



Early Years Transitions Toolkit

This is part three of a three-part resource for parents and carers on **Transitions in the Early Years**. This is a **Toolkit** of useful resources, to make it easier for parents and carers to support their children.



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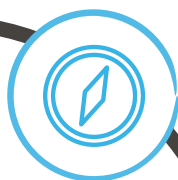
Now you have read our **What Is?** and **How to?** guides on **Transitions in Early Years**, it is time to choose the tools which will be most helpful in supporting your child.

In this guide:



Early Years Transitions Toolkit of Resources

This guide is **part three of three** resources for parents and carers on **Developing Transitions in the Early Years**. The **first** resource in the series looks at how strengths and support needs within the three areas of difference in autism can impact on transitions, and the **second** provides suggested strategies and advice.



What is: The Potential Impact of Autism on Transitions in the Early Years (From Birth to Five)?



How to: Support Your Child With Transitions in Early Years.



Early Years Transitions **Toolkit of Resources**.



Parent Resources



Tool 1 - Transitions Checklist:

? What is it?

This checklist tool can help you gather information about your child's transitions.

🕒 When to use it?

The checklist can be used to identify what works well and support needs prior to identifying 'next steps' and putting in place strategies to support your child.

✅ How to use it?

The checklist can help you gather information about your child's transitions so that you can think about how best to support them. You can also use the tool to form the basis of a discussion with Early Years staff about your child's current transition strengths and support needs.





Tool 1 - Transitions Checklist:

Actions	Completed?	Comments/support needs
We have been given an explanation about primary school provision options and we have been given opportunities to visit		
We have visited a range of school options		
A school place has been assigned for September (usually by the April)		
External services supporting me/ my child have been contacted		
I have made contact with the receiving primary school		
A transition meeting has been organised and relevant people are invited		
We have attended the first transition meeting		
The new school have given us a transition book or <i>Situation Story</i> ¹ about the new setting		
My child has been for their first visit		
Further visits are planned if needed		
Staff from the primary school have been to see my child in their Early Years setting		
I know who my key contact is at the school if I have any concerns		





Tool 1 - Transitions Checklist:

Actions	Completed?	Comments/support needs
The primary school have explored their sensory environment through a sensory audit and they have shared that with me		
My child has had a One Page Profile created and this has been shared with staff		
My child has a Communication Passport which has also been shared with staff		
My child's sensory differences have been explored and shared		
My child's Individual Support Plan (or EHCP if appropriate) has been shared		
Staff at the primary school have had autism training		
We are practising with the new uniform		
We are practising the route to school		
I know how we can share information from home to school and vice versa		

Adapted from Autism Education Trust's **Supporting Learners with Autism During Transition - Examples and Templates for Early Years to Primary School Transition, Early Years to Primary School Transition Checklist**

¹ **Situation Stories** is the term suggested by our Autistic Young Experts, however the concept is that of Carol Gray's Social Stories™. Please see the following link for more information and for details of her work: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/communication-tools/social-stories-and-comic-strip-conversations>



Parent Resources



Tool 2 - One Page Profile:

? What is it?

This tool provides an overview of your child to help new adults get to know them quickly, engage with them via their interests and avoid anything which may cause anxiety. The information fits on one page with a focus on positives and what works for your child. Parental information is essential to share with a new setting.

🕒 When to use it?

This tool can be set up as a way to support transitions and should be reviewed and updated regularly as your child's interests and support needs change.

✓ How to use it?

Using your knowledge of your child, add information to each section of the profile to share their strengths and interests, what makes them happy, things they find tricky and what helps as well as what they can do independently.





Tool 2 - One Page Profile:

What you can do to help me:	My name is: I am years old I communicate by:	What is important to me:
What people like and admire about me:	Me Click to add a photo here	My strengths & talents:
My dream is to:	My fears / worries / things I don't like:	My favourite things:



Tool 3 - How You Can Help: Practical Strategies for Transition Factsheet:

? What is it?

