**Transition**

**It’s a process, not an event**

**Change**

Children and Young People can find change difficult

Children and Young People need support [in advance of](http://www.autism.org.uk/about/transition/starting-or-switching.aspx##preparing) and [during](http://www.autism.org.uk/about/transition/starting-or-switching.aspx##during) the period of change.

**Preparing for change**

Planned visits and phased entry

Meet and take photos of any key people who will be involved in their transition.

Make a book of photos and information they can refer to as this can help to relieve their [anxieties](http://www.autism.org.uk/about/transition/starting-or-switching.aspx##anxiety).

**Visual Supports**

[These](http://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/visual-supports.aspx) can help young people to understand what will be happening and reinforce verbal communication.

These will need to be used more than once, particularly if the change is going to take place over a prolonged period of time.

When using visual supports:

* [Use clear language](http://www.autism.org.uk/about/communication/tips-parents.aspx) and give your child time to process what is said
* Make sure that you show outcomes as well as all the stages of a process
* Use a calendar and encourage count down to the change, where appropriate

**Social StoriesTM**

Create short descriptions of specific situations, events or activities, supported by strong visuals.

They must includes specific information about what to expect in that situation and why.

These help children know what to expect.

**Prepare in the current setting**

Organise individual or group work on preparing for the transition.

Include activities in the curriculum where the child has strength and that help develop confidence.

**Communicate and share information**

Strengths

Support Needs

Likes

Dislikes

Triggers

Effective communication WITH ALL will make a positive difference.

A key worker or transition coordinator can help with this and with preparing a transition plan

Share the child’s wellbeing plan

**Manage the child's anxiety**

Make sure children and young people have the opportunity to ask questions about their concerns.

Explain why the change will benefit them.

Provide them with a book or box where they can write or draw any concerns they have.

Teach some relaxation techniques and remind children to use them.

Create an anxiety plan / social story for children to know what to do if they are anxious.

Find out more about supporting autistic people to [prepare for change](http://www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/preparing-for-change.aspx).

**Support during the change**

Keep the child’s familiar things close-by

Communicate clearly – give specific instructions, without using gestures or specific facial expressions.

This will help them to process what is being said to them more effectively.

Visual supports and timetables

Praise the child for coping with the change and adapting to a new routine.

Keep in regular contact with parents and relevant staff

**After the change**

Be sure that an appropriate curriculum is being delivered using information provided by the previous setting

Assess, identify and focus on the child’s skills and areas where support will be needed in class

Ensure that there is ongoing observation and assessment in order to plan any next steps

Some autistic children and young people find it difficult to transfer certain skills into different situations so putting these means of communication in place is important.

They can also have complex [sensory](http://www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/sensory-world.aspx) issues and may become anxious due to different smells, noises and lights in the school environment.

To help them cope with this you can ask school if they are able to take in reassuring and familiar smells. Some people are sensitive to bright lights or noise so sunglasses or earplugs may help them. Schools are responsible for making reasonable adjustments to help an autistic pupil feel more comfortable.

Read more about reasonable adjustments and disability discrimination in [Great Britain](http://www.autism.org.uk/about/in-education/resolving-disagreements/discrimination-gb.aspx) and [Northern Ireland](http://www.autism.org.uk/about/in-education/resolving-disagreements/discrimination-ni.aspx).

Involving you as the parents

Parents should always be consulted and kept informed of the action taken to help their child and of the outcome of this action. The school must tell you when they first start giving extra or different help for your child because they have additional support or special educational needs. The extra or different help could be:

a changed way of teaching

some help from an extra adult, perhaps in a small group

use of particular equipment like a computer or a desk with a sloping top.

Remember, you know your child better than anyone, so talk to the school in you have concerns about their education.

In Scotland

Local authorities have a legal duty to support certain children with some of the changes in education to ensure that the transition goes smoothly.

At least 12 months before your child starts or changes primary or secondary school (or six months for those starting pre-school), the authority must gather information from education, health and social work services that currently work with your child.

At least six months before your child starts or changes secondary school (or three months for pre-school and primary school), the authority must provide information to prepare the services and staff in the setting your child is moving into.

You will receive a copy of this information and it can only be passed on with your permission. The authority must also ask you, and your child if appropriate, for your views.

If nothing has yet been done to support your child's transition, contact the school or education authority in the first instance.