My Tips for Homeschooling a Child with Autism

Education can be a challenge for any child diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. In response, there are many parents who turn to homeschooling rather than traditional education means. However, to unlock your child’s full potential, you have to make the most of your homeschooling lessons.

In this article, we are going to take a look at some of the ways that you can help your child thrive in their early education and beyond. With these tips, not only will you and your child get the most out of your lessons, it will also keep you from getting too frustrated and burning out quickly while you work on lessons.

Use Fixations to Your Advantage

One thing that is common for children with autism spectrum disorder is to get fixated on certain topics. However, this single-mindedness can be used to an advantage. Whatever your child is fixated on at the moment, incorporate it into your lessons! This way, you are tying the new knowledge they need to know to something they already love and are interested in. Not only will this help them to remember the information as they learn, it will make the learning process interesting for them and help to hold their attention.

Don’t Be Afraid to Take Breaks One thing that can overwhelm any child – especially one with ASD – is working long hours non-stop. In fact, this can be why traditional schooling doesn’t work for some children. So, don’t force long hours on your child when you are homeschooling them.
Instead, take breaks throughout the day. The best way to do this is to take short breaks between lessons to allow your child to relax and refocus. If you don’t do this, you might find that by the end of the day your child is too burnt out to properly obtain the information you are teaching them.

**Real-World Socialization**

One concern that many parents have for their children with ASD is how they will relate to others in real world situations. As a parent and teacher, though, it is your job to make sure that you socialize your child. This is especially important when you take your child out of public school, limiting the amount of time they spend with other children.

However, you can still socialize your child with methods such as frequent field trips. In fact, you can once again center these field trips around the fixations of your child so that they remain interested and engaged.

**Keep a Visible Schedule**

One way that you can help to keep your child on track is to keep a routine. Children with ASD do particularly well when they have some structure to their day. If you change your routine up every day, your child may have trouble with getting focused on work or transitioning from task to task.

It is also a good idea to keep this schedule somewhere visible so that your child can view it daily and be able to check it throughout the day. If you want, you can even make this schedule bright and colorful or interactive so that your child can “check off” things that they do throughout the day.

**Move Around a Bit**

Another thing that can be difficult for a child with ASD is to sit still for hours at a time. We have already gone over the fact that you can take breaks from your lesson plans to break this up but there is one more thing you can do: incorporate movement into your lesson.

Don’t be afraid to vary your learning content a bit. Instead of reading out of a textbook or taking notes, try an activity where you and your child can run, jump around, and just generally play while you learn.

**Take Your Time**

When you are getting ready to homeschool your child, don’t get too overzealous right away. If you end up buying tons of textbooks and materials, you are likely to end up not using all of them. Instead, take a couple weeks and pay attention to how your child learns and works best. Once you know how and where your child works best, you can tailor your lesson plans to fit their needs.

This is one way that homeschooling has an advantage over traditional schooling. When you are teaching just your child, you can personalize teaching in a way that a teacher in charge of a class of 30 can’t.

**Don’t Be Afraid of Asking for Help**

Finally, don’t think that you are in this alone. Homeschooling an autistic child is a huge responsibility but there are plenty of resources from online materials and resources to professional help such as accredited learning partners. Above all, though, remember to be patient with yourself – this a learning experience for you too.
Bread in a Bag

Recipe type: Bread
Serves: 2 mini loaves or 1 full size loaf

Ingredients

- 3 C flour, divided
- 3 Tbsp white sugar
- 1 (.25) package rapid rise yeast
- 1 C warm water
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 1½ tsp salt

Instructions

1. In a resealable plastic bag place 1 C flour, sugar and yeast and add in warm water.
2. Squeeze air out of the bag and seal.
3. Squish with your hands until well mixed together.
4. Let it rest for 10 minutes at room temperature. Bubbles will form.
5. Open bag and put in 1 C of flour, oil and salt.
6. Seal bag again and squish until well blended.
7. Add last cup of flour and continue mixing in the same manner until well blended.
8. Remove dough from bag and put onto a lightly floured surface.
9. Knead for 5-10 minutes or until smooth.
10. Divide dough in half and place each half into a greased mini loaf pan. Or make one large loaf
11. Cover with a towel and allow to rise for about 30 minutes.
12. Bake in a 375 degree oven for 25-30 minutes or until bread is golden brown.

Recipe by your homebased mom at http://www.yourhomebasedmom.com/bread-bag/
ICE CREAM SUNDAE WAFFLES

This was an amazingly fun breakfast – and so simple and easy to prepare. I simply took a delish Eggo Home-style waffle (but feel free to use any type of Eggo waffle you love the best!) – and cut off the two sides, to leave it in a triangle shape, like an ice cream cone.

Here are the other steps:

- I added a bunch of sliced bananas as the “ice cream” – All I did was slice the bananas, lay them on the platter, and overlap a few to give some depth.
- Next, I squirted some whip cream above the banana “ice cream” section – like it would be on a real ice cream cone.
- I topped the ice cream waffle with a maraschino cherry, and then drizzled some caramel flavored syrup over the top of the waffle.