This tool provides examples of common transitions situations and lists suggested strategies to support your child to enjoy successful transitions.

🕒 When to use it?

This tool can be used as a reference point when you are thinking about the best ways to support your child.

✅ How to use it?

You can use this tool to identify what your child does now, to plan their next steps and to think about strategies to support them to achieve those steps. Suggested strategies can be discussed with your child's Early Years setting and adapted to suit the support needs of your individual child.





Tool 3 - How You Can Help: Practical Strategies for Transition Factsheet:

What we are worried about	What we want to happen	Suggested strategies
My child won't want to go somewhere different.	My child is happy to go to school.	Your child will likely be anxious about going somewhere new. It is important to try and reduce their anxiety and your own to prepare for this. Visit the school for short periods, maybe to drop off some paperwork. Attend planned transition visits Through transition meetings, identify how many visits might be best. Visit the setting when it is quiet so your child can look around the environment and feel safe. Build up to having more people/ children in the space. Stay for short periods initially and build up to longer. Take photos (you or your child) of things that will be important/ motivating for them so you can look at them together at home. Use a visual calendar at home to show when visits to school are happening and when things are the same e.g. going to pre-school.





Tool 3 - How You Can Help: Practical Strategies for Transition Factsheet:

What we are worried about	What we want to happen	Suggested strategies
They will miss their key adults from their current setting.	My child will understand that pre-school is finished.	It is important that your child understands that pre-school is finished and school is starting. Use clear language to explain the 'rules' about when we go to school. Have a way to say goodbye to key adults - perhaps make them a card etc. Agree a phrase with your child, that they will use to say goodbye. "Thank you for looking after me. Now I'm 5 I go to school." This may be more confusing if they have a sibling to drop off or collect or after school care via the pre-school. In which case you could show this via a visual schedule at home.
That new staff won't know my child well enough and be able to support them.	New staff know my child well and are able to support effectively.	Create a One Page Profile with your child's pre-school so that staff in their new setting can get to know them quickly. Include what they really like, are really good at, can do independently and also what distresses them and what works when they are upset. Revisit this regularly with the new setting to ensure it stays up to date.





Tool 3 - How You Can Help: Practical Strategies for Transition Factsheet:

What we are worried about	What we want to happen	Suggested strategies
That they won't understand my child's communication.	New staff understand my child's communication so my child does not become frustrated or distressed.	Build a Communication Passport for your child. You can start this at home and ask the pre-school setting to add to it as well. This will give the new setting, really rich information about how your child communicates and how they should be communicated with. You could include some key phrases that they use or understand so that their new school can use them too. Agree a way that school will inform you if there has been distress and what happened so that you can work together to identify the triggers and find a way forward next time.
That my child won't eat/drink while they are in the setting.	My child is able to eat and drink at school.	Lots of children find eating and drinking in a new environment difficult. Sometimes this is because what they are offered is or is perceived as different to what they are used to. Sometimes it's because they have missed the cues that it is time to eat or drink or they are unable to switch their attention from an activity they are enjoying.





Tool 3 - How You Can Help: Practical Strategies for Transition Factsheet:

What we are worried about	What we want to happen	Suggested strategies
		Most schools ask that children drink water during the school day. If your child does not drink water then talk to school about a way forward. It may be that they can use their favourite juice initially while they adjust and gradually phase to water over time. With food, talk to the school about your child's sensory preferences and what sort of lunch you want them to have. If you choose a hot meal for your child, it could be a process of exploring the hot food for some time, whilst also having a pack up of things they like to eat once they have explored the hot food in a way that is appropriate e.g. visually, smell, touch on lip etc. Some autistic children need to eat more regularly throughout the day as they feel hungry often and so talk to the school about how this can be provided and what you can send into school so they can graze when they need to.
That my child won't use the toilet whilst at school.	My child is able to use the toilet when they need to at school.	Toilets can be difficult places for autistic children due to the sensory impact of the smells, noises and unpredictability of who else might be in there. Explore the barrier to them using the toilet at school. What works at home?





