

Some Suggestions For Teaching Children How To Use The Educational Websites

Some children may like the education websites more than playing video games, but for many, reinforcers will need to be used especially at the beginning.

1. Teach them how to navigate the website

The goal is to ultimately let them go to the education website and use it on their own. To do this, they have to learn how to start the lesson and how to possibly end or save the lesson. They need to learn how to move around within that lesson or page. Also, teach them what not to press. Pressing the exit button may cause them to lose all their work.

2. The website material is for practice

It depends on the child, but many children with ASD have difficulty learning new material from the education websites. The websites may use language they do not understand, or they talk too fast, or do not explain clearly. Going to a website and then not knowing what to do or frequently responding incorrectly can make the child stop using the website very quickly.

Education websites are best used for giving the child more practice with a task he already knows how to do. For example, the child is already familiar with the names of colors, but needs more practice. Education websites can show pictures quickly and in various ways to help him practice these color names. Another example, the child knows what an adjective is. He needs to learn more though to improve his vocabulary. Websites can offer many examples and often in a fun and interesting manner.

3. Set the rules. Use reinforcers and a timer.

Demonstrate clearly to the child what buttons he can press and which ones he should not. Sometimes the websites will play a funny sound or a short song the child likes. He may try to keep hearing them. There also may be a certain scene the child wants to keep watching. Be aware of this kind of behavior and include that into the rules ("must watch the video correctly and not in a funny way" or "you cannot keep pressing that button").

To teach the child to keep playing, you can tell them they have to finish a certain level or play for a certain amount of time before they receive their reinforcer. Praise them every few minutes if they are using the website correctly.

As mentioned previously,

a. Ask what reinforcer they want.

b. State the rules clearly. Confirm they understand by asking them questions (e.g. "Can you keep pressing that bell many times," or "can you keep watching that cow scene many times?").

c. Set up two reinforcers and two time periods:

a) Small snack – for working nicely and following the rules. This will be given if the timer rings and the child did not do any inappropriate behaviors and followed the rules of the game. Knowing your child's history, consider how long the child can sit to do this task when determining how long to set the timer.

b) Larger snack – (for example, 2 big pieces of snacks) if the child finishes the assignment or if he plays for the specified time while also following the rules and not demonstrating any behavior issues

Give verbal praise to reinforce his positive behavior and to also remind him of the reinforcer he is working for ("good job working on the computer. You will get your snack soon.")

If the child doesn't follow the rules before the timer rings, reset the timer and tell him to try again. If he keeps having difficulty earning the reinforcer, decrease the amount of time he has to work before getting the reinforcer. Also increase the amount of social praise you give to him (instead of giving social praise every 2 minutes, give it every 1.5 minute). This will serve as a reminder to follow the rules.

4. Monitor the child frequently

Some children know how to use a computer and may try to go to YouTube or play video games online when you are not monitoring them. You can set up parent controls on the computer to prevent them from going to other websites. Go to YouTube to find videos like the one below that will teach you how to set up the parent controls. The video below is for a version of the Windows 11 operating system. Find out what version of Windows you have. Type that version name plus the keywords "parental controls" in YouTube to find the right video for you.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98GRWXPVSDI>

For Apple products, type in the keywords "parental controls" and the type of Apple device you have (e.g. Ipad, MacBook, etc.).