



Early Years Autism Support

Support with Transitions

Key Points

- Children on the Autism Spectrum can find transitions challenging, whether it's from one activity to another or from one setting to another.
- Coping with transitions is an essential life skill and they should be managed carefully and proactively in a way which suits the needs of the individual.
- There are a range of ways you can support your child to help reduce their anxiety and make transitions easier for them.

Transition Challenges

Children on the autism spectrum may:

- Find it difficult to cope with changes in routines, situations, people or environments
- Not be able to predict what the transition will look or feel like
- Feel very anxious about any change or transitions
- Need repeated reassurance during transition
- Ask repeated questions regarding the transition
- Find it difficult to predict what will or could happen next
- Have a strong need to be in control and build in predictable routines



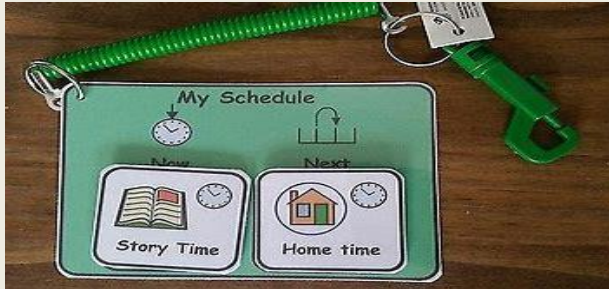
Autism, change and transition (Autism West Midlands):

[https://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Autism change and transition.pdf](https://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Autism%20change%20and%20transition.pdf)

Strategies for managing transitions

Use visual resources

The use of visual supports e.g., visual timetables, can help children to move from one activity to another, understand what is happening next and help provide structure and routine.



Visual Supports (National Autistic Society):

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/visual-supports.aspx>

Prepare or rehearse

If possible, prepare your child in advance by showing them and talking about the new environment they will be in, e.g., pictures of a park they are going to or initially visiting the park at a quieter time.

Give reassurance

If faced with an unexpected change, tell your child what will happen in a clear, concise way and reassure him/her that he will be okay. It can also be beneficial to inform the child what will happen after the unexpected event

Give warning of change

Wherever possible, inform your child of any changes that are going to take place and explain why the change is going to happen. The timing of giving this information needs to be judged according to the individual child.

Changing activities

Your child may need reminding or warning prior to the end of an activity to enable them to prepare for the transition to something else. This can be verbal and visual e.g., using an electric or sand timer.



Supporting Key Transitions



One of the most important transitions for your child is to a pre-school, nursery or school. There should be a clear transition plan set out for your child to support their needs in a new setting. This should involve you, your child, the staff from the old and new settings, and any professionals involved with your child.

Transition plans may include:

- Extra visits to your child's new setting
- Transition meetings to share key information on your child's strengths and needs
- Transition photo books with photos of your child's new setting and staff members to share with your child before they start
- Communication or pupil passport showing staff your child's need
- Work on additional skills required in the new setting
- Establish the key member of staff for support
- Establish practical arrangements e.g., eating, toileting, break times.

A Guide to finding a school for your child with autism (Autism Education Trust): https://www.aettraininghubs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/what_to_guide_upload.pdf

Transition Toolkit (Autism Education Trust): <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachemnt/transi tiontoolkit.pdf>

Working together with your child's school (Autism Education Trust): http://www.aettraininghubs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/AET_working_together_with_childs_school.pdf

Oxfordshire's Early Years Transition pack: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/childrens-services-providers/support-early-years-providers/transition-pack>