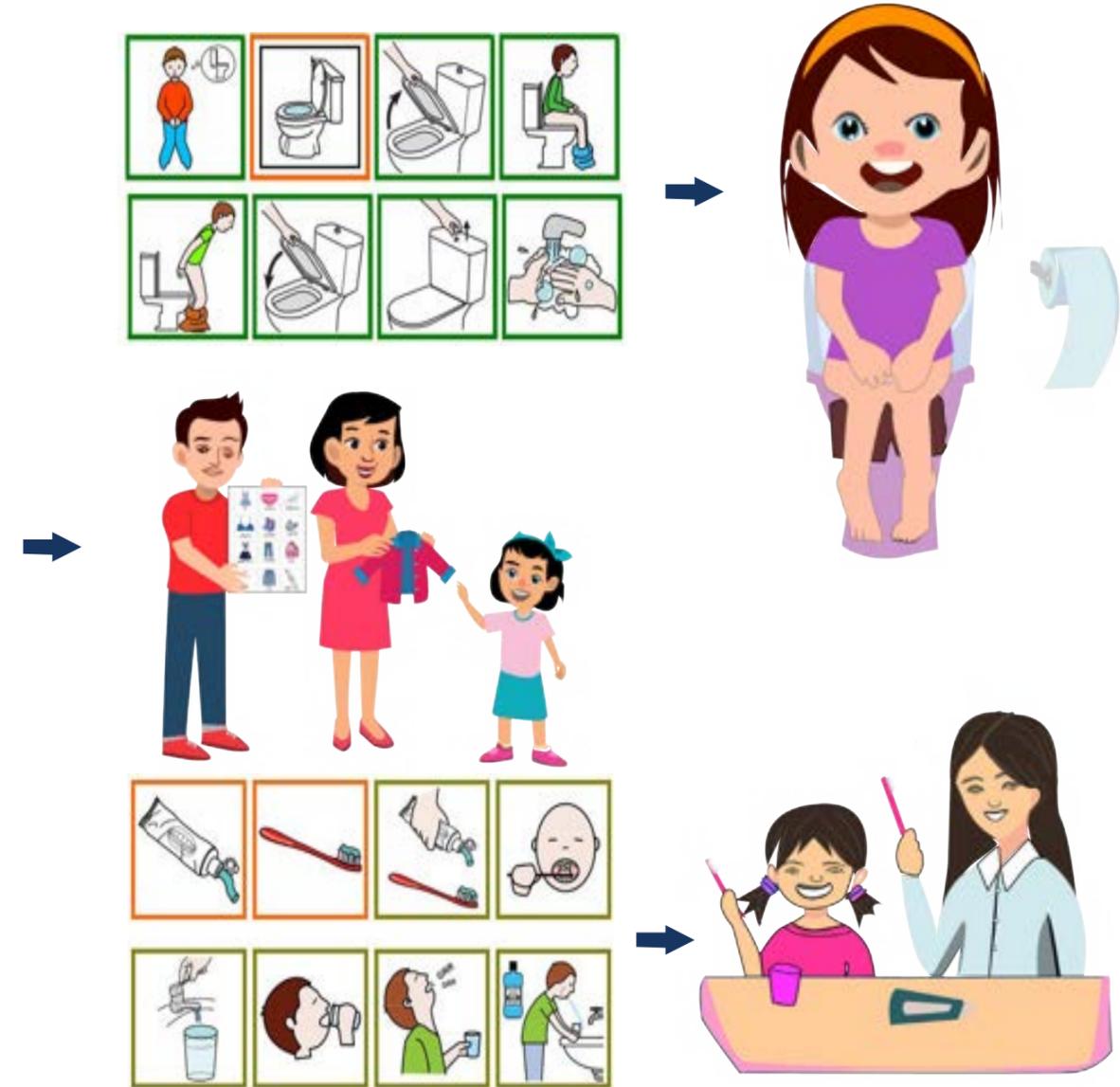


Card #1(A): Promoting Activities of Daily Living (ADL) in preparation to go to school



Romdoul struggled to brush, bathe and dress herself which are known as activities of daily living (ADLs). Romdoul could manage toileting and eat independently with support from her mother. With visual supports, such as pictures or symbols, **Romdoul** could carry out ADLs.

