



Children with Autism in Mainstream Classrooms: The Role of School Shadow Teacher

In the article “Autism in the Classroom”, Colihan (2008) discusses strategies to help children with Autism thrive in a mainstream classroom environment. Some of her proposed strategies include sharing your knowledge about the child to the teacher, giving the child easy instructions and practicing routines.

Being a busy working adult, it is always not easy to keep in constant contact with the child’s teacher, getting updates from teachers and also, updating the teacher on the child’s progress and needs. However, this issue can be mitigated by hiring a **school shadow teacher** to help build the bridge between the parent and the school. The strategies of a school shadow teacher are largely in line with Colihan’s (2008) strategies.

1. Sharing knowledge of child to the teacher

With the shadow teacher being constantly in school and frequently interacting with the child’s teachers, your child’s needs will be constantly conveyed to the teachers. The shadow teacher can also work with the school teachers in order to come up with suitable adjustments and strategies to help your child better fit into the mainstream school environment.

2. Giving child easy instructions

In many cases, children with autism tend to comprehend information more slowly than their peers. Therefore, these children may miss out on important things in class, especially when they are not able to digest their teacher’s instructions. With a shadow teacher, the shadow teacher can help translate the teacher’s instructions into a way

that the child is able to comprehend. The shadow teacher can also help take note of important things in class to ensure that the child does not miss out on these crucial information.

3. Practicing routines

A main goal of a school shadow teacher is to help familiarise the child to the routines of school (e.g. classroom routines, doing work routine). These routines are reinforced with a token economy that the shadow teacher frequently uses with the child. Hence, with a school shadow teacher, the child's daily activities and routines in school will be closely monitored. School routines that the child faces challenges with will be taught and practiced together with the school shadow teacher.

Are you a parent looking into hiring a shadow teacher for your child? Check out our school shadow programme at <http://nurturepods.com/our-services/school-support-program-school-shadowing-support/>

Interested in becoming a shadow teacher and impacting the lives of children with autism? Check out our school shadowing training course at <http://nurturepods.com/professional-certification-course-school-shadow-support/>

For more information, you may visit <http://nurturepods.com> or email us at admin@nurturepods.com

References

Colihan, K. (2008). Autism in the classroom. *WebMD*. Retrieved from <http://www.webmd.com/brain/autism/features/autism-in-the-classroom>