



Communication and Interaction Team

Supporting Transitions

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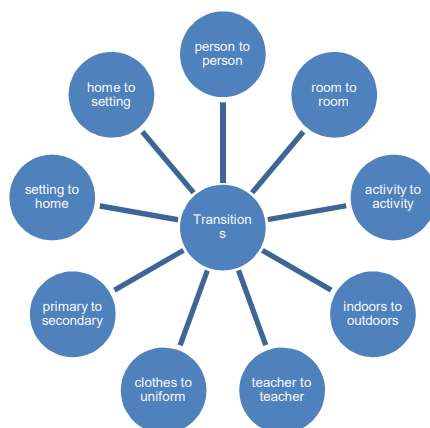
The key to a successful and seamless transition is to ensure good communication between all of those involved and to keep the child central to the whole planning process.

For a CYP with Autism we also have to consider the four key areas of difference

<https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/what-is-autism/> and ensure that these differences are supported.

For example many CYP with ASC find change and transitions extremely difficult and seek high levels of structure, predictability and routine to feel safe and make sense of the world.

This may mean that greater attention/ awareness is needed to support all transitions during the CYP's day including:



- Understanding / responding appropriately to the expectations, demands and social rules of any environment, particularly when new and unfamiliar.
- Understanding how to physically interact within any environment / context, particularly when new and unfamiliar.
- Relating to new or unfamiliar contexts and staff.
- Interpreting and acting on social cues
- Predicting what might happen

All of these elements can have an impact on a pupil's ability to modulate their levels of arousal and subsequently manage their self-regulation. As a result pupils with autism will require a high level of structured support in order to access new environments and to approach change; subsequently it will be very important that they receive a particularly well planned and enhanced transition into any new educational setting with the emphasis adjusted according to content, ie Early Years, Primary, Secondary or Post 16.

Useful Strategies

- CYP will require a carefully planned transition process into school / Post 16 provision, including supported visits with key people and the development of a workbook / 'All About Me' profile which includes important information in visual format. It will be important to explore how current systems which are having a positive impact for the pupil can be replicated in a new context.
- Possible opportunities to visit a setting at quieter times, ie 'after hours', to help to prevent sensory overload.
- The use of visual resources will help to clarify what is to be done and will help the CYP to recall and retain information in relation to the expectations placed on them during the day in both academic and social contexts

Strategies to Support

It is particularly important to consider that as a result of the four key areas of difference pupils with autism are likely to experience heightened anxiety in relation to:

- Unknown situations



- The use of social narratives should be used to help the CYP to understand specific social contexts and what they can do in such situations and crucially to provide them with positive reassurance and affirmation. It is important that such approaches are personal to the CYP and that they have as much ownership of the process as possible.
- Comic Strip Conversations may be useful to assist the CYP to draw out and develop greater understanding about specific situations and could assist them in their understanding of difficult or key concepts in relation to transition the CYP may be missing in relation to transition and provide a source of reassurance.
- It will be important that the CYP is helped to develop a relationship with key adults based at the setting who they recognise as a source of support and guidance.
- A personalised mentoring system could be established with frequency as appropriate.
- Unstructured times such as break times, self-study / study periods may need a timetabled focus with mentor support with addition of structured opportunities such as clubs / extracurricular activities
- The CYP will need to know where their 'safe place' is and how to access it especially if they are anxious. Access to quieter environments during unstructured times, ie 'lunch clubs', library, etc. would also be useful.
- All staff at a setting need to be aware of the pupil's needs and apply any strategies consistently. The development of a personal profile as recommended by the Autism Education Trust, would be a useful tool in facilitating this process.
- Good home/school links will help to monitor the pupil's moods and to develop a consistent approach in terms of strategies and help the CYP to make links and generalise their skills in the long term. These systems can also help to monitor if a school-based anxiety is manifesting at home.

Useful resources, links and further reading:

- Autism Education Trust: 'Transition Toolkit': www.autism.org.uk > nas > [autism-education-trust-transition-toolkit](http://www.autism-education-trust-transition-toolkit)

Autism Education Trust:

- Schools National Standards and Competency Framework
- Schools Training Programme
- Details can be found here: <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/training-programme/schools/>
- Post 16 National Standards and Competency Framework
- Post 16 Training Programme including 'Transition from School to College' module
- Details can be found here: <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/training-programme/post-16/>

The National Autistic Society:

- Transition Guidance: <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/transition.aspx>

The Communication and Interaction Team:

- Providing training, support and advice to settings: <https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/disadvantaged-vulnerable-learners/send/communication-and-interaction>
- Useful resources for transition and classroom strategies: <https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-support-for-schools-parents-and-pupils/links-for-home-schooling-resources-and-activities/communication-and-interaction>
<https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/disadvantaged-vulnerable-learners/educational-psychology/resources/transition-guidance>