Additional Information

Children with autism have no motor deficits (muscle-related problems) and therefore they can perform ADLs moderately well compared to children with intellectual disability. However, children with autism have challenges in understanding sequences (which activities come before and after). They need help to understand the sequences of activities through pictures for they understand visuals better than words.

The following ADL activities can be promoted by simple visuals:

- **Bathing:** A sequence of pictures such as opening the bathroom door, using the mug to take and pour water, drying the towel etc., will help the child to bathe themselves.
- **Dressing:** Some children with autism may have fine motor challenges (for example buttoning the shirt) and therefore may need support.
- **Eating:** Though young children with autism may have difficulty chewing or swallowing food, and are picky eaters, by the time they come to school, they could overcome with adequate support.
- **Toileting:** Children with autism usually do not have challenges in toileting but have sequencing problems. In the case of **Romdoul**, her parents started to train her early on, so that she did not have difficulty in managing her bladder or bowel functions.

If you are struggling to develop visuals on ADLs, there are a variety of resources available through the internet to help you.

You may like to talk to your therapist, nurse or special educator or other professionals at CCAMH for more information and support.

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Card #1(B): Promoting Activities of Daily Living (ADL) in preparation to go to school



Her mom showed her a picture of a toothbrush and steps to complete brushing. Her mother said **“This is a toothbrush. We use it to brush our teeth.”** Then, her mom helped her to put toothpaste and showed her how to brush her teeth. Now Romdoul could brush her teeth every day independently.

Romdoul’s mom knows that it takes time and practice for **Romdoul** to learn new things and she is determined to help her reach her full potential.

Additional Information

With the right support, children with autism can easily learn and become independent so that they can attend school.

To make children with autism learn to do ADLs independently:

- Break down tasks into smaller steps. This will make the tasks seem less overwhelming and more achievable.
- Use visual supports, that are culturally appropriate which will enable your child to understand the sequences of activities and what they need to do.
- Praise the child (positive reinforcement) when he/she completes a task independently. This will make them feel confident and continue to learn and make progress.
- Be patient and consistent with the visual support. In case the chosen visual not working, try to modify or change the illustration/pictures in consultation with your therapist.

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Card #2(A): Romdoul goes to school - Learning style (Visual schedule)



Romdoul's parents created a visual schedule to help Romdoul understand the sequence of activities before going to school. The schedule shows Romdoul what she is supposed to do before going to school step by step.

Additional Information

Visual schedules can be a helpful tool for children with autism. They can help children understand what is happening and what is expected of them, which can reduce anxiety and help them to be more competent in carrying out the activities.

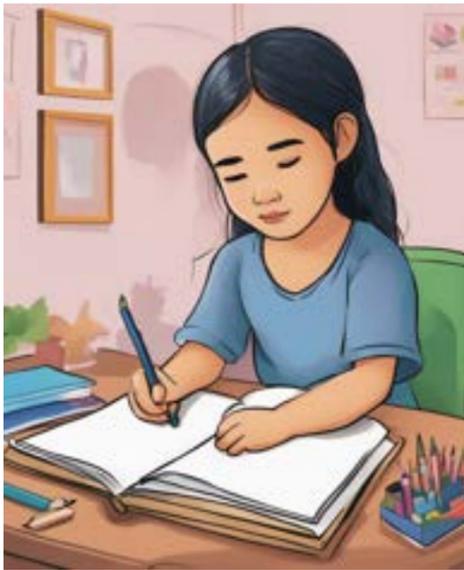
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Card #2(B): Romdoul goes to school - Learning style (Visual schedule)



- **Romdoul's** father created visual schedules to help her to carry out tasks, such as getting ready for school, transitioning between activities, and completing homework.
- **Romdoul's** father identified the activities and created a picture or symbol for each task. He displayed the pictures or symbols on a board in her room.
- He explained what each picture or symbol means. This helped Romdoul to follow the schedule step-by-step.

