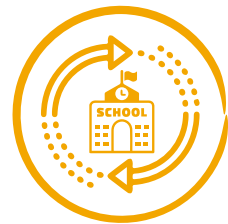




Transitions in Schools Toolkit

This is part three of a three-part resource for parents and carers on **Transitions in Schools**. This is a **Toolkit** of useful resources, to make it easier for parents and carers to support their children.



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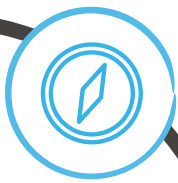


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Now you have read our **What Is?** and **How to?** guides on **Transitions in Schools**, it is time to choose the tools which will be most helpful in supporting your child.

This guide is **part three of three** resources for parents and carers on **Transitions in Schools**. The **first** resource in the series looks at how strengths and support needs within the three areas of difference in autism can impact on transitions, and the **second** provides suggested strategies and advice.



What is: The Potential Impact of Autism on **Transitions in Schools**



How to: Support Your Child With **Transitions in Schools**



Transitions in Schools Toolkit of Resources



Parent Resources



Overview of the Tools in the Transitions in Schools Toolkit:

Tool 1 – Questions to Ask When Choosing a School

This tool provides some questions to ask when choosing a school for your child. There is space to include the information you receive in response and then your thoughts to help formulate a view of that school and how it will support your child/ young person's strengths and differences.

Tool 2 – How you can Help: Transition Plan Questions

A tool with transition plan questions that should be addressed within your transition meetings, identifying who to ask and a space for your notes. Choose which questions are relevant to your child/young person and use them as a guide to prepare for a robust transition process to a new setting.

Tool 3 – How you can Help: Transition Checklists

This tool identifies what you can do as a parent/carer to support your child/young person to manage transitions and your role in the transition process. From attending meetings and visits to structuring support at home to make transitions easier and calmer.

Tool 4 – Quick Guide to Reviews During Transitions: Factsheet

This Factsheet provides an overview of what to expect at transition review meetings, who should be involved and the importance of working in collaboration on your child/ young person's transition plan.

Tool 5 – Preparing for Transitions Template

Autistic children/ young people can find transitions difficult due to the anxiety that comes from change and unpredictability. This tool helps to work through some of the concerns you may have around your child/young person's transition and what strategies may help to reduce the anxiety for both yourself and your child/young person.



Tool 1 - Questions to Ask When Choosing a School

? What is it?

This template provides key questions you may want to ask a new setting, when thinking about whether the provision can meet the needs of your child/ young person.

🕒 When to use it?

Use this template to record the responses you are given to your questions and your own thoughts about those responses.

✓ How to use it?

The template should be used when you are exploring the next setting options for your child/young person. You may wish to have multiple copies so that you can record responses from different settings and compare them.



Tool 1 - Questions to Ask When Choosing a School

Your child/young person

	School information	Parent's comments
Will the school develop a Pupil-Centred Plan for my child/ young person stating their strengths, interests and needs?		
Will all school staff who teach and support my child/young person be aware of their needs?		
How will the school enable my child/young person's views and preferences to be taken into account?		
Does the school use visual supports to make learning activities and the structure of the school day more predictable for autistic children?		

Working together with the school

	School information	Parent's comments
Does the school have a named person responsible for autistic children and young people?		
Does the school help children and young people develop relationships with their peers?		
How will the school enable my child/young person's views and preferences to be taken into account?		
Has the school got a good system for sharing key information about autistic children and young people with other staff?		
Does the school create more opportunities for parents to communicate with staff, if requested?		
Does the whole school have staff knowledge and understanding in the education of autistic children and young people?		



Parent Resources



Tool 1 - Questions to Ask When Choosing a School

Adapting learning for your child/young person

	School information	Parent's comments
Does the school make adjustments to how lessons are taught for autistic children and young people?		
Does the school promote children and young people's social and emotional well-being as well as their academic progress?		
Does the school help autistic children and young people with life skills? (self-care, health, exercise, using money etc)		
Has the school created structured break and lunch time activities to support autistic children and young people if they choose to access these?		

Supporting your child at school

	School information	Parent's comments
How does the school assess sensory differences for autistic children and young people?		
Has the school made adjustments to the sensory environment for autistic children and young people?		
Has the school got a safe / low arousal space for children and young people to spend time in if needed?		
How will the school prepare my child/young person for transition to another activity, class or to their next phase or setting?		

Adapted from previous AET tool **A parent's and carer's guide to finding a school for your child with autism**



Parent Resources



Tool 2 - How you can Help: Transition Plan Questions

? What is it?

