

Completing Tasks and Executive Functioning



Here are some further tips and strategies that can be used to help autistic girls complete tasks and help with executive functioning:

- ⇒ **Ensure that she is ready to start a task by not seating her or pairing her up with a child who will distract her.**
- ⇒ **When completing a task, have an option of spaces that she can go to such as the library or a quiet space if she needs time out or to break for a few minutes.**
- ⇒ **Check in with her at the start, middle and the end of a task to ensure that she is on track and has sustained attention. Sometimes she may forget what to do next or remember where she is up to. Keep visual instructions that she can go back to and check in when she looks unsure.**
- ⇒ **Be aware that she may present different levels of executive functioning depending on her engagement in a task. For example, she may show sustained attention for a topic she likes but may struggle to complete a task if she is emotionally distressed.**
- ⇒ **Her executive functioning does not only affect her school work. It may also impact her social interactions because of challenges with her response inhibition, flexibility and her emotional control.**
- ⇒ **Provide her with clear written or visual instructions to reinforce what you have said.**
- ⇒ **Regularly check for understanding of verbal and written instructions as she may not ask for help.**
- ⇒ **Give her the big picture. For instance she may benefit from understanding the end result before beginning her work.**

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- ⇒ Help her understand time. For example use an analogue clock so she can see time passing and plan how to use it. Also break tasks into smaller steps and help her determine the time needed to complete each step.
- ⇒ Help her get organised with lots of visual prompts, including colour codes for each subject or picture sequences.

For the purposes of this Fact Sheet, which is a supplement to 'Spotlight on Girls with Autism: Supporting Autistic Girls at School' website, we are using the pronouns 'she/her'. Yellow Ladybugs recognises all gender identities and we emphasise that this information may also be relevant to autistic cis-boys and gender diverse autistic individuals, and equally that this information may not always be applicable to all autistic girls/women.