

# Helpful Tips when working with Children with Autism

## DO

- **Smile** when interacting with the students.
- **Wait and look for a response** when greeting – if not given time to process and respond, this may dent the student's self-confidence.
- In group activities, be a **positive role model** and demonstrate enthusiasm and good listening.
- **Let one adult lead** the activity – too many adults giving instructions is confusing!
- **Minimise language** at all times. Simplify sentences as much as possible and use gestures or pictures to back up communication.
- Provide **clear options** to choose from rather than free choices.
- Remember to use **visuals** to support understanding.
- **Avoid confrontation**. If possible, build empathy and work with the student to bring about a mutually desired outcome.
- When anxiety levels are rising, keep your **voice calm and low**.
- Encourage the student and **praise** appropriately to build self-esteem.
- **Have fun** and build a positive relationship!

## DON'T

- Use the word **naughty** or bad if you can help it. This will only serve to damage self-esteem.
- Use the word **"no"**. See if you can find a gentler way of phrasing what you want to say.
- **Physically move a child** unless safety is in issue, for themselves or others.
- **Allow a child to hurt you** if it is avoidable.
- Let the students see if you are **frustrated** and having a bad day. We all have bad days, but we have a responsibility to be good role models and exercise control.

Updated in March 2020. The above advice is based on our experiences at Freemantles of working with children who have autism and related difficulties