Strategies for Learning and Teaching

The NCSE Policy Advice Paper No.5, *Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Schools* (2015), provides a list of 34 interventions which are 'shown across a number of reviews to be effective

for some children and young people with ASD.' NCSE Policy Advice (2015).

These interventions include

- Early intensive behavioural interventions
- Structured play groups
- Cognitive behaviour interventions
- Antecedent-based interventions
- Task analysis
- Functional communication training
- Social Communication training
- Joint attention
- Naturalistic intervention or naturalistic teaching strategies
- Modelling
- Exercise
- Picture exchange communication system
- Reinforcement
- Visual support
- Scheduling
- Social Skills Training

The full list of 34 interventions is available in **Appendix 5: List of Interventions** at

http://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/1_NCSE-Supporting-Students-ASD-Schools.pdf

Evidence-Informed Instructional Interventions for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

SESS has developed a video (20 mins) to demonstrate a number of the evidence-informed instructional interventions that teachers working with students with Autism Spectrum Disorder may draw upon to promote and facilitate development and learning.

The video shows a selection of evidence-informed practices in action, looking at the development of social skills, communication and language, behaviour, life-skills, learning and exercise. The interventions are based on and aligned to the identified needs of the student with autism and linked to targeted learning outcomes. The selected interventions may be implemented in all educational settings.

Click below to view this video.

Evidence-Informed Instructional Interventions for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder from SESS on Vimeo.

For additional Video Clips which illustrate difficulties associated with ASD and related teaching approaches, click on the link below.
Click here for additional video clips on teaching approaches

Strategies for Developing Social Communication and Social Interaction

- Be aware of the importance of play as a means of developing social communication
- Establish a relationship with the pupil based on consistency and predictability, developing the pupil's trust and confidence
- Structure opportunities for the pupil to play alone, with a partner, in small groups and in larger groups
- Enable the pupil to make choices and develop independence within the overall framework
- Support the pupil through activities she/he finds challenging
- Identify effective rewards and reinforcers
- Help pupils to recognise their own feelings and the feelings of others
- Structure activities and routines using visual prompts
- Specific social interaction skills need to be taught, using real social situations. Remember that pupils with ASD are literal thinkers and they are often confused by the rules that govern social behaviour
- Adopt reverse inclusion and 'buddy systems' as a feature of inclusion policy and practice
- Help the pupil to understand the value of communication and why we communicate
- Use visual material and/or signing to support and facilitate the pupil's communicative initiations and responses
- Secure the pupil's attention prior to issuing instructions/engaging in conversation.
- Teach the social aspects of language such as turn taking and timing (some turn taking activities may include board games, hitting a balloon back and forth, telephone conversations, bouncing a ball back and forth, etc.)
- Teach gestures, facial expressions, emotions, vocal intonation and body language
- Always refer to the pupil by name as he/she may not realise that 'everyone' includes them
- Keep verbal instructions brief and simple and support with visual when possible
- Structure opportunities for pupils to practice skills in different situations
- Use stories to teach social communication/interaction.
- Develop social skills programmes to include peers
- Directly teach jokes, puns and metaphors

Strategies for Restrictive, Repetitive Behaviours, Interests and Activities

- Pupils must be helped to cope with new and/or varying activities
- Use object, visual or written timetables
- Structure the classroom environment to reduce distractions
- Provide structures that assist pupils in understanding the duration of tasks.
- Implement structured and systematic programmes to develop the pupil's fine and/or gross-motor skills.
- Pre-empt the pupil's anxiety that results from being presented with unstructured or unfamiliar situations without prior warning/explanation.
- Be aware of the difficulties for pupils inherent in less structured situations such as break, lunchtime, in the corridor and in transitions between lessons
- Build in calming and relaxing periods or movement breaks throughout the child's day

- Devise and implement a structured play/leisure programme.
- Teach play scripts
- Make adjustments to the classroom to address the pupil's under sensitivity/oversensitivity to noise, smell, taste, light, touch or movement.
- Elicit relevant information regarding the pupil's eating, drinking and sleeping irregularities.
- Develop the role of ICT in meeting the pupil's needs associated with ASD and facilitating all curriculum areas
- Understand the function of behaviour which may be challenging
- Teach alternative, appropriate behaviours such as asking for help, asking for a break, completing a calming activity or using relaxation techniques
- Collaborate with all stakeholders to develop Individual Educational Plans that focus on the pupil's communication, social and behavioural needs and on providing access to the curriculum