



SUPPORTING THE ASD STUDENT THROUGH TRANSITIONS

What is a Transition to an individual with an ASD?

Transition is the process of changing from one thing to another. Transition (or change) often brings with it a different environment to process, different people to work with, different rules and expectations to follow and be aware of, and different skills and 'thinking' to use. People on the autism spectrum find transitions and change very challenging, but with good support, this process can become easier for them.

Transition = change = processing = lots of 'thinking work' for the ASD student = potential for overload = potential for anxiety = potential for breakdown = potential for negative behaviours (that will surface either at school or at home)

By supporting the ASD student through the transition and change process, and giving and teaching them strategies to help manage this process, we can assist in altering the 'potential for overload' course, to a course of 'feeling good about the day'.

TYPICAL DAILY TRANSITIONS FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS

- Transition from home to school
- Transition from activity to activity within classroom
- Transition from classroom to classroom
- Transition from teacher to teacher
- Transition from classroom to playground
- Transition from activity to activity within playground
- Transition from routine to 'out of routine'
- Transition from school to home

(And all different people, places and activities come with different expectations and rules = transition from one expectation and rule to another expectation and rule)

MAJOR TRANSITIONS THAT HAPPEN YEARLY

- Transition from one year level to the next
- Transition to new teachers
- Transition to new classmates

MAJOR TRANSITIONS THAT OCCUR EVERY FEW YEARS – AT THE SAME TIME AS THE YEARLY TRANSITIONS

- Transition from one school unit to the next (eg. Junior to Middle)
- Transition from one school to the next (eg. primary to secondary)



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Tips to help your ASD students through Transition:

- Provide plenty of warning for change.
- Provide timetables and schedules (which allow students to 'visually' see transitions and changes in advance), and teach your students how to use them effectively.
- Provide stories and scripts to support your students through transitions that are new or particularly challenging (and regularly read these stories and scripts with your student).
- Provide photo books for younger students, maps for older students, and visual (or written) back up plans for the student to make reference to when things might not go to plan during a transition.

Tips to help with Major Transitions:

- Prepare well in advance.
- Plan visits to new environments and meetings with new people, and use plenty of visuals to support the student's processing of the change.
- Start slowly – allow time for adjusting to new environments and people. Make a few visits to a new school by simply 'driving or walking past' before actually entering the yard or the buildings. Invite new teachers to visit in the current environment before taking the student to see the new teacher in the new environment.
- Provide new teachers or schools with as much information about the student as you can – this will help ensure support from 'both ends' of the change.
- Encourage a partnership approach between parents and educators – often anxiety related to major school transitions plays out in the home environment and parents and educators working together will give everyone involved greater insight, and ensure greater potential for successful transitions.
- Teacher's Assistants or Integration Aides who have developed good trusting relationships with students are often perfectly placed to support students through transitions. Make use of these support systems to help students through more challenging changes.