This tool offers questions that you may want to ask through the transition plan process and identifies who should be responsible for providing the answers, to give you understanding of what an enhanced transition should look like for your child/young person.

🕒 When to use it?

Although transition planning can start before your child/young person has a confirmed place at their next setting, some of these questions will be addressed once the new setting is involved. Prior to that confirmation, you and the current setting could be identifying the key information to share with them.

✓ How to use it?

Use the tool to prepare for those transition meetings and ensure that these questions have been covered and that you know the responses. This will enable you to support your child/young person at home during the transition and work in collaboration with those involved.



Tool 2 - How you can Help: Transition Plan Questions

Here are questions to help support with the transition to a new setting.

Choose those which are relevant for you to ask in relation to your child/young person.

Question	Who to ask	Notes
How will key information about my child/young person be shared?	Current SENCO/Staff member New setting External agency if appropriate	
Does my child/young person have a Pupil-Centred Plan set up ready for transition?	Current SENCO/Staff member	

Building positive relationships

Question	Who to ask	Notes
When will the new SENCO/Staff member visit my child/young person in their current setting (and/or at home if appropriate)?	New setting	
Can we have a 'who's who' photo book to familiarise with new staff/key adults?	New setting	
Is there a video of the new setting that we can explore?	New setting	
How do we keep in touch? Who is my key contact?	New setting Current key staff member	
How will I know about my child/young person's day?	New setting	
What training has the setting had on educating autistic children and young people?	New setting External agency (detail)	



Tool 2 - How you can Help: Transition Plan Questions

Learning and Development

Strategies	Who to ask	Notes
How many visits to the new setting can my child have? What if they need more?	New setting	
What can my child/young person expect on their visits?	New setting	
Can we have a visual timetable?	New setting	
How do you support communication visually at school?	New setting	
Does my child/young person need a personalised visual timetable?	New setting	
Are there visual timetables/sequences to support my child/young person with tasks such as changing for PE/Sports or getting ready for?	New setting	
Where can I find more information about the school day/policies etc?	New setting	

Enabling Environments

Strategies	Who will be responsible?	Additional notes (date due by)
Is there a positive sensory audit for my child/young person?	New setting Current key staff member External agency	
Have you completed a sensory audit of the environment, thinking about their differences?	New setting	
Can we have a physical tour of the setting?	New setting	
Can we have a simple map of the classroom /building?	New setting	



Parent Resources



Tool 2 - How you can Help: Transition Plan Questions

Enabling Environments

Strategies	Who will be responsible?	Additional notes (date due by)
Do you have a low arousal/safe place for children/young people to go to when they need it?	New setting	
How do they access that? What system is in place?	New setting	
Do you have a consistent seating space identified?	New setting	
How can we prepare for closure (goodbye) activities at their current setting?	Current setting	
Can we have a simple Situation Story (based on Carol Gray's Social Stories™) about the transition to help prepare my child/young person?	Current setting in collaboration with the new setting, to ensure accurate information.	
Can we make a visual timeline of events as part of this transition?	Current setting New setting External agencies if appropriate	
Any other questions you have about this process:		

Reflection

What worked well?
What did not work well?
What do we need to consider for future transitions?

Adapted from previous AET tool *Enhanced Transitions Planning Template*



Parent Resources



Tool 3 - How you can Help: Transition Checklist

? What is it?

This tool lists actions for you as a parent/carer to effectively support the transition process of your child/young person. In order for a robust transition to take place, it is essential that everyone is working in collaboration to make the transition as easy and as calm as possible, reviewing together as needs arise.

🕒 When to use it?

Once your child/young person has a confirmed place at their new setting, start to work your way through this checklist, listing any important dates, notes of information shared and thoughts you have about each action to reference later.

✅ How to use it?

Work your way through the list adding personalised information for your child/young person, what you have tried to do in support and the impact that is having. This can then form part of the discussion at your next transition review meeting where you can celebrate what is working well and share ideas to support further in any areas of concern.



Tool 3 - How you can Help: Transition Checklist

Supporting your child/young person to manage transitions

Actions	Notes
Attend as many transitions events as possible so that you know what to expect.	
Encourage your child or young person to participate in transition events too.	
If getting to events is difficult or you know that your child or young person will need support to access these events, then speak to the school.	
Work with your child on any Transition Projects.	
Practise Ahead of Time: • Getting up at a particular time. • Trying on the uniform. • Practising the “getting ready for school” routine. • Doing the journey to school.	
Use Visual Strategies/Timetables	
Use a visual countdown to show the days left: at the current setting; of the holidays; till starting at the new setting.	
Does my child need adjustments for uniform: Purchasing adapted clothing? Reasonable adjustments agreed with school?	



