



CENTRE FOR AUTISM  
MIDDLETOWN

## Setting Up Work at Home

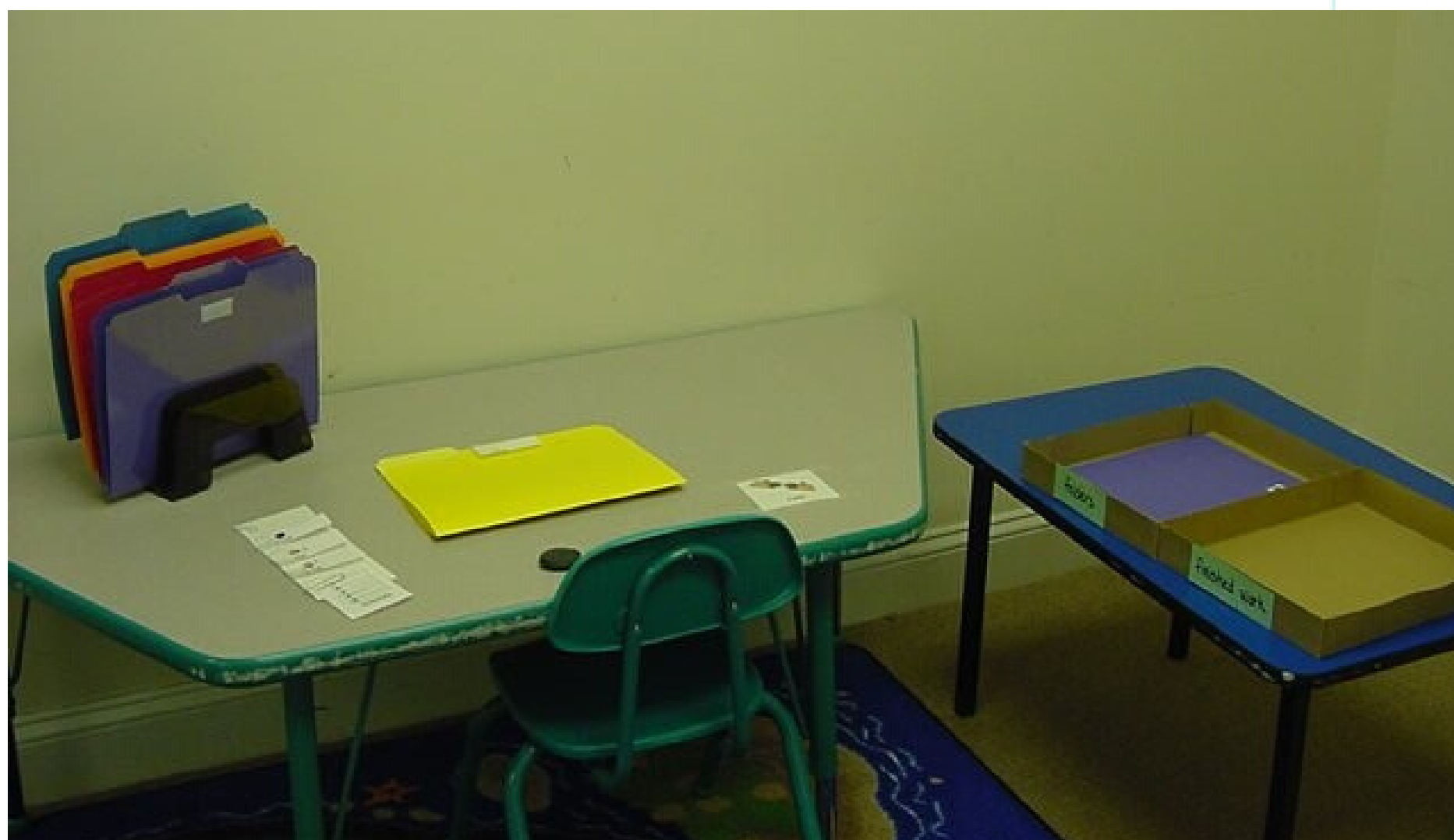
Many children and young people with autism will enjoy participating in educational activities at home. Engaging in clear and concrete tasks may be reassuring for your child at a time when everything else seems confusing and unpredictable.

Your child's school may have set work to be completed or you may be accessing some of the educational websites and apps to download activities.

When setting up work tasks, the suggestions below may be helpful in supporting learning.

### Practical Strategies

- Ensure demands are realistic. It might take your child some time to become used to working at home and he/she may be feeling anxious in response to the changes. Start with work tasks which are familiar to them, even if it is repeating work already completed. This will ensure the work is within their ability level and will give a sense of achievement. They will then be more likely to engage in the work activities and become used to the new routine of working at home.
- Limit distractions. Set up a work area with minimal distractions. Place only work materials on the table and remove any other objects, such as toys, dishes, cutlery etc. It may be helpful if your child is facing a blank wall with no window, pictures or photographs. Switch off the TV, radio, computer etc, or if the home environment is very noisy with other children, headphones or ear plugs could be provided during work times.
- Set up work areas. Structuring the environment can help your child to understand what to expect in work tasks. For example, you may use one table for independent work and another table for times when you will be teaching/working with your child. If you do not have 2 separate tables available, you can indicate the difference by having one chair placed at the table for independent work, and 2 chairs placed at the table for one-to-one time with your child.
- Use a colour coding system. You can allocate a different colour to each subject e.g. Literacy- red, Numeracy - blue, World Around Us- green, History - yellow, Science- brown etc. Place a coloured mat or piece of card on the table to correspond to the subject your child is about to engage in so that they know what to expect. Use this same colour coding system to place coloured labels on books and folders to clarify which subject they are for. This will help them to independently organise their own work materials.
- Organise the work tasks. Your child may be able to independently work through a series of tasks if they are organised appropriately. For example, place worksheets in separate folders and place the folders in a pile on the table. Your child starts with the top folder and works through each folder until all are completed. Ensure there is a tray or box where they place each folder as the work is completed.





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**Practical Strategies Continued;**

· Provide a means to ask for help. Ensure your child has access to an appropriate way to ask for help if struggling with a task. You may have a small visual support card on the table with the word or symbol for help on it. Teach them to give this to you when they are having difficulty in an activity.



· Schedule regular breaks. Your child is likely to need movement or calm breaks at regular intervals while working. Include these breaks on their schedule or provide them with a visual support which they can use to request a break.

· Teach Change. Things do not always go to plan. Teach your child a consistent way to understand change by helping them associate it with a visual symbol. The visual systems below teaches the child or young person to change one activity to another, omit and activity or add an activity. This promotes more flexible thinking.

