

Preparation for transition to Primary School for Children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

The transition to school from a preschool setting is a significant challenge for the young child with autism.

Below are a series of practical tips to help with a smooth and successful transition into your chosen school.

1. Preparation

- ✓ Visit the school beforehand - more than once, if possible. This will help to familiarise your child with the layout and the routes. Ask the Additional Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) or class teacher if they have photographs of the different areas in school. This can help with getting to know different areas of the school. They can also be made into a book or used with a Now/Next card. Remember to ask for the school's induction pack.
- ✓ Tell the ALNCo about strategies that have worked for your child in preschool settings.
- ✓ Familiarise your child with the route to school. Beforehand, take photographs of the journey and make a "My journey to school" book that the child can follow. Talk to your child about the pictures in book.
- ✓ If your child likes to know his/her daily routine, practise at home by using a timetable or a Now/Next card.
- ✓ Think about the clothes your child is going to be wearing to school; elasticated waist skirts/trousers and Velcro shoes are easier to manage independently. Practise taking these on and off at home ready for independent dressing and undressing for PE and for going to the toilet.
- ✓ Practise nursery rhymes, action songs, recognising their own photo and name, sitting and sharing a book, role-play with their favourite toys, and personal hygiene routines e.g. washing hands, sitting on the toilet.
- ✓ If your child is not fully toilet trained, consider toilet training during the holiday before they start school. A useful website for leaflets and resources on toilet training is www.promocon.co.uk.

2. Early Days

- ✓ School bag clearly marked with child's photo and name.
- ✓ Simple visual timetable of daily routine.
- ✓ Use "My journey to school" book each time you go to the school.
- ✓ If you are not picking your child up, ask class teacher to fill in a daily diary highlighting what has happened during the day and notifying you of any changes you need to be aware of.
- ✓ Lay uniform out the night before with your child and put a photograph of school on top to visually remind child of school the next day.
- ✓ Practise activities at home that maybe causing your child problems e.g. sitting on the floor for circletime, sitting at a table for snacktime, choosing a toy or food from a choice of 3 using real objects or pictures, waiting, lining up, turn taking, walking not running, personal hygiene routines. This will help to build independent skills and encourage your child to ask for help.
- ✓ Once settled, try to organise playdays with peers to encourage play/social skills.