Tool 3 - How You Can Help: Practical Strategies for Transition Factsheet:

What we are worried about	What we want to happen	Suggested strategies
		If your child needs it, talk to school about how they can support with ensuring the space is quiet and feels safe. Your child should be using the toilet routinely throughout the day. It may be that if a group toilet block is overwhelming then they need access to another single toilet that may be in school. It will be important for school and home to share information about toileting if your child is unable to use the toilet at school routinely as this could impact their health and wellbeing.
My child is still in nappies or pull ups.	My child is able to use the toilet when they need to at school.	If they are still learning to use the toilet, then they need a plan in place for school and home to work on making the toilet a comfortable place to be and helping them to recognise the signals. The school should have an intimate care plan/policy in place that details how they will care for children who are in nappies and need changing at school.





Tool 3 - How You Can Help: Practical Strategies for Transition Factsheet:

What we are worried about	What we want to happen	Suggested strategies
That they will be alone when others are playing.	My child is able to play with other children when they want to.	It is important that we recognise that autistic children sometimes want to play alone but we also need to ensure they have the social knowledge to play with others should they want to. Talk to school about your child's social relationships, their strengths and next steps to identify a way forward through their Individual Support Plan.
My child won't wear one or more aspects the uniform, without distress.	My child attends school with adjusted expectations for uniform – it is a work in progress.	Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to enable children with SEN to engage in learning at school. If your child is very distracted by the feel of their socks then they will be unable to engage in learning and will need an adjustment e.g. perhaps they wear the socks outside when it is cold but they can take them off inside. Maybe the trousers are uncomfortable around their waist and legs so they have the same colour trousers but in an elasticated, soft fabric to enable them to focus in the classroom. Talk to the school about reasonable adjustments for your child to identify a way forward.





Tool 3 - How You Can Help: Practical Strategies for Transition Factsheet:

What we are worried about	What we want to happen	Suggested strategies
That my child won't understand the routines/ expectations.	My child understands the routines and expectations in this school.	Your child should have a visual timetable in their classroom which shows what is happening today. They may also need a more personalised version of first/then or now/next so they can focus on what is happening right now. The school could record a short video of the class routine for a morning or afternoon which your child can watch as needed. The routine could also be communicated through a Situation Story¹.
That we won't know how their day has been because they can't tell us about it.	We know how their day has been and have some key things to share with them.	In Early Years, the school should have a way to record your child's learning journey while they are at school. There are often online systems where information can be shared with parents and also parents can add information from home to share back to school. Talk to school about how you can use this system most effectively and how you might get to know one or two key things that happened in your child's day, so you can share it with them at home.





Tool 3 - How You Can Help: Practical Strategies for Transition Factsheet:

What we are worried about	What we want to happen	Suggested strategies
My child will be overwhelmed and tired.	My child is able to access all parts of the school day.	Starting school can often mean longer days for children and more information, learning and routines within those days. For some children, the jump from attending pre-school on part time hours to attending school on full time hours, needs some time to adjust to. Liaise with your child's school as to how they could manage this and what will work best initially as your child gets used to the environment. If your child does start on a phased timetable, ensure there is regular review of what success looks like and when you will review to discuss the next step to your child being in school full time.

¹ **Situation Stories** is the term suggested by our Autistic Young Experts, however the concept is that of Carol Gray's Social Stories™. Please see the following link for more information and for details of her work: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/communication-tools/social-stories-and-comic-strip-conversations>



Tool 4 - What are Visual Strategies for Transition? Factsheet:

? What is it?

Autistic children may have differences in communication, which means they may find it more challenging to process, retain or respond to information that is only supplied verbally. In addition, they tend to be visual thinkers. As a result, they will often benefit from the use of visual strategies to support them, particularly during transitions where there is a sequence of actions. This resource explains what visual strategies are, why they are important and when it might be appropriate for you to use them with your child.

🕒 When to use it?