Additional Information

It is important to choose appropriate pictures that are contextually relevant while preparing visual schedules:

- Use pictures or symbols that your child can understand.
- Make the schedule as simple as possible.
- Use simple words that match the pictures.
- Place the schedule in a location where your child can see it easily, for example in the child's bedroom or near the breakfast table.
- Review the schedule with your child if the visuals are unclear.
- Be patient and consistent.

Important to give adequate time for your child to get used to the schedule and put it into practice. By following the tips,

Romdoul's father created a visual schedule that was easy for her to follow and was effective and helpful.

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Card #3(A): Individualized education plan (IEP)



Romdoul's parents worked together with teachers and her therapists (special educator and speech therapist) to create an Individualized education plan (IEP) to support her to learn effectively in school.

Additional Information

Autism is a spectrum disorder and no individual is like the others. Each autistic child is unique and has a different learning style, and therefore, important to develop an IEP that matches his/her level so that they receive the appropriate level of education they need to succeed in school.

Here are some things to keep in mind when creating an IEP:

- The IEP should be based on the child's learning ability and competence.
- The IEP should be measurable and achievable.
- The IEP should be reviewed and updated regularly.
- The parents' active participation in developing IEP will facilitate home-based support.
- The IEP for children with autism should have more visuals while aiming to cover the educational syllabus.

By working together, parents, teachers, and therapists can create an IEP that will help the child reach their full potential.

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Additional Information

Here are some tips for parents of children with autism while creating an IEP in partnership with teachers:

- **Be prepared.** Inform your child's strengths and weaknesses, as well as their academic and social needs to his/her teachers.
- **Be an advocate.** Speak up for your child's needs and make sure that they are met.
- **Be flexible.** Be willing to compromise and work with the IEP team to create a plan that is best for your child.
- **Be positive.** Remember that the IEP facilitates individualized learning based on each child's learning ability, potential and interests.

With the right support, children with autism can learn effectively like other children in school. IEPs can play a vital role in ensuring that these children receive the education they need to reach their full potential.

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Card #4 (A): Importance of Parents' Engagement and Support in school work



Romdoul often had problems completing her homework. Romdoul's parents met her teacher who advised to follow up the IEP after school hours. Every day after school, Romdoul's parents sat with her to look at the IEP and asked her about the lessons.

Additional Information

Romdoul's story highlights the importance of parental involvement after school hours. By actively working with the teacher and therapists, the parents can help them to succeed in school. It is important to remember that every child is different, and what works for one child may not work for the other. It is important for parents to find what works best for their children and to be consistent with their involvement.

Here are some specific examples of how parents can be involved in their child's education:

- **Talking to their child about their day:** Parents can ask their children about what they learned in school, what they did during the day, and what they enjoyed or didn't enjoy. This helps parents to stay connected with their children and to learn about the day and their child's interests.

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Card #4 (B): Importance of Parents' Engagement and Support in school work



Gradually, Romdoul's parents made changes in IEP in consultation with her teacher. Now she could pay more attention in class, and complete her homework on time.

Additional Information

- **Helping their child with homework:** Providing a quiet place to work, breaking down tasks into smaller steps, and appreciating the small progress (**positive reinforcement**), etc. may enable the child to complete homework.
- **Attending parent-teacher conferences:** It is important to attend parent-teacher meetings to learn about their child's progress and discuss any concerns they may have. This helps parents to stay involved in their child's education, ensuring their success.
- **Being involved in school activities:** Parents' involvement in school activities, and encouraging the child to join field trips will enable them to get to know their child's classmates and friends. This will enhance the socioemotional competence of autistic children.

By being actively involved in promoting IEP, parents can promote learning and help their child to choose the career /vocational education training that will enable them to live an independent life.

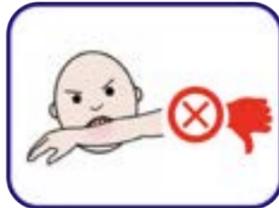
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Card #5(A): Promotion of social communication in a school setting Points for Discussion



Romdoul finds it difficult to make as well as retain friendships. Her parents used visual supports, such as pictures and symbols, to help

Romdoul read others' emotions, and what is being said and respond appropriately.

