

Watch, Transitions Ahead!

As we begin the new school year, we prepare our children for the new protocols and rules enforced. But we also must prepare our children that those protocols could change at a moment's notice.

Transitions are difficult for all children and adults but can be tremendous challenges for a child with special needs. Individuals with Autism, ADHD, Anxiety, and sensory processing differences often struggle with transitions for unique reasons. Use these tips to help prepare your child ahead of time that expecting change is a part of the days ahead.

Talk About It:



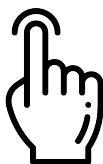
Talk with your child about what things will look like at the start of the school year. Then when appropriate, discuss with your child the changes that could be coming. ex: *"If people in your class get sick, we will do this. If many people in your school get sick, we will do this."* Also be sure to talk about the days of improvement ahead, *"When things are safer, we will be able to learn, play, and eat lunch with friends again."* In order to have these conversations, keep yourself informed of your school's present plan and keep up with communications on changes.

Make it Visual:



To keep these ideas of change fresh in their mind, keep a chart in a visible place in your home that lets the child know when and how to expect changes. Use pictures or written words to show your child what protocol looks like for each day of school. ex: *"Today we are going to school with masks, keeping social distance from all friends, and eating lunch in the classroom"* Use this system to also show what protocol will look like when things get better or worse. We've created the [Traffic Light Transitions](#) worksheet for you to use. Create your own system, based on your school's protocols of what things look like for a yellow, green, or red day.

Hands On:



Allow your child to interact with the visual chart that you have created often. Perhaps use a clothespin or a sticker to identify what color day it is each morning. Review what the rules will be for that morning so that when the color (or protocol) changes, it doesn't catch them off guard. They've been expecting these transitions from the very beginning.