This fact sheet is a useful resource to refer to when thinking about the appropriate visual cues or sequences to put in place to support your child with getting ready for school, getting dressed or what happens when they get home.

✓ How to use it?

This tool can be used as a starting point to think about, discuss and agree the most appropriate and impactful visual support to use with your child at home and in their Early Years setting.



Parent Resources





Tool 4 - What are Visual Strategies for Transition? Factsheet:

Visual strategies are a way of reinforcing information that is given verbally, with visual information so that the message being conveyed is easier to understand and remember.

Visual strategies can be used to accomplish a range of goals. You may use something visual to help your child to understand a situation, or to provide a visual prompt so that your child can accomplish a task more independently.

Visual strategies may take a range of formats, including signs, symbols, objects of reference, photographs and writing, or a combination of these strategies.

The strengths and support needs of your individual child should determine the size, format, quantity and complexity of the information being communicated.

Why Use Visual Strategies?

Autistic children have differences in communication, which means they may not be able to process, retain and respond to information only supplied verbally. In addition, they tend to be visual thinkers. As a result, they will benefit from the use of **visual strategies** to support them.

Using **visual strategies** will support your child, by:

- Enabling them to 'see' and remember what to do in any given situation. The visual provided will not disappear from their memory like spoken instructions do.
- Giving them additional time for processing information.
- Giving them the opportunity to process the information in their own time.
- Promoting independence by providing a visual tool to refer to, in order for them to identify and carry out a task or the stages of a task.
- Enabling them to refer back to the visual, helping them to sequence, rehearse and learn a skill.





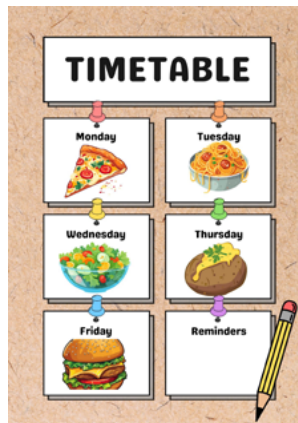
Tool 4 - What are Visual Strategies for Transition? Factsheet:

When might you use visual strategies?

Visual strategies can be used in a range of situations. To:

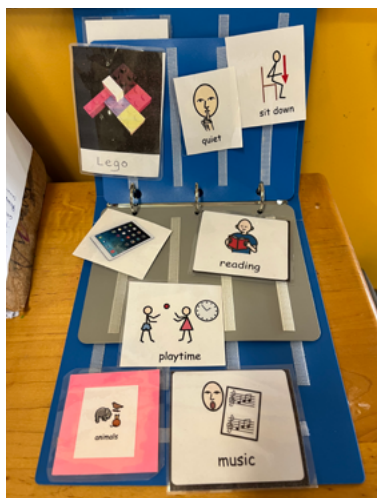
1. **Give information** – To answer the who, what, why, where, when questions.

Show your child what they will be having for lunch this week:



2. **Explain social situations** – Autistic children may have differences in social understanding. Providing social information, e.g. social rules, both verbally and with a visual support, can help your child to understand a variety of social situations.
3. **Give choices** – Let your child know what their options are, what is available/ not available.
4. **Provide structure** – Communicate what is happening and when throughout the day, week or month. This can help reduce your child's anxiety around the unknown.

Show your child what they will be doing today:





Tool 4 - What are Visual Strategies for Transition? Factsheet:

5. **Teach routines and/or new skills** – When we follow a recipe or the instructions for putting together flat pack furniture, having the steps broken down makes it easier. When your child can see what they need to do and in what order, this will help them to learn the routine.

Show your child that when they come into their setting from the playground, that they will need to hang their coat on their peg.