The following strategies helped Romdoul to engage with their peers and make friends:

- Romdoul's parents wrote down the different emotions and related visuals in a card/chat to make her to understand others' emotions.
- They used clear and simple language.

Additional Information

Romdoul is an example of how children with autism can learn to improve their social communication skills. With the right support and understanding, children with autism can learn to communicate and make friends in a school setting.

Here are some specific aspects of social communication that children with autism may need help with:

- Making eye contact.
- Taking turns.
- Following directions.
- Expressing emotions.
- Understanding nonverbal communication.

If your child is having any of the above challenges related to social communication, you may like to prepare a visual support system specific to each of the above areas to help your child. You may like to seek the help of your child's therapist, or other professionals (special educator, art therapist, speech therapist) to produce materials that could be of support to your child.

With the right visual support, children with autism can be helped in school settings to improve their social communication skills and develop relationships with others.

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Card #5(B): Promotion of social communication in a school setting

Points for Discussion



- They gave time to Romdoul to process emotions and respond appropriately, understand others' emotions (words expressed with emotion such as anger, happiness, etc.).
- Romdoul's parents were patient and understanding, realizing Romdoul responds inappropriately, not because of her fault but due to her inability to perceive others' emotions.
- Her parents responded appropriately and appreciated her (Positive reinforcement).

Additional Information

Here are some additional tips for promoting social communication in children with autism:

- Start by listing your child's strengths and weaknesses and share them with the teacher.
- Set realistic goals for your child's social communication development in consultation with the teacher.
- Provide your child with opportunities to practice social communication skills in a safe and supportive environment.
- Use visual supports to help your child understand social cues and expectations.
- Be patient and consistent with your child's progress in relating with others.
- Celebrate your child's successes even if it is gradual and in small steps.

It is important to remember that every child with autism is different, and what works for one child may not work for another.

It is important to work with your child to find what strategies work best for them.

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Card #6 (A): Behavior problems in the classroom



Romdoul is overwhelmed by the noise around her and closes both her ears. This behaviour was noticed by Romdoul's peer, Sophy.

She developed a plan in consultation with the class teacher.

Additional Information

Here are some other behaviour problems that children with autism may exhibit while at school:

- **Disruptive behaviour:** Talking out of turn, making noise, pulling away others' notebooks/materials and breaking things to disturb others.
- **Aggressive behaviour:** This can include things like hitting, kicking, and biting with no reason and unprovoked.
- **Withdrawal:** Avoiding social interaction, not talking, not participating in activities and remaining alone are the most common behaviours among autistic children.

If your child is exhibiting behaviour problems, it is important to talk to their peers, teachers, school psychologist and social worker.

They can assess your child's behaviour and develop a plan to address it.

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Card #6 (B): Behavior problems in the classroom



Sophy took **Romdoul** to a quiet place where she can work calmly. **Romdoul's** teacher provides periodic breaks during the week which helps her to stay calm and focused. **Romdoul's** teacher also praises her (**positive reinforcement**) when she behaves appropriately which helped **Romdoul** understand that good behaviour is rewarded. With **Sophy** and the teacher's help, **Romdoul** is learning to manage her behaviour and focus on her work.

Additional Information

There are a variety of strategies that can be used to manage behaviour problems in children with autism, such as:

- **Positive reinforcement:** Rewarding your child for desired behaviours.
- **Time-out:** Removing your child from a situation for a short time when they disrupt others in the classroom.
- **Visual schedules:** These can help your child understand others' emotions, and what is expected of them and behave according to contexts.
- **Social stories:** These can help your child learn about social situations and how to interact appropriately.
- **Occupational therapy:** An occupational therapist will do a detailed assessment of the sensory challenges and plan appropriate therapy to improve their coping skills related to sensory issues.

If your child is exhibiting behaviour problems, it is important to remember that you are not alone. Many autistic children have behaviour problems at different stages of their development. With the right support from the therapists and the staff at school, your child can manage their behaviours and continue to learn.