Tool 3 - How you can Help: Transition Checklist

Supporting your child/young person to manage transitions

Actions	Notes
Organisation: Checklist of what is needed each day for their bag. Storage boxes clearly marked for their school things.	
Regulation and Decompression After school routine. Time to relax/decompress/regulate. Minimise adult communication while they do this.	
Homework/ Home learning Make it part of a routine. Break down long tasks into chunks. Identify what they need to recall what to do (an example from school?). How will you motivate them to complete this?	



Tool 4 - Quick Guide to Reviews During Transitions: Factsheet

? What is it?

This tool is a factsheet explaining transition review meetings which can be held at any change of phase or stage as your child/young person moves through education. If your child/young person has an Education Health and Care Plan, then the reviews may also include their SEND caseworker.

🕒 When to use it?

This tool can be used to reference when your first transition meeting is arranged so that you know what to expect.

✅ How to use it?

You can use this tool to identify who should be involved in your child/young person's transition review meeting at this stage. The tool will also help you to understand the process around what should happen in those meetings. You can use other tools in this Toolkit to prepare for specific aspects of the transition process and you can bring them to the review meeting.



Tool 4 - Quick Guide to Reviews During Transitions: Factsheet

Transition Plan Review Meetings

People invited to the review meetings may include:

- The child/young person (or their views collected prior to).
- You, the parent/carer.
- Key member of staff from the current setting.
- Key member of the staff from the new setting (once a place is confirmed).
- Any other professionals involved in supporting your child/young person, from Education, Health or social care services.

The Transition plan in collaboration:

- Everyone will be asked to contribute to the transition plan.
- As a parent/carer you have a crucial role in sharing relevant information about your child/young person.
- In preparation for the review, you may find it useful to explore what you support your child/young person with and how you see this changing in the future.
- The Transition plan will be recorded, including everyone's views and who is responsible for which actions.
- A copy should be shared with you as a parent/carer.
- This plan should be reviewed regularly as stages of the plan are completed and reflected upon to consider if next steps need adjustments and also to consider whether on-going support will need adapting.



Tool 5 - Preparing for Transitions Template

? What is it?

This tool describes some common concerns of parents/carers of autistic children and young people, around transition. It also describes the aspirations we may have for this next stage in our child/young person's life and identifies how we might support them with this.

🕒 When to use it?

This tool can be used during any transition of class, phase or setting to identify what concerns you have as a parent/carer or to capture your child/young person's worries and include these in transition planning.

✅ How to use it?

Work through each worry, identifying if it is a worry for you or your child/young person. Highlight strategies that you/they feel would support and reduce the worry and share with the transition team at the next review meeting.



Tool 5 - Preparing for Transitions Template

What we're worried about	What we want to happen	Suggested strategies
My child/young person won't want to go somewhere different.	My child/young person is happy to go to school	Your child/young person will likely be anxious about going somewhere new. It is important to try and reduce their anxiety and your own to prepare for this. Visit the new setting for short periods, maybe to drop off some paperwork. Attend planned transition visits Through transition meetings, identify how many visits might be needed. Visit the setting when it is quiet so your child/young person can look around the environment and feel safe. Build up to having more people in the space. Ask for photos of things that will be important/motivating for them so you can look at them together at home. Use a visual calendar at home to show when visits to the new setting are happening and when things are the same.
They will miss their adults/peers from their current setting.	My child/young person will understand that that setting is finished	It is important that your child/young person understands that their previous setting is finished and the new setting is starting, though this can be upsetting. Use clear language to explain the "law" about when we have to attend education. Have a way to say goodbye to key people and stay in touch if they would like.



Tool 5 - Preparing for Transitions Template

What we're worried about	What we want to happen	Suggested strategies
That new staff won't know my child/young person well enough and be able to support them	New staff know my child/young person well and are able to support effectively	Create a one-page profile with your child/young person's current setting so new staff can get to know them quickly. Include what they really like, are really good at, can do independently and also what distresses them and what works when they are upset. Revisit this regularly with the new setting to ensure it stays up to date.
That they won't understand my child/young person's communication	New staff understand my child/young person's communication so they do not become frustrated or distressed	Build a communication passport for your child/young person. You can start this at home and ask the current setting to add to it as well. This will give the new setting, really rich information about how your child/young person communicates and how they should be communicated with. You could include some key phrases that they use or understand so school can use them too. Agree a way that school inform you if there has been distress and what happened so that you can work together to identify the triggers and find a way forward next time.



