

## Visual Supports and Routines

Visual cue cards can be really effective for easing working memory and for co-regulation

The only part of the autistic brain that is not effected by autism is their visual processing. This is a simple way to describe how easy visual information is processed.

This is because the visual input goes directly from the eyes to the action part of the brain.

### Using Token Boards as a Structure for Building Learning Routines.

Reward based systems are so helpful for those with autism. Everyone lives on a token economy. We all earn or receive something of value when we do things. Due to developmental delays, the ability to tap into one's intrinsic motivation is probably delayed, too, and needs extra support!

Ease working memories and reduce cognitive overload by giving a token every couple minutes. It's a gentle reminder that a something enjoyable is coming soon, and they can stretch their learning muscles.

ASD brains flourish on system-based processes that are predicable. Providing the tokens, is a quiet systematic tool, and routines will build on them rather quickly.

### How to Make and Use a Token Board! [nancyroop.com/blog](http://nancyroop.com/blog)



## Take Back to Class Accommodation Guide

Student Led: use favorite topics & characters.

Audiobooks and read alouds: listen then create three action pictures from the story.

Paras can scribe for a student so they can get their ideas down with less frustration.

Reduce the number of multiple choice answers to two.

Give the answer key of the review sheets to students with blanks for them to copy one or more words based on their level. Or they can use a highlighter to highlight the answer already given which allows the review the correct information!

**Empathy, compassion,  
and patience are key!**



**DIRECTIONS:** Print page 1-4, two-sided with flipping on short edge.  
Fold in half with this page on the outside. Trim off 1.25 inches or leave for notes.  
Put two staples on folded side, approximately 1.5 inches from the top and bottom.

## Reduce the Executive Functions

When you approach accommodations, think of what executive functions are not needed to learn the learning objective. This will reduce the cognitive load.

1. identify the learning objective
2. Identify what functions to complete the work
3. Make a change to the tasks per student's needs

### Executive Function Supports

Organization: sample of finished product, organizers

Planning: list the steps in order

Task Initiation: adult initiates the first step

Working Memory: word banks--copy, or cut/glue

Impulse Control: focus on one step at a time by covering entire the list, except for one.

Emotional Control: visual "How are you feeling?"

Self Monitoring: check lists, check in with adult

Flexible Thinking: graphic organizers, assist with brainstorming. Social narratives about change



## Quick Tips for Reluctant Readers

Match text, pictures and graphics to sensory needs. Some hi-lo books or nonfiction graphics are overstimulating.

Older nonfiction is organized well, and pictures/graphics are not as overwhelming.

Avoid figurative language which takes more working memory.

Repeated readings, read alouds, shared, and audiobooks: they become comfortable with the text. All things new can be jolting, even books for some.

**Detective Questions:** Detectives go back to find their evidence. Normalize looking-back to the text to find information. Put page number as a clue on worksheets.

**Neurodivergent readers like familiarity and patterns. Books in a series are predictable and familiar.**



**Informational fiction is Real, Relatable, & Relevant!**

Use a word bank.

Color code with lines or dots.

Use same colors consistently.



frog fish turtle shark skate

1. What animal is Stephen's favorite? \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 13)
2. What was too scary for Stephen? \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 21)
3. What animal helped Stephen feel calm? \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 81)

DIRECTIONS: which word tells...

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

aquariums ● where _____	carefully ● _____
turtles ● what _____	last summer ● _____
slowly ● _____	inside ● _____
the tank ● _____	Alex ● _____
Jordan ● _____	sandbar ● _____

DIRECTIONS: expand the sentence.

He walked to the frogs.

Who? \_\_\_\_\_ Stephen

When? \_\_\_\_\_ he felt scared

Where? \_\_\_\_\_ at the Aquarium, or The Big Aquarium

Stephen walked to the frogs when he felt scared at the aquarium.

## Using Sticky Notes

When it comes to assignments, I use short task lists that include several steps, and check them off as the student completes them. When the student is able to task-switch, easily, they can add the check marks.

Post-its are great, but you can also use preprinted lists, or laminated cards for routine tasks. Below are three lists:

The first pink one is for kids that can read. Write out three steps, and check them off when completed.

The second pink one, is for nonreaders. Create a simple picture guide, or symbols that represent the tasks. This creates a structure which helps with staying on task.

The yellow post it is a sample for a fifth grader who is not on the diploma track. This list is modified from what the teacher asked of all the students. This method also works for kids that follow the curriculum, but just need support to stay on task, while having breaks during work time.

## Create Short Checklists



- ✓ Listen to teacher's lesson.
- 2. Write 3 notes in notebook.
- 3. Write 4 definitions pg 2.
- 4. Color 3 states on USA map.
- 5. Choice time: 5 minutes.

# "Repeat assignments daily for up to a week focusing on the content standard."



This method stays on grade level, but with repetition and a slower pace.

Student listens to some/all of the teacher's lesson everyday.

The teacher/paraeducator makes 3-5 copies of assignment/work.

Student repeats the lesson with high to low scaffolds/modifications throughout the week.

Move on when the next unit starts.

Remember Errorless Learning when working one-to-one! This promotes encoding the correct information.

## Create a Picture Book One Page a Day!

For kids who have a para, and are not on the diploma track, create a book based on something in their life, a favorite topic, or their personal history.

Use a binder, lined paper, and plain white paper.

Write a word, phrase, or a sentence on lined paper, and one picture illustrating it on plain paper.

Use a hole punch and put it in a binder.

When pages are finished, create cover art and a title page.

Read the book often and maybe to the class!

### Scaffolding

Discuss the process and choices with the student.

If the student has trouble getting started: para writes two sentence options, and asks the student for their idea, and writes it down.

Then the student chooses a sentence. Depending on their skills and self-regulation, they can copy it, cut and glue it onto the book's page, or type it on a Ptouch label maker.

For a student who needs support with drawing. Para can sketch a picture for student to trace and color. This provides a framework for the student to feel successful!





[Visual Cards: 1. PRINT 2. TRIM 4.5 inches wide from outer edge and 1.5 inch from top 3. LAMINATE back-to-back.]

I am feeling...

Angry or Upset



Afraid or Nervous



Ready to Learn



## STEPHEN'S QUICK TIP FOR STAYING CALM



When I start to feel too much in my body, I can take deep breaths.  
I breathe in with a deep belly-breath and count to five: **1 2 3 4 5**.  
I focus on the numbers and remember to go slowly.  
Then, I exhale slowly and count backwards from five: **5 4 3 2 1**.  
I repeat these two more times.  
I look at frogs, squeeze a toy, or listen to music.