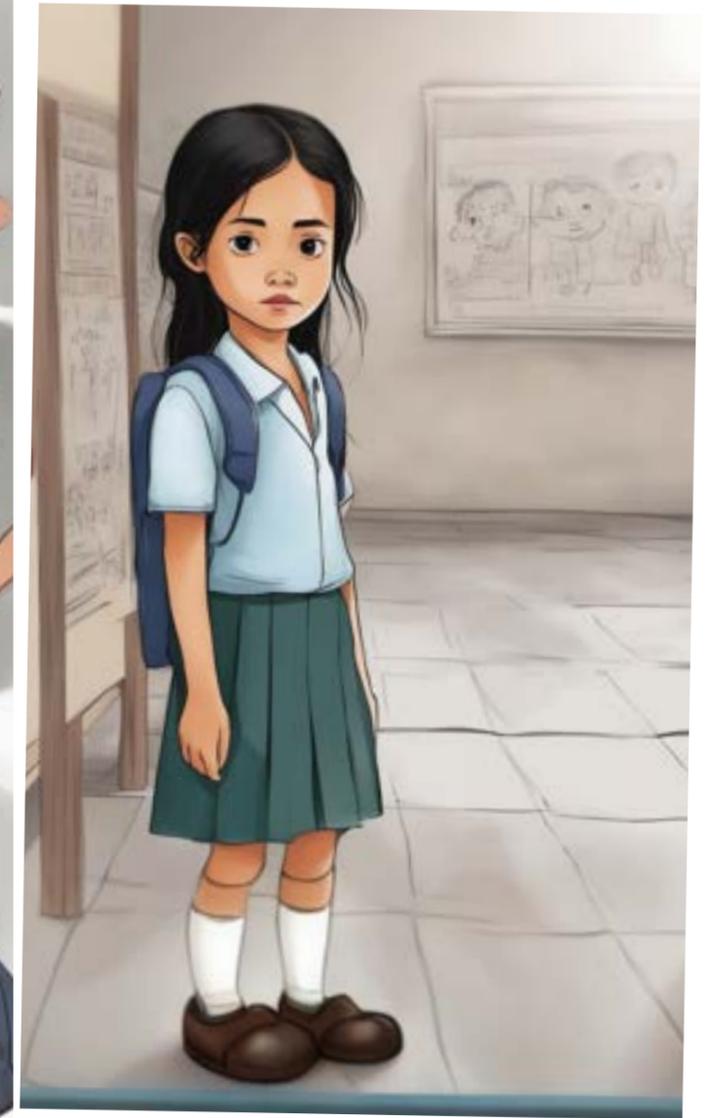
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Card #7(A): Type of Comorbidities



Romdoul was fidgety, had no interest in toys, and trouble paying attention, while she was in preschool. She was diagnosed as having autism. The therapist planned a comprehensive package of intervention and she showed adequate progress. **Romdoul's** parents learned home-based strategies to help her to remain calm.

Additional Information

With the right support from you and therapists, children with autism can overcome health challenges (comorbidities) and continue to learn at school.

Some of the other comorbidities among children with autism are:

- **Anxiety:** Children with autism may experience anxiety in a variety of situations, such as social situations, new environments, or changes in situations.
- **Depression:** Children with autism may experience depression, which can manifest as sadness, irritability, loss of interest in activities, and changes in sleep and appetite, more common among adolescents/young adults.
- **Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD):** Children with autism may also have ADHD when they have difficulty paying attention, controlling impulses, and sitting still.

