



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

Beginning a new school year is exciting and scary for parents and children alike. The transition is especially challenging for families with children on the autism spectrum. While change is difficult, keep these tips in mind to make the transition back to school a success.

### **1. Prepare your child for change.**

The beginning of the school year brings many changes at once. Familiarize your child with anything new related to school as much as possible. This may mean bringing your child into their school or classroom, showing your child a picture of their teacher and any classmates, or even meeting the teacher before the first day of school.

### **2. Discuss the unexpected.**

Parents cannot anticipate everything that will happen during a school day. Prepare your child for situations that may not go as planned. Talk about a plan of attack for free time, such as lunch and recess. Use social stories to familiarize your child with routines and how to behave when the unexpected happens.

### **3. Reintroduce routines.**

Over summer vacation your child's morning and evening routines may have changed. They may be waking up and going to bed at different times. Start adjusting your child to the school year schedule and routine well before the school year actually begins.

### **4. Teach and review school related “hidden curriculum.”**

While many children may switch easily between the social demands of summer activities and those required in a classroom, children on the autism spectrum may need more explicit reminders. Go over the “*dos and don'ts*” of acceptable school behavior.

### **5. Prepare yourself for change.**

Meet with teachers and administrators to discuss your child's strengths and challenges. Remember, you know and advocate for your child best. Establish communication early to develop positive relationships with your child's teacher and school.