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Transitions: Class to Class and Building to Building

Transitions

- How transitions affect students on the autism spectrum
- Qualities of a good transition plan
- Activities, ideas and suggestions to facilitate a smooth transition

Students with ASD...

- Can be reluctant to change
- Difficulty with predicting
- Prefer routine events/activities
- Display difficulty with flexibility
- Difficulty reading social situations and cues
- May have difficulty regulating sensory needs
- May have high anxiety

Types of Transitions

- Early Childhood to Kindergarten
- Elementary School to Middle School
- Middle School to High School
- Moving to a new city or state
- Moving neighborhood schools in a large district
- Moving to a specialized program in the district



Successful transitions...

- Start with communication
 - Schools
 - Staff
 - Parents and/or guardians
 - Student
 - IEP team members



Successful transitions...

- Revolve around the student's needs
- Incorporates the entire IEP team
- Involves the next grade level, staff, and/or building
- Is started early in the Spring




Steps to a Successful Transition




1st Steps...


1. Working with the team that is receiving the student
2. Preparing the student for the transition




Working with the New Team

- Contact the new school staff that the student will be working with.
- Have the new school staff observe the student in the current placement.
- Have staff from the current placement observe in the new room, grade, or building.






- Set up a meeting with the new staff (sending school leads the meeting.)
- Agenda
 - Strengths of the student
 - Overview of the student, IEP goals and objectives
 - Scheduling issues/concerns
 - Develop transition plan for the student



- Set up a meeting with the new school (receiving school leads the meeting).
- Agenda
 - IEP goals/objectives – any changes that need to be discussed
 - Possible schedule
 - Discuss training that new staff needs
 - Tips on working with the student



- Discuss the need of a meeting date with the parents and the new school in August of the next school year.
- Agenda
 - Meet all of the student's teachers
 - Address any changes over the summer
 - Discuss any new anxiety/concerns the student has

Working with the Student with ASD

- Discuss the upcoming transition.
 - Videos
 - Pictures
- Help your student develop a list of people that will be his or her support team throughout this process.




- Address anxiety using the Incredible 5-Point Scale by Kari Dunn Baron and Mitzi Curtis
- Identify and write down situations that the student will encounter.




5
4
3
2
1

- There is no way that I will be able to handle this situation.
- This could make me feel sick to my stomach or extremely nervous. I need help to do this.
- This could make me very nervous. I need someone to help prepare me for this situation
- This might make me feel uncomfortable, but I will try it.
- I can handle this. I'm okay.






- Teach the 5-Point Scale if your students haven't used it before.
<http://www.autisminternetmodules.org>
- Create situation cards
 - Meeting new people
 - Eating in the lunchroom
 - Remembering my schedule
 - Math class
 - Using a locker
 - Fire Drills
 - Noisy classrooms
 - Changing classes
 - Keeping track of homework



- Have the students categorize the cards to which level of anxiety it causes.
- Make sure to write down "3", "4", and "5" cards and which category they fall in.

Sharing Information About the Student



Develop a student profile sheet for each student.

- Powerpoint or Keynote
- Picture book
- Video

- Favorite subjects
- Least favorite subjects
- Type of teacher I like
- Accommodations that help
- Subjects in the a.m.
- Parts of my day that cause the most anxiety
- Interests outside of school

Sharing Information About the School

- Gather information about the new school.
 - Booklet
 - Video
 - Checklist
 - Website

Ideas to put in booklet

- Picture of the school
- Address
- Principal's name
- Assistant Principal's name
- Subjects/activities that are available
- Overall impression

Visits to the New School or Classroom

Tips for successful visits

- Go slowly.
- Provide visuals (checklists, notes).
- Have adults or students from the student's support team along on the visit.
- If the student is overwhelmed, do NOT push and force the student to stay or talk.
- Make visits short. Shorter, frequent visits are better than one or two long visits.
- Bring a camera to take pictures of the school.
- Process the visit afterwards with your student.

First Visit

- The purpose is to familiarize the student with the building and reduce his or her anxiety of being in the building.
- Preferably after school or before school when other students are not there.



▪ **Activity #1.** Take a visit to your new school. You may want to visit the school before or after school when there are not very many students in the building.

- Date I'm going to visit _____
- I am going with _____.

▪ **TO DO LIST DURING MY VISIT**

- Find the school office.
- Introduce yourself to the Secretary.
- Introduce yourself to the Principal.
- Ask for a map of the school. (use the map to find the following places on the list)
- Find the nurse's and counselor's office.
- Find the lunchroom.
- Walk around the hallways and look at a locker.
- Look into a classroom.
- Find out where the restrooms are.
- Find out where exploratory classrooms are.
- Find out where the gym is.
- Look at the locker rooms.

There may be other rooms or places in your new school that you may want to check out. That's good! Take your time visiting your new school.



When you come back from your visit, answer the following questions....

1. What happened on your visit?
2. What are your feelings and thoughts about the visit?
3. How do you think your visit will help you the first day of school?



Second Visit



- The purpose is to start developing a new support team for the student.
- Typically, this visit is a 1-1 conversation with a new staff member. (One person that the student is comfortable with may be there to observe and/or help if needed)

Other Visits



- These visits are during the school day and require more planning with the student.
- They can be visits to the lunchroom, classrooms, specials classes, etc.
- Make sure to create a plan if the student becomes anxious and needs to leave.

Continuing Visits



- Revisit the anxiety cards for "3", "4" and "5" to see which situations need to be addressed.
- Meet other students that could be mentors or friends.
- Each student will be different – you need to tailor it to their needs.

Before School Starts



- Receive schedule and locker combination.
- Come up and practice walking through their schedule and their locker combination.
- Arrange a time to put supplies in their locker/decorate their locker.

Remember...



- Involve the student as much as possible to address their specific concerns and anxiety.
- Keep the lines of communication open.
- Continue doing activities until the student is at a manageable level of anxiety.
- The end goal is a smooth transition for the student on the autism spectrum, the family and the school community.

Resources



- Autism Internet Modules – www.autisminternetmodules.com
- Buron, K. D., & Curtis, M. (2003). *The Incredible S-Point Scale: Assisting students with autism spectrum disorders in understanding social interactions and controlling their emotional responses*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.
- Trautman, M. L. (2010) *My New School: A Workbook to Help Students Transition to a New School*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.
- Video Modeling Information: http://autismcdc.fpg.unc.edu/sites/autismcdc.fpg.unc.edu/files/Video_Modeling_factsheet.pdf