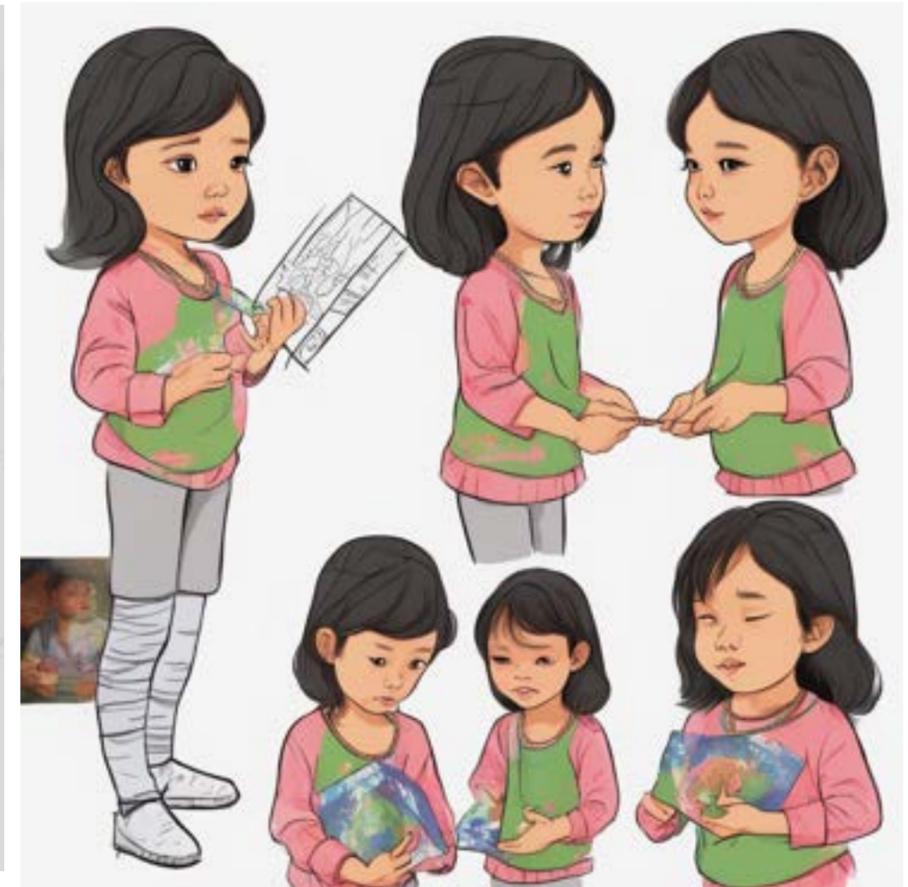
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Card #7(B): Type of Comorbidities



While in class six **Romdoul** had have involuntary movements and fell down. She was diagnosed as having epilepsy which is more common in autistic children than others. She was prescribed medication. After regular medication Romdoul was fit-free, slept well and was able to attend the class. It is important to consult your family doctor or appropriate centre for detailed evaluation and treatment plan. Good to continue medication as per the advice and not stop by yourself.

Additional Information

- **Sensory processing disorder:** Children with autism may be overwhelmed by sensations such as touch, taste, smell, sight, sound, movement, etc. This is more common among preschool children. They gradually overcome as they develop.
- **Sleep disorders:** Children with autism particularly toddlers (below 5 years) may have difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or getting enough sleep. The practice of sleep hygiene and avoiding electronic devices before bedtime can improve sleep in most children.
- **Gastrointestinal disorders:** Children with autism avoid taking a variety of food due to sensory challenges and may suffer from undernutrition and vitamin deficiency. An occupational therapist will be able to assess and gradually introduce a variety of food in consultation with parents.
- **Intellectual disabilities:** 6 to 7 out of 10 children with autism may have cognitive challenges and therefore affect their school performance. However, only 2 out of 10 need special education and the rest can attend regular school with adequate support.

If you think your child may have a comorbidity, it is important to talk to your therapist and the teacher. Your family doctor or an expert can assess your child and develop a treatment plan.

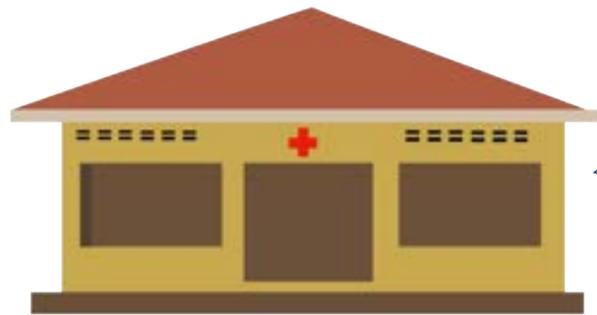
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Card #8(A): Active collaboration between education, the health sector and parents



Hospital



Mental health center



School



Family

While in preschool Romdoul had challenges in paying attention, sitting in one place (fidgety), and was not interested in toys. While at school, she developed a seizure for which she was treated with regular medication.

