choose clothing that you would be comfortable wearing to a school building.

3. **Mute your computer's microphone:** Once you logon to your remote classroom, mute your microphone and keep it muted while your teacher and classmates are speaking.

4. **Focus on the speaker:** Focus on the information provided by your teacher and listen to whomever is "speaking" in the class. To show you are listening, turn your body toward the screen, nod or give a thumbs up when you agree with something, and keep your eyes on the camera/screen (if comfortable).

5. **Participate:** Remember to ask and answer questions during class. Learn how to use the "raise your hand" function and wait to be called on. Some classes may use the "chat" feature to communicate.

6. **Stay on topic:** Remember that when you are typing questions/comments, people must read them so keep them short and on-topic.

7. **It is tricky to read emotion over the screen:** In an online environment it sometimes can be hard for people to understand your feelings when you communicate. During chats or conversations, emoticons can help others understand if you are using humor or how you are feeling. Avoid using all caps which is equal to yelling. It may also help to reread your messages/posts for friendliness before you send them.

8. **Limit distractions:** Food and drink can be distracting to you and others in the classroom, so try eating and drinking before or after class time. If you need to eat or drink something, remember to turn your camera and/or sound off for a short time. Do not talk or text on the phone during class. Turn off the TV and radio and close other computer windows on your screen.

Image credit: Julie M. Cameron, Pexels

9. **Limit sharing personal comments and interests during class time:** Sharing personal comments and interests that are unrelated to the topic are best left to times outside of the online classroom unless your teacher has set a time for the class to share. Try not to have side conversations with your classmates while the teacher is speaking.

10. **Be respectful:** Use respectful language and words when communicating with teachers and classmates. Avoid sarcasm because it can be misunderstood in an online environment. Remember – if you would not say it face-to-face in a classroom, then do not say or type it in an online classroom because it can be misunderstood in an online environment.

Video Resources to Help Explain Digital Etiquette to Your Child:

Digital Etiquette – BrainPop	https://www.brainpop.com/technology/freemovies/digitaletiquette/
Rules of Digital Classroom: Proper Etiquette for Online Learning	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6B4_oUeZhw
Netiquette: A Student's Guide to Digital Etiquette	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWw3aEw1SFo

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Online Learning Expectations

My school is online because of COVID-19. Since I am learning at home, it is

important that I know what to do and expect. I wake up, eat breakfast, and

put on clothes I would wear if I were going to the school building. I sign into

my online class on time so that I do not miss anything. I mute my microphone

so that noises in my home do not distract people. I pay attention to the

teacher and participate in class by nodding my head and raising my hand to

ask questions. It is important that I stay on topic just like I would at school. If I

have something off-topic that I want to say, I wait until the end of class to

share. These expectations help me and my classmates learn online while the

school building is closed.

Self-Management

Directions:
　　At the end of each of 5-minute interval, circle whether you actively participated in online learning. After the fifth or last time interval, determine if you get a reward.

Target Behavior/Skill:
1. Ask a question relevant to the lesson AND/OR
2. Made a comment relevant to the lesson

1	2	3	4	5
☺ ☹	☺ ☹	☺ ☹	☺ ☹	☺ ☹

How many smiles do I have?

Do I have 5 smiles?

✔ Yes

✖ No

★ Get a reward!

↻ Try again.

Do I get a reward?

Adapted from AFIRM Module: Self-Management

I am

working for
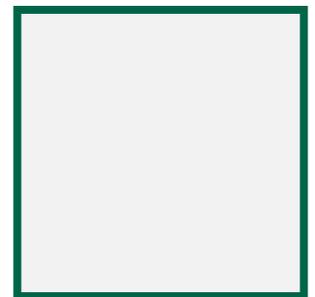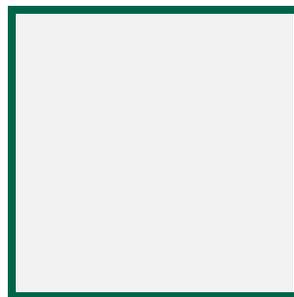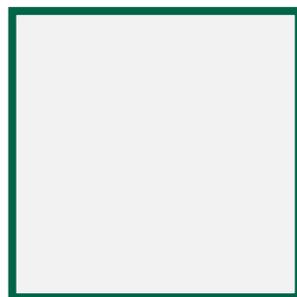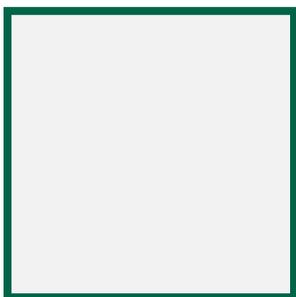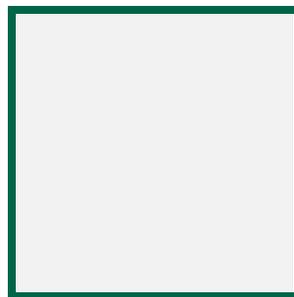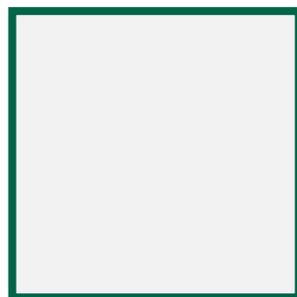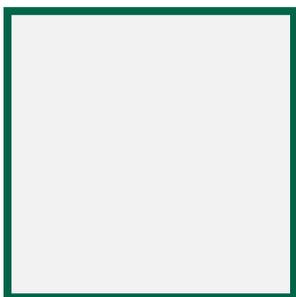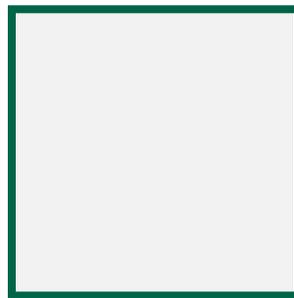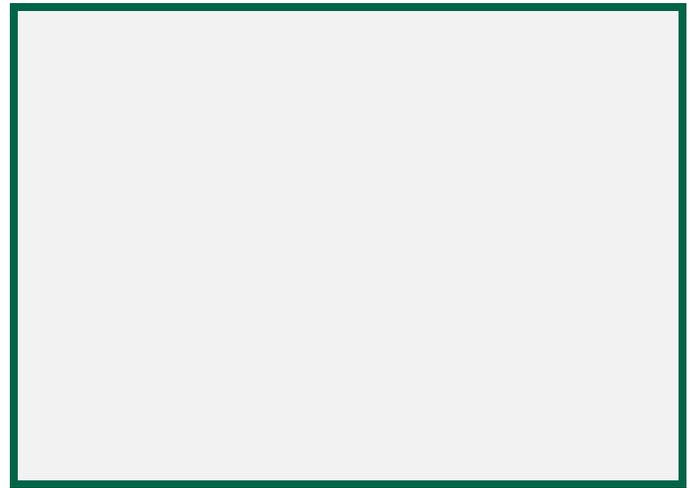
Adapted from AFIRM Module: Reinforcement: Introduction & Practice

Social Games via Zoom

Positive social connections are important for students with autism and may need more support to make sure that social connections continue. Below are just a few ideas for maintaining and building new social connections with classmates.

- ❑ Bob Ross-style paint-along
- ❑ Pictionary with Zoom whiteboard
- ❑ A virtual book club
- ❑ A virtual chess club
- ❑ A movie maker club
- ❑ A virtual lunch
- ❑ Charades
- ❑ Karaoke
- ❑ Board games
- ❑ Card games – try playingcards.io
- ❑ Simon Says
- ❑ Show and tell
- ❑ Would you rather…?
- ❑ Scavenger hunt