6. **Communicate rules** – These might be generic rules or social rules. Your autistic child may have differences in social understanding, and visual strategies - such as simple cue cards - can help with this.
7. **Assist your child in coping with change** – When something in your child's routine is going to change, try to prepare them in advance. Preparing autistic children when something will be different from what they normally expect can reduce anxiety around the unknown. Use a 'surprise' or 'oops' symbol and build these symbols into the daily visual timetable used by your child.
8. **Support self-regulation** – Your child needs to learn strategies to help them cope when they get anxious or encounter a problem. Strategies such as looking at calming activities that they can choose from can help with this.
9. **Aid memory** – Visual strategies help your child to remember what to do and/or when.

For Example:



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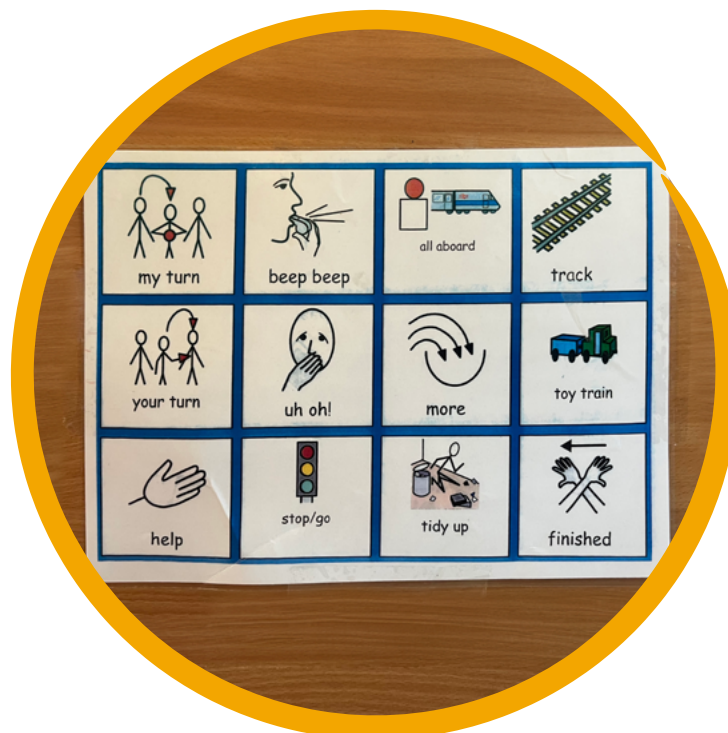
Tool 4 - What are Visual Strategies for Transition? Factsheet:

10. **Communicate emotions** – Although autistic children will demonstrate a variety of emotions with their actions, they may find it more difficult to recognise and name their emotions, and this makes it harder for them to manage them. Helping your child to translate emotional responses into pictures or written language gives an opportunity to explain, clarify or validate how they are feeling.

Use scales like this to help your child communicate their emotions:



11. **Clarify verbal information** – Autistic children can interpret language very literally and they may struggle to infer what is meant from what is said and the way it is communicated. Using visuals can help clarify the message and helps to eliminate any confusion.



Tool 5 - What is a Communication Passport? Factsheet

? What is it?

This tool provides an explanation of what a Communication Passport is, and when and how to use it.

🕒 When to use it?

This tool can be used when planning for transition to develop new staff understanding of how your child communicates and what they mean. It should be used as a working document and updated regularly as communication develops.

✓ How to use it?

This tool can help you detail whether your child communicates with words or whether they are non or pre-verbal, what their vocalisations mean and how to read their body language and facial expressions. The tool reminds us that every child's communication is different and it is important that we adapt our communication in order for them to understand us. You can share the Communication Passport with your child's Early Years setting and anyone else who looks after them, so that they can add to it with what they see in setting before the child transitions to a new environment.



Parent Resources



Tool 5 - What is a Communication Passport? Factsheet

Autistic children may have differences in the way they communicate. They may be verbal, non-verbal or pre-verbal and may use echolalia and / or gestalt language processing. A **Communication Passport** captures your child's unique communication, enabling them to have a voice and share information about themselves, with familiar adults, so that those new to them can learn to understand them quickly and communicate with them effectively.

? What is it?

