

## **Transitioning Back to School: 5 Tips for Teachers**

The beginning of a new school year is a demanding time for teachers. The transition can be especially challenging when working with students on the autism spectrum. While change is difficult for these students, keep in mind these tips to make the transition back to school a success.

### **1. Communicate with parents.**

Begin the year with positive communication to learn more about your student. Parents know their child best. They can help familiarize you with any behavior and safety concerns before the year begins. The more you understand the child, the greater the potential for a successful school year and the better you communicate with the parents.

### **2. Provide visual supports.**

Students on the autism spectrum need visual reminders for success with learning new routines. Visual supports may include written or picture lists of materials needed for each class, reinforcement token board, a schedule, a map of the school, and model assignments.

### **3. Clearly list and teach behavioral expectations.**

While most students may understand classroom behavioral expectations such as raising a hand to ask or answer questions, students on the autism spectrum may need explicit instructions. Model and explicitly teach the behaviors you expect.

### **4. Plan to teach other students about autism/Asperger Syndrome.**

Students are more likely to accept and include their peer if they understand autism spectrum disorders. Creating a positive social environment for your student on the spectrum is important to their adjustment.

### **5. Plan ahead to prepare for trouble spots.**

When setting up your room and planning seating charts remember to consider the specific needs of your student. This could mean seating a student closer to your desk or away from distractions. Create a plan of attack for free time, such as recess and lunch, as unstructured activities may be more difficult.