Additional Information

It takes a village to grow a child' is a Chinese proverb, which underscores the need for people around the child to come together to give a conducive opportunity for development. Collaboration is key to successful outcomes of children with autism getting the same opportunity as others to learn and develop. By working together, the education, health sector and parents can provide the child with the support they need to reach their full potential. All three groups need to work together to find what works best for the child.

Here are some specific examples of how education, the health sector, and parents can collaborate to support children with autism:

- Young children with autism (below 6 years) have many health challenges and needs health professionals to support the parents to manage sleep problems, temper tantrum, attention issues, and sensory and other problems, the health professionals can provide psychoeducation, advise the parents on home-based strategies and medicines when needed.
- The teachers can develop individualized education plans (IEP) to meet their individual needs in consultation with parents.
- When autistic children are unable to cope with the regular school system, the teacher may advise special education.

Some children may attend special school one or two days a week and the rest may go to regular school while some of them may need full-time special education.

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Card #8(B): Active collaboration between education, the health sector and parents



Therapist



Health Provider



Teacher



Parents

Romdoul's teachers and therapists worked together to give medical help and education plan. Romdoul's parents kept in touch with her physician and sought timely help, and provided home based support.

Romdoul is able to communicate and interact with others and make friends at school. With active collaboration and support from the education and health sector, she may reach her full potential.

Additional Information

- Parents should actively collaborate with therapists and teachers to fulfil their children's needs other than providing love, support, and understanding to their children.
- The parents can advocate meeting the rights and needs of not only their child but also all children with autism through international days such as World Autism Day (2nd April) and agencies such as Disability Action Council (DAC), Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY).

By working together, education, the health sector, and parents can make a difference in the lives of children with autism.

They can help these children to reach their full potential and live happy, fulfilling lives.

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How to use the cards on Understanding the child with Autism at school (Theme 2)

1. What are these cards about (key messages):

These sets of cards explain the challenges and opportunity for children with 'autism spectrum disorder (ASD)' and the roles of parents and teachers in helping their children including home-based intervention.

2. Who will benefit from these cards (target group):

Parents, school-teachers, primary health care staff, community health care workers, village and commune leaders.

3. Informing and preparing for the session (community engagement):

- Choose a quiet place
- Inform the participants in advance the location and purpose of meeting
- Good to involve a parent of child with autism going to school in the discussion (peer-leader)
- Inform the village and/ commune leaders the purpose and get the consent for the meeting.

4. How to use these cards (Process of behavior change communication)

- 10 to 15 the ideal number of participants
- Good to have two sets of cards, in case more people turn-up
- Distribute the cards, one card for each
- Give them time to read by themselves before starting the discussion.

5. Themes in the Level 2 set of cards (Contents):

- **Flashcard no. 1:** Promoting Activities of Daily Living (ADL) in preparation to go to school

- Flashcard no. 2: Learning style (visual schedule)
- Flashcard no. 3: Individualized education plan (IEP)
- Flashcard no. 4: Importance of Parents' Engagement and Support in school work
- Flashcard no. 5: Promotion of social communication
- Flashcard no. 6: Behavior problems in the classroom
- Flashcard no. 7: Type of comorbidities
- Flashcard no. 8: Active collaboration between education, the health sector and parents

6. How to conduct, summarize and conclude the session (Participatory learning principle)

- Ask whether the participants are ready or need more time to read the individual cards
- Each participant read the card or share the story on the first page
- The facilitator gives additional information for each card (given on the rear side)
- Give opportunity for discussion and seek clarification before moving to the next card
- One among the participant is asked to summarize the discussion
- The facilitator responds to questions, offer clarifications and highlights the key messages
- Session is closed after deciding the theme, date and time for the next meet
- The facilitator concludes by thanking the participants

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