



# Four Strategies To Help Your Child With Autism At Home

proven tools to start  
incorporating today

[www.JacobsLadderResources.com](http://www.JacobsLadderResources.com)

# WELCOME!

During this unprecedented time, as families are navigating the challenges of schools being closed, we understand how difficult this season can be for children who have Autism.

We want to help.

At Jacob's Ladder we have served over 4,000 students in the last 26 years with various neurological and behavioral diagnoses.

Although your child may not have completed an evaluation with us, we want to share four specific strategies that we regularly utilize with our students diagnosed with autism. You can use these strategies today to start helping your child build a strong foundation to reach their full potential.

We hope this brings you a little bit of hope.

Sincerely,

## Amy O'Dell

Founder & Director, Jacob's Ladder



# Four strategies to help your child today

1 Redirect Self-Stimulatory Behaviors  
So your child can be more present minded

2 Proactively Plan A Well-Balanced Diet  
So your child's brain has the right nutrients

3 Embrace The Five Step Process  
To develop your child's processing skills

4 Utilize Zones of Regulation During The Day  
To teach your child self-regulation



# Strategy #1

## Redirect Self-Stimulatory Behaviors

- You might notice your child regularly exhibit self-stimulatory behaviors such as visual play, auditory stimulation, and tactile-seeking behaviors.
- All forms of sensory play need to be stopped and redirected as much as possible. The brain can form new neural pathways based on the stimulation it receives, but if your child frequently engages in self-stimulatory behaviors, it is reinforcing maladaptive pathways.
- Your goal is to redirect your child in those moments. This teaches them more adaptive ways of regulating so they build new neural pathways and be more present minded.



**See the next page for  
specific ways to  
redirect  
self-stimulatory  
behaviors**

# Strategy #1

## Redirect Self-Stimulatory Behaviors

1

If your child...

Seeks constant movement such as jumping, rocking or spinning

Activities you should do...

- Wind Sprints - [video link](#)
- Jumping Jacks - [video link](#)
- Helicopter Spins - [video link](#)
- Creep - [video link](#)

2

Engages in frequent tactile-seeking movements such as hand flapping, tapping, or squeezing and/or rubbing their hands and feet on various surfaces

- Deep Pressure - [video link](#)
- Tactile Glove - [video link](#)
- Hand Re-Education - [video link](#)
- Apply various textures around the house to their hands/feet such as rough, soft, smooth, and sticky substances

3

Participates in a high degree of visual play such as corner vision, lining up items, waving items in the periphery, fixating on lights or fans

- Flashlight Tag & Stomp - [video link](#)
- Visual Tracking - [video link](#)
- Remove access to items being used inappropriately

# Strategy #2

## Proactively Plan A Well-Balanced Diet

- During this time at home, it can be difficult to plan meals and make sure they are well balanced.
- Often times children on the autism spectrum have food sensitivities or aversions. It is important to take note of foods which may cause discomfort and inflammation and work to eliminate your child's intake of such foods. These can lead to inflammation and limitations to basic nutritional needs. This can impact many areas of physiological health and overall cognitive functioning.
- At Jacob's Ladder we recommend a well-balanced diet and utilization of key supplements for any area the child may be lacking.



# Strategy #2

## Proactively Plan A Well-Balanced Diet

1

### Basic Nutrients

The basic nutrients that are needed in a healthy diet are protein, carbohydrates, fat, vitamins, and minerals. It is important to remember that height and weight can be within the normative range, but your child can still be starving for basic nutrients.

Food	Recommended Serving Size
Milk, yogurt, cheese	2-3 servings
Vegetables	3-5 servings
Fruit	2-4 servings
Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, and nuts	2-3 servings

2

### Protein

Choose a complete protein: beef, eggs, milk, poultry, yogurt, tofu, fish, cheese, soy milk, and pork.

Age	Recommended Protein Intake
1 - 3 years	13 grams
4 - 8 years	13 grams
9 - 13 years	13 grams
14 - 18 years	Male: 52 grams Female: 46 grams
19+ years	Male: 56 grams Female: 46 grams



# Strategy #2

## Proactively Plan A Well-Balanced Diet

3

### Liquids

Drink water and avoid sugary beverages. Avoiding dehydration is critical for overall health, neurological function and system detoxification. As much as possible, seek the purest water.

