

Pre-academic

Designed for Parents, Teachers, and Teacher-aides.

Pre-academics

Pre-academics are the **foundation skills** children need before formal reading, writing, and math.

Examples:

- Matching, sorting, and identifying objects.
- Recognizing colors, shapes, and numbers.
- Following simple directions.
- Paying attention for short periods.

For autistic children, these skills are best taught on one-on-one basis or in a small group, with predictable hands on and visually displayed steps.

Why it matters

- Builds **confidence and readiness** for schoolwork.
- Strengthens **language, attention, and social routines**.
- Makes learning feel like a game rather than a demand.

How to introduce pre-academic skills

Start with strengths and interests

Use the child's favorite characters, toys, or topics. If they love cars, sort toy cars by color or size.

Use visuals and hands-on activities

- Picture cards, real objects, or simple charts instead of just words.
- Matching games, puzzles, or stacking blocks for counting.

Teach in short, predictable sessions

5–10 minutes at a time, same time and place each day.

Clear start and finish signals help the child feel safe.

Model and prompt gently

Show how to do it first, then let the child try. Offer gentle prompts and praise small successes.

Incorporate sensory breaks

Allow movement or calming activities between tasks to prevent overload.

Build in communication

Use simple language, sign, or picture exchange to help the child respond. Even pointing or eye-gaze counts as participation at first.

Tips for Success

- Keep tasks fun and at the **child's level**.
- Celebrate effort, not just correct answers.
- Slowly increase complexity as the child succeeds.
- Work with therapists or teachers for consistency.

Key takeaway:

Pre-academic skills aren't about pushing "schoolwork" early; they're about **creating positive learning experiences** through play, visuals, and small steps. When introduced gently and predictably, they give autistic children a strong start for future learning and feeling confident in the school setup.