This was amazingly good – and the kids were so excited to get “ice cream” at breakfast time! I love putting together fun foods like this for the little ones…. It’s sometime hard to get them to eat, but if I make things interesting like this, they forget to be as picky, lol – which is great for us both!

Reprinted from: www.sunshineadsippycups.com
WEBSITE REVIEW: Not An Autism Mom

http://www.notanautismmom.com

By: Anne Carpenter

In the last few years, I have seen websites by people with ASD who espouse more progressive views of autism including pushing back against cures and treatments and promoting neurodiversity. It is refreshing to see from a parent of not one but twins with autism who were born prematurely and had to spend many weeks in the NICU.

The site is divided into several sections: Home, Fan Favorites, Prematurity, Parenting, Autism and a section for guest posts although a good number of the blog posts are from other authors. One unique feature is that the author offers what she calls "Unprofessional Development," a series of online training through her Facebook page and meetings via Zoom called "Beyond Behaviors," with one being presented this month and the other scheduled for August. Other posts include the disadvantages of Autism labels, ways to deal with society's expectation of "mourning" the loss of a perfect child once one is diagnosed with ASD, a comprehensive bibliography of Autism books and five communication options including the use of pictures, sign language and AAC devices. I was struck by one post, posing the question: Is Autism a Curse or a Gift? Something interesting to reflect on, for sure. Last, but not least, there's The Actually Autistic section including a post asking for writers with Autism and one by the author of The Edge of the Playground, that I downloaded. I liked this website a lot but I wish there had been more of the author's posts rather than so many guest author posts but all in all, it's worth a look

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When a parent finds out that his or her child has a diagnosis of ASD, it is almost a given that the first approach they turn to is ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) as it is now seen as the Gold Standard of treatment especially for very young children. Tabletop drills may not always be enough to reinforce needed skills that parents want their children to learn. Katie Cook, M. Ed, BCBA, came up with a clever little book of activities that parents can do with their child at home (ideal for quarantine!) that are designed for teaching a wide variety of skills while having fun.

Each section has activities that address such challenges as communication, sensory processing issues, socialization, emotional regulation and dealing with stress and anxiety (not an easy thing to do these days!) Examples include Share the Pear (Ages 4-11), where the players pass a pear around and when the timer goes off, whoever is holding the pear loses and is out. This is a variation of Hot Potato and is purported to help the children learn sharing with others. The Barrier Game (Ages 7-11) has the mother and child sit back-to-back and one of them is designated as the leader who draws a picture or builds a simple structure out of clay or blocks and instructs the student how to make it, step-by-step. When the directions are completed, they both turn around and compare what they did, and then they can switch places; they can see what mistakes were made and giggle over the results and have fun while learning about communication and taking turns. Each activity includes the age range, materials needed and instructions. At the end, there is always a charming watercolor painting of a child engaged in that activity. This is a delightful and practical tool for parents as a supplement to ABA therapy or even as a standalone tool in itself as it makes learning these important life skills fun!
RAINBOW MEDITATION SCRIPT

- Get comfortable. Close your eyes and relax.
- Take a deep breath in through your nose, and breathe it out slowly through your mouth.
- Now just breathe normally and relax.

- Imagine a big, beautiful rainbow in front of you. See all of its colors. Feel the colors.

- Imagine the color red is glowing brighter than the rest, and there is red all around you.
  - Breathe in the color red. Think to yourself: I am safe. Say to yourself: I feel safe.

- Now, imagine the color orange is glowing brighter, and orange is all around you.
  - Breathe in orange. Think to yourself: I feel my feelings stirring in my body. Say to yourself: I feel peaceful.

- Next, imagine the color yellow is glowing and is all around you.
  - Breathe in yellow. Think to yourself: I am powerful. Say to yourself: I feel confident.

- Now, imagine the color green is glowing brighter, and there is green all around you.
  - Breathe in the color green. Think to yourself: My family and friends love me, and I love them. Say to yourself: I feel loved.

- Imagine the color light blue is getting brighter, and light blue is all around you.
  - Breathe in the glowing light blue. Think to yourself: People listen when I talk, and I am a good listener. Say to yourself: I feel heard.

- Now, imagine the color dark blue also called indigo is getting brighter, and indigo is all around you.
  - Breathe in indigo. Think to yourself: I have a great imagination. Say to yourself: I see great things happening for me.

- Now, imagine the color purple is getting brighter, and the color purple is all around you.
  - Breathe in purple. Think to yourself: I am wise. Say to yourself: I am smart.

- Take one last look at your big, bright, beautiful rainbow, and notice if you see anything (pause), feel anything (pause), hear anything (pause), or notice anything else (pause).

- Now take a deep breath, and wiggle your toes.
- Take another deep breath, and wiggle your fingers.
- Take one last deep breath, and open your eyes when you are ready.
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