The **Passport** adds further information on your child's communication which can be signposted to from a **One Page Profile**. It provides space to describe the range of communication that your child may use. It enables you as their parent / carer to record what you have learned about your child's communication so that their next setting is ready to communicate effectively with them, as soon as they arrive. The **Passport** is written from your child's point of view and should be easy to understand. It should have photos and pictures.

🕒 When should it be used?

The **Passport** should be used when your child joins a setting, so that staff learn about their communication from you – their parents/carers. Later, it should be updated ahead of future transitions so that new staff can also learn about your child's communication quickly. The **Passport** enables staff to support effectively and minimise frustration for your child in not being understood. It also promotes partnership with families.

The **Passport** should then be updated regularly as communication strengths and support needs change over time.

✓ How to use it?

Work through this tool with your child and complete the gaps or highlight the relevant statements relating to their communication based on what you know and understand. You should reflect on any differences in their communication from being at home to being in less familiar surroundings e.g. visiting family members, going on outings etc. Share this information with their current setting so that the **Passport** can be added to and passed on to their new school to support their next transition.



Tool 5 - What is a Communication Passport? Factsheet

Communication Passport:



Communication Passport

Insert photo

Name:

How

tells you things

Words

Sounds

Facial expression

Symbols

Signs

Objects

Movement

Objects of reference



Parent Resources



Tool 5 - What is a Communication Passport? Factsheet

How	tells you things
Happy	What he/she does How to respond
Upset	What he/she does How to respond
Angry	What he/she does How to respond
Bored	What he/she does How to respond
Yes	What he/she does How to respond
No	What he/she does How to respond



Tool 5 - What is a Communication Passport? Factsheet

What	does when he/she
Needs the toilet/to be changed	Is in pain
Wants something	Wants to talk
Is hungry	Is thirsty
Wants to be alone	Wants to be with others
Other	Other
Communication Passport completed by:	



Parent Resources



Tool 6 - Getting Ready for School: Comic Book Conversation

? What is it?

This tool is a story set out like a comic strip. Comic Book Conversations focus on routines, situations and events.

🕒 When to use it?

You can use the **Comic Book Conversation** when you want to explain a routine - what happens and in what order. The tool can also be used to explain a situation - what might happen, what people might say or how they might act. A **Comic Book Conversation** could also be used to explain an event that is going to happen and what your child might expect.

✓ How to use it?

You can read The **Comic Book Conversation** with your child and help them understand a routine, situation or event. Use the tool to start a conversation about what will happen, what your child needs to do, in what order and why. You could explain key transitions to your child using a **Comic Book Conversation**, for example:

- Their morning routine as in the example in our tool.
- Their journey to the setting / school.
- Having lunch.
- Playing in the yard.
- What they will do in their setting.
- Coming home.



Tool 6 - Getting Ready for School: Comic Book Conversation

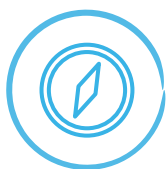
Getting Ready for School.



Parent Resources

Next Steps:

If you haven't done so already, check out the other two resources in this series on Transitions in the Early Years:



What is: The Potential Impact of Autism on Transitions in the Early Years (From Birth to Five)?



How to: Support Your Child With Transitions in Early Years.



Parent Resources



References:

Tool - 1: *Transition Checklist*, devised by Vicki Fitzackerley

Tool - 2: *One Page Profile* created by Autism Education Trust.

Tool - 3: *How You Can Help: Practical Strategies for Transition Fact Sheet*, devised by Vicki Fitzackerley.

Tool - 4: *What are Visual Strategies for Transition? Fact Sheet*

Text adapted for the Early Years Foundation Stage by Ann Wiseman from the Autism Education Trust, Making Sense of Autism Module resource. Examples for transitions by Vicki Fitzackerley, Gosberton House Academy.

Tool - 5: *What is a Communication Passport? Fact Sheet*, adapted for Early Years Foundation by Vicki Fitzackerley.

Tool - 6: *Comic Book Conversation* Designed by Julie Gibson, AET, for this resource.





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