

# Autistically Thriving: Sensory Sense-Making Autistic Style

## Helpful Hints

### Help in Autistic Friendly Ways

**Reduce conversation**-usually people have an urge to talk more when helping. Autistic neurology benefits from less talking during times of sensory overload and in stressful situations.

**Use visuals**-frequently (Hint: Remember to preteach the meaning of visuals.)

**Use statements vs. questions- for example:**

QUESTION (no): "Which puzzle do you want to do next?"

STATEMENT (yes) "When you are finished with snack, you get to choose between the Star Wars Puzzle or the Harry Potter Puzzle.

**Be predictable & provide prediction**-always consider neurological surprise and how to reduce it

### Use Proactive Feel-Good Activities

**Embed frequent regulation breaks throughout daily schedule**- try to be more proactive (promoting continued regulation) and less reactive (waiting to dysregulation)

**Provide access to regulation strategies**- 100% of the time. Include them in the daily routines (e.g., movement strategies during learning tasks, fidgets during meals, etc.)

**Structure the breaks**-use visual choice icons/visual schedule and practice feel-good activities to increase comfort and familiarity (practice a lot)

**Offer & explore a variety of feel-good activities**-help the autistic person find strategies that are regulating to their neurology (not to the helper's neurology)

**Use break statements vs. questions to reduce conversational clutter**- For example:

QUESTION (no): "Do you want to take a break?"

STATEMENT (yes) "When you are finished with the puzzle, you can choose 1: trampoline or bounce on ball."

### Be Curious

**Consider the autistic neurology at all times**- how could the way that a person thinks and experiences the world contribute to what you observe?

**Consider how you can change or adapt your own behavior to promote an autistic person's success** (what can I do differently next time to be more supportive?)

**Consider how you can adapt the environment and tasks**- promote feelings of safety and regulation all of the time

**Use a Regulation Approach (not a Compliance Approach)**

REGULATION: Empower autistic people by helping them to discover their own unique sensory experiences & what they need to feel safe and regulated; focus is on honoring the autistic neurology

COMPLIANCE: Teaching an autistic person to follow demands and meet goals set by 'others'; focus is on 'fixing' the autistic neurology