Age	Recommended Water Intake
1 - 3 years	5 cups per day
4 - 8 years	7 cups per day
9 - 13 years	10 cups per day
14 - 18+ years	10 - 14 cups per day

4

### Sleep

Sleep plays a vital role in good health and well-being throughout your life. Refer to the recommended sleep durations by age below.

Age	Recommended Sleep Time
Infants (4 - 12 months)	12 - 16 hours a day
Toddler (1- 2 years)	11 - 14 hours a day
Preschoolers (3- 5 years)	10 - 13 hours a day
School-aged Children (6- 12 years)	9 - 12 hours a day
Teenagers (13- 18 years)	8 - 10 hours a day
Adults (18+ years)	7 - 8 hours a day



# Strategy #3

## Embrace The 5 Step Process

- When all of our schedules are in flux and stress levels might be higher during this time, we recommend your utilize the 5 Step Process when giving directives.
- Regularly using this tool not only teaches your child compliance- it builds receptive language, processing abilities, as well as reasoning and planning skills.
- This “closes the loop”, which means that information is neurologically received, processed, stored and utilized by your child. This factor is what develops new capacity in the brain.



## The Five Step Process

1. Obtain eye contact
2. Give the direction
3. Model the direction
4. Repeat the direction
5. End with specific praise



## The Five Step Process

1

### Obtain Eye Contact

Stand about 3 feet or less from your child. Call their name and obtain eye contact to confirm that they are engaged and ready for the instruction.

2

### Give The Direction

Give the direction, ensuring your language is concise and clear, limiting to 2-4 words per instruction. After giving the direction, pause and let your child process the information for 10-15 seconds with direct eye contact.

3

### Model The Direction

If your child does not complete the direction, model the direction for your child up to three times, teaching them the expectation. Each time the direction is given, pause and allow the child time to process the information.

4

### Repeat The Direction

Repeat the task and walk your child through the request. You may need to provide hand-over-hand support for successful completion of the task.

5

### End With Specific Praise

Provide a high degree of specific and positive feedback. Specifically praise the child for their engagement and for completing the task.

This sequence for providing directives should be completed multiple times throughout the day, as each time the child moves through the 5 steps, they are further building and myelinating pathways within the brain that support increased capacity for taking in, processing, and giving the appropriate output.

# Strategy #4

## Utilize Zones of Regulation

- Children with Autism may experience great challenges with self-regulation, especially during these unforeseen times.
- It is incredibly important to help your child understand their current feeling state as well as the corresponding strategies to help them achieve regulation. You can do this through a tool called the [Zones of Regulation](#).



# Strategy #4

## The Zones Of Regulation

	Blue	Green	Yellow	Red
How Your Child Is Behaving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tired</li> <li>• Hungry/Thirsty</li> <li>• Laying head on the desk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calm</li> <li>• Communicating effectively</li> <li>• Engaged in tasks presented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distracted</li> <li>• Pacing through room</li> <li>• Engagement in self-stimulatory behaviors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-compliance</li> <li>• Agression</li> <li>• Cying/Yelling</li> <li>• Tantrum/meltdown</li> </ul>
Self-Regulation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gross motor and cross-lateral movements</li> <li>• Snack/drink</li> <li>• Movement break</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High praise and encouragement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calming sensory input</li> <li>• Gross motor and cross-lateral movements</li> <li>• Deep breathing</li> <li>• Change of environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space alone to calm</li> <li>• Deep breathing</li> <li>• Swinging in a hammock</li> <li>• Cross-lateral movement within a controlled space</li> <li>• Organized deep sensory input</li> </ul>

- We regularly use this tool throughout the day with the students we serve. We encourage you to start using it with neutral moments at home so that when your child becomes heightened, they have a basic understanding of those tools and can begin to gain the skills to self-regulate.





# Take The Next Step

Call us to develop a game plan for your child

While these four strategies can be helpful for your child, we recognize that each child can have **various complexities**.

That is why at Jacob's Ladder, we evaluate and create a customized plan around the **whole child**, pulling from thousands of potential activities to help each child develop a better-connected brain and reach their full potential.

If you are looking for someone to talk to, we are here to listen and help. Schedule a call with us if you would like to discuss your child's needs and begin **developing a game plan** for your child.

[Schedule A Call](#)

[JacobsLadderResources.com](https://www.JacobsLadderResources.com)

770-998-1017



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