

Motivating Autistic Children: A Look At Underlying Factors

Parents often struggle to motivate Autistic children to do chores, personal care, homework, and social activities. It's crucial to recognize that when an Autistic child "won't" do something, its often because they "can't" for various reasons.

By identifying, understanding, and taking steps to support the reasons a child "can't", parents can improve the child's confidence and ability to engage in tasks and activities. Knowledge is the key to improving motivation.

Unmet Needs That Impact Motivation



1

Sensory Processing

Sounds, smells, textures, and lighting can make activities like personal hygiene, chores, homework, or socializing too much to bear for some Autistic children. For help with sensory processing, click [here](#).



2

Motor Challenges

Difficulty with fine or gross motor skills can make tasks requiring dexterity or coordination time consuming and difficult. This can make a child avoid those tasks. For help with motor challenges, click [here](#).



3

Past Experiences

Ruminating on memories of being frequently corrected, shamed, rejected, bullied, or overwhelmed can lead to behaviours to avoid tasks or situations where those experiences occurred. For help with rumination, click [here](#).



4

Executive Functioning (EF)

Many Autistic children face EF challenges impacting mental flexibility, planning, task completion, and self-control. Up to 70% have impaired EF due to ADHD. ADHD traits like impulsivity can clash with the autistic need for predictability. For help with EF, click [here](#).



5

Anxiety

Studies suggest at least 40% of Autistic children have clinical anxiety. Anxiety can make it difficult or impossible to remember learned skills because it disrupts the affects the thinking part of the brain. For help with anxiety, click [here](#).



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Processing Speed

Autistic children may have slow processing speed, taking extra time to process what they see or hear. They may need seconds, minutes or longer to react. This is not defiance or laziness. For help with processing speed, click [here](#).



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Social Communication

Autistic children often struggle with social cues, forming relationships and taking part in social activities. The result can rejection and low motivation to join social gatherings. For help with social communication, click [here](#).



8

Learning Profiles

Until the Autistic child is taught in the way they learn best, they may struggle to learn life and social skills, as well as academics. This can result in low confidence and low motivation to approach tasks. For help with learning profiles, click [here](#).



9

Intolerance of Uncertainty

Autistic children have a predisposition to anxiety related to uncertainty. Anxiety can spike when they don't know what to expect of a task or experience, or what will be expected of them. For help with intolerance of uncertainty, click [here](#).



10

Transitions

Autistic children can take longer to shift attention when they are deeply engaged in an activity. Transitioning from their hyperfocus to a low-interest task can be very difficult. For help with transitions, click [here](#).



11

Poor sleep

Autistic children commonly experience poor sleep. Tired children are less able to pay attention, focus, or have the stamina for physical tasks. For help with poor sleep, click [here](#).

Pinpointing the Barriers

Every Autistic child is unique. A parent who learns all they can about the child helps them thrive. A great way to gain important information about your child is to seek a psycho-educational assessment to understand how the child learns, and a comprehensive sensory motor assessment to learn how they experience the physical/sensory world around them.

To learn more, click [HERE](#) or scan the QR code!

