



Autism Tip Sheet

From the Elida School District Autism Team

Transitions and Anxiety

Very few people like change – we tolerate it because it is an inevitable part of life, so we learn to cope with it and eventually appreciate the challenges and opportunities for our personal growth and development that it brings. However, for individuals with autism each and every change and transition is very difficult.

This may mean the major moves at different life stages or it can also mean the daily transitions of moving from one activity to another, from place to place or person to person. The way such changes and transitions are managed can make a big difference to an individual's well-being, ability to learn skills, make progress, build relationships and be happy.

What you can do

Routine helps a child with autism make sense of the world. They like to know what is going to happen next. Any unexpected change to routine can cause a major upset.

- Practice to help prepare for change and allow the student to practice an activity in advance.
- Develop a class timetable with a visual schedule or write the order of activities on the board for the day. Give the child a copy of the timetable so parents can help the child learn the timetable.
- If staff plan on taking leave, give the child plenty of advance warning. Explain to the child that everything else about the day will be the same; but the teacher will be different.

- To assist a substitute teacher, make up an information page about the child with autism. Include information as necessary.
- Give the child a transition cue to warn them a new task or activity is coming and some time to finish what they are doing and move to the next task.
- The child may be more willing to leave the task if he is reassured that he can return to it later.
- It is a good idea to introduce slight variations to activities to help the child become more tolerant of change.

Sources:

[Autism Help Info](#)
[Autism West Midlands](#)