

I am teaching an eleven year old girl with Asperger's Syndrome. She has no real understanding of time despite being able to 'read' the clock. I do regularly work with her relating the time to what is happening. Her difficulty is so great that she can't remember/access events which happened even a few minutes ago. Any suggestions?

Answer 1.

Use a visual timetable for the time he/she is in school as children with ASD or Asperger's learn better visually. It might be possible to use words with older children. Separate time into periods such as:

9.00 - 9.30 English

9.30 - 10.00 writing

As each session passes, the child can score it out. It would also be possible for the teacher to add in extras if need be. Although it might seem a little childish for your eleven year old, the abstract nature of time is difficult to grasp and understanding comes better if they can 'see' it.

Answer 2

Maybe you are trying to define time in units which are still too small for the child to grasp. Perhaps you need to go back to the stage where there is one event per day, such as Thursday is swimming day. You could illustrate this with pictures or a symbol. Later on you can start to break down each day into events. You might like to use a picture daily journal with symbols including a clock without numbers. Make cardboard clocks which you can use to teach the time by folding the clock, 1/4 past, 1/2 past etc. Each child is different so these are only suggestions, not answers.

For some young children they can learn to relate time to major events in their life, e.g. how many bedtimes until the event.

How do you teach a boy of 14 with Asperger's that he really needs to wash himself and not wait for his parents to do it for him as is happening now? His parents have approached me for help.

Answer 1

You should use this as the subject of social skills lessons. Try working with photos and emphasise how well the clean appearance of people looks. Discuss with him different words for the varying levels of cleanliness – e.g. filthy to spotless. Then make a list of steps a person needs to do to get to that level of cleanliness, e.g. wash face/hands (with warm water and soap – then rinse and dry). Use pictures to illustrate. This will help to build a pattern of activity required. Use the TEACCH approach to work backwards through the steps.

Make sure his parents are fully involved in this approach and they are doing it the same way. This is all background to helping him understand the reason why we keep clean. He then needs to be explicitly taught the skills to perform the tasks. This will take some

time but once all the skills are mastered you could use a visual (pictorial or words) list/schedule to help him remember what he needs to do and in what order.

Build up the sequence slowly from the last step to the first. Teach the last step first and let him know that this is the bit he does while you help with the rest. Once he can master that one give him the last but one to do – and so on. If he is one of the people who insist rigidly on routine he probably needs a rule - as soon as you get up in the morning – you have “A wash” – the skills of “A wash” have been taught and sequenced.

Any ideas on teaching mental maths problems to two children with Asperberger's (one aged 6 and one aged 7years). I needs something that will appeal to their 'visual' way of learning.

Answer 1

Traditional dice and board games with lots of pictures to help give them a picture/image of numbers to 6 can really help. Starting with real objects like sweets going from actual handling to imagining. 'If your friend Philip comes and you have 6 sweets and share them, how many will you have each' etc. Sweets are great because they can count colours etc - (although the numbers might fluctuate if they decide to eat them instead of counting them.).

Answer 2

I think you need to make sure they understand what the words in the problem mean. Have large words which they will find in the problem, on cards with the symbols beside them, A different colour for each operation will help. This would help them to relate the word with the symbol more quickly This assumes the pupil can actually carry out the operation. It is important to check just what is causing the problem; whether it is the language or if it is the need to switch between operations. If it is the language used, you might need to spend some more time on one type of operation at a time. They may not be ready to deal with mixed operations yet . If the children can do the work where there is only one operation involved then you know what the problem is. You then need to do lots of work involving working out what the operation is.

Something like:

you: less than

child: minus (or subtract, whatever you use)

you: more than

child: plus

You: more than

child: plus

etc etc etc

Just to check that the child actually knows what the operation means, get them to write it down at the same time as naming it. This kind of 'game' could be sent home for parents to work on also.