Tool 5 - Preparing for Transitions Template

What we're worried about	What we want to happen	Suggested strategies
That my child/young person won't eat/drink while they are in the setting	My child/young person is able to eat and drink at school	Lots of autistic children/young people find eating and drinking in a new environment difficult. Sometimes this is because what they are offered is or is perceived as different to what they are used to. Sometimes it is because they have missed the cues that it is time to eat or drink or they are unable to switch their attention from an activity they are enjoying. Sometimes it is because the environment for eating is overwhelming their sensory systems. Most schools ask that child/young people drink water during the school day. If your child/young person does not drink water then talk to school about a way forward. It may be that they can use their favourite juice initially while they adjust and gradually phase to water over time. With food, talk to school about your child/young person's sensory preferences and what sort of lunch you want them to have. If you choose a hot meal, it could be a process of exploring the hot food for some time, whilst also having a pack up of things they like to eat once they have explored the hot food in a way that is appropriate e.g. visually, by smell or touch on lip etc. Some autistic children/young people need to eat more regularly throughout the day as they feel hungry often and so talk to the school about how this can be provided and what you can send into school so they can graze when they need to.



Tool 5 - Preparing for Transitions Template

What we're worried about	What we want to happen	Suggested strategies
That my child/ young person won't use the toilet whilst at school	My child/young person is able to use the toilet when they need to at school	Toilets can be difficult places for autistic children/ young people due to the sensory impact of the smells, noises and unpredictability of who else might be in there etc. Explore the barrier to the toilet at school. What works at home? If they need it to feel safe and predictable, talk to school about how they can support with ensuring the space is quiet and feels safe. They should be using the toilet routinely throughout the day. It may be that if a group toilet block is overwhelming then they need access to another single toilet that may be in school. It will be important for school and home to share information about toileting if the child/young person is unable to use the toilet at school routinely as this could impact their health and wellbeing.
My child/young person is still in nappies or pull ups.	My child/young person is able to use the toilet when they need to at school	If they are still learning to use the toilet, then they need a plan in place for the school and home to work on together. The school should have an intimate care plan/policy in place that details how they will care for children/young people who are in nappies and need changing at school.



Tool 5 - Preparing for Transitions Template

What we're worried about	What we want to happen	Suggested strategies
That they will be alone rather than spending time with peers	My child/young person is able to interact with peers safely when they choose to	It is important that we recognise that autistic children/young people sometimes want to spend time alone but we also need to ensure they have the social knowledge to interact with others should they want to. Talk to school about your child/young person's social relationships, their strengths and next steps to identify a way forward through their Pupil-Centred Plan.
My child/young person won't wear one or more aspects of the uniform, without distress	My child/young person attends school with adjusted expectations for uniform-it's a work in progress	Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to enable children/young people with SEN to engage in learning at school. If your child/young person is so distracted by the feel of their socks then they will be unable to engage in learning and will need an adjustment e.g. perhaps they wear the socks outside when it is cold but can take them off when inside. Maybe the trousers are uncomfortable around their waist and legs so they have the same colour trousers but in an elasticated and soft fabric to enable them to focus in the classroom. Talk to the school about the reasonable adjustments for your child/young person to identify a way forward.



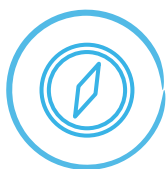
Tool 5 - Preparing for Transitions Template

What we're worried about	What we want to happen	Suggested strategies
That they won't understand the routines/ expectations	My child/young person understands the routines and expectations in his school	Your child/young person should have a visual timetable in their classroom which shows what is happening today. They may also need a more personalised version of first/then or now/next so they can focus on what is happening right now. The school could record a short video of the class routine for a morning or afternoon which your child/young person can watch as needed. This could also be communicated through a Situation Story (based on Carol Gray's Social Story™ concept).
That we won't know how their day has been because they can't tell us about it	We know how their day has been and have some key things to share with them when they are ready	Talk to school about how you can do this most effectively and how you might get to know one or two key things that happened in your child/young person's day so you can share with them at home.
My child/young person will be overwhelmed and tired	My child/young person is able to access all parts of the school day	A new setting can mean longer mornings or days for children/young people and more information, learning and processing within those days. Liaise with the school as to how they could manage this and what will work best initially as your child/young person gets used to the environment. If you do start on a phased lesson timetable, ensure there is regular review of what success looks like and when you will review to discuss the next step.



Next Steps:

If you haven't done so already, check out the other two resources in this series on Transitions in Schools:



What is: The Potential Impact of Autism on Transitions in Schools



How to: Support Your Child With Transitions in Schools



Parent Resources



References:

Gray, Carol. (2015) The New Social Story Book™: Over 150 Social Stories That Teach Everyday Social Skills to Children and Adults with Autism and Their Peers, Future Horizons.





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