

**What is an Autism Spectrum Disorder?**

A neurobiological disorder. Affects perception. Communication and Social Challenges.

Can affect motor skills. Exhibits uneven learning profile. Presents differently in everyone.

Sensory - easily under or over stimulated. Organization and prioritization challenges. Often suffers from anxiety.

**What might it look like in a classroom?**

May appear inattentive or bored. May see repetitive behaviors (rocking, finger movements). May display different emotions when stressed.

May have poor awareness of body in space. Lacking organizational skills. Strong focus on one task at a time. Difficulty with group work.

Trouble staying on topic and maintaining conversations. Literal interpretation of words. Knowledgeable in areas of interest.

**What are the strengths of an autistic student?**

“Out of the box” thinker. Task oriented. Reliable, once expectations are understood.

Ability to maintain prolonged, intense focus on subjects of interest, Excellent long term and rote memory.

Excellent visual-spatial skills, Intelligent, Strong attention to detail.

**What are the challenges of an autistic student?**

May misread social cues. Stress relieving activities may make other uncomfortable. Intelligence and large vocabulary may hide challenges.

Sensory perception can interfere with learning. Multi-tasking is extremely difficult. Difficulty with changes and how transitions are communicated.

Limited sense of time/use of time. Difficulty with changes and how transitions are communicated. Limited sense/use of time. May be stressed with group work.

**What can I do to help support this student’s learning?**

- Provide quiet areas for learning and test taking
- Respect student’s chosen level of eye contact
- Allow for sensory items
- Provide hands on learning and visual aids

- Provide peer mentors
- Allow extra transition time
- Allow for adjusted seating placement
- When under stress, ask if the student would like to leave for a few moments

- Talk to the student and find out what they like/need
- Allow more time
- Provide step by step written instruction
- Talk to the student and find out what they like/need