



Proactive Strategies: General Guidelines

Why do we set the environment up proactively?

- ✘ Being proactive allows the individual with special needs to prepare ahead for often challenging situations.
- ✘ It also allows them to pick up on the most essential details to increase understanding and success.
- ✘ Proactive strategies are often visual and structured, enabling increased understanding, stability, comfort and benefit than auditory information provided which can be short-lived and/or missed in the midst of other activity.
- ✘ With increased understanding, comfort and predictability comes decreased anxiety and behavior and increased independence and success.

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What proactive components are necessary?

- ✘ Proactive strategies often involve visual information and structure to materials, setting, and physical environment to lend predictability.
- ✘ We can provide proactive strategies that provide the individual with information about duration, materials, people, boundaries, setting and other circumstances and expectations of their environment.
- ✘ When and where can we teach these skills?
- ✘ Any setting or circumstance can be set up proactively so that the individual has information about the activities and expectations of themselves, others, and surroundings within that environment.

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How do we use proactive strategies?

- ✘ It is important to understand disorders such as ASD to best identify some strategies that might be useful to most individuals with similar challenges (e.g., countdowns, stoplights, first-then, timers, choice boards, and schedules).
- ✘ However, understanding the particular characteristics, needs and work habits of each individual will assist with the proactive strategies of most benefit, the information most needed for the individual to gain independence, and the particular format and/or adaptations necessary (e.g., written, icons, object).
- ✘ Proactive strategies are best introduced in 1:1 situations.
Supportive techniques for prompting attention and the skills and independence to make use of the strategies include:
 - ✘ Differential responding to emphasize behaviors that we would like to see repeated and those that we prefer not
 - ✘ Structured prompting methods to support at the level needed but also allowing for independence
 - Errorless learning
 - Guided compliance
 - ✘ Other supports
 - Visual cueing (e.g., picture cues, scripting)
 - Social narratives
 - Self-talk
- ✘ Consistency important!
- ✘ Data should guide the process—which skills to target, where to begin and when progress is being made.