

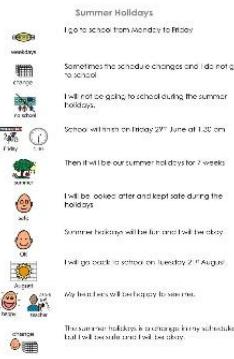
Supporting Neurodivergent Children and Young People – Strategies

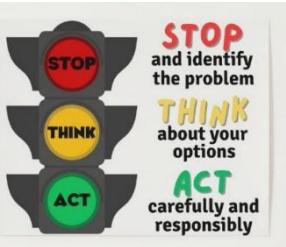
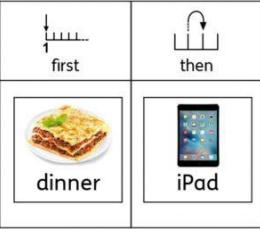
Here is a summary of the strategies we mentioned in our session on supporting neurodivergent children and young people. There are many different strategies available to try and we hope some of these will be helpful, you know your child best so please adapt and use these as suits you and your child's needs!

What helps strategies to work

These are some tips to hopefully help strategies to be successful!

- Staying positive
- Responsibility and autonomy
- Modelling
- Sticking to plans
- Be aware of your own reactions – looking after yourself first

Area for support	Strategies
Managing feelings of anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Relaxation techniques – mindfulness, journaling, regular exercise, controlled breathing.- Creating calm and predictable routines with visual supports.- Break down instructions into clear, achievable steps.- Trying to reduce avoidance of the difficult situation as a common response to anxiety – remember times they have still done what they were anxious about before!
Encouraging open conversations and voicing concerns/worries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Have conversations in safe and familiar environments.- Try talking while doing another activity side by side e.g. driving or baking to take pressure off and reduce eye contact.- Open questions – this website has some helpful ideas for question prompts Conversation starters (Young Minds)
Managing changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Social stories and visuals can help communicate upcoming changes and prepare your child for what is going to happen.- If a big change is happening can some ownership be given on deciding a small part of the change to allow some feelings of control.- Stay positive – remind your child of the things which won't change like you and your support!- If your child is ready, practice small changes in a safe place like home to help build coping strategies and tolerance for changes. We must also be aware that for some young people routines are help them feel safe so don't suddenly make changes without first discussing this together.

<h3>Identifying and supporting their strengths</h3> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific positive praise and recognition – give more attention to the behaviours you want to see. Support their strengths and interests – see if these can be developed further with others who share their interests - Autism Society has a directory of local groups on their website. Find neurodivergent role models your child might be interested in – this link contains a few examples although there are many more than this! Neurodivergent and Disabled Role Models Model positive talk about yourself. Toolkit which be completed with your child to help identify their normal - know-your-normal-toolkit-ambitious-about-autism.pdf
<h3>Supporting learning at home</h3> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop, think, act! Encourage your child to think before acting and consider all the options – practice by playing turn taking games e.g. Uno. Schedule in frequent breaks. Break tasks into small, achievable steps. Externalise memory and time with visual supports (i.e., egg/digital timer). Break down routines into clear steps which can be repeated daily for example, a checklist of their before school routine – shower, make lunch etc to put up somewhere visible to support working memory and independence. Use reminders on phones.
<h3>Staying on task</h3> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First...then... - use a preferred activity as motivation for a nonpreferred task. Consider a quality expectation too if they are likely to rush to get to the activity they want. Discuss distractions with your child and what can be done to reduce these. Beat the clock – turn it into a game/race to make completing the task more interesting. Agree cues – decide with your child a cue to remind them to stay on task. Praise – give your child attention and praise when they are on task and less when they are off task.
<h3>Further resources</h3>	<p>Helpful books:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>12 Principles for Raising a Child with ADHD</i> – Russell A. Barkley <i>Starving the Anxiety Gremlin</i> - Kate Collins-Donnelly <i>Smart But Scattered The Revolutionary Executive Skills Approach to Helping Kids Reach Their Potential</i>- Dawson & Guare & Guare <p>Pinpoint - Parent-led charity</p> <p>SEND Information and Advice Support Service (SENDIASS) - Cambridgeshire service</p> <p>Self-care for parents and carers Anna Freud - Information about the importance of self-care for parents/carers</p> <p>Ambitious about Autism - Autism charity who put autistic voices at the center</p> <p>Epic Think Learn - (webinars and resources for parents to support neurodivergent children and young people)</p>