

## Supporting the return to educational settings: transition supports for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs

For children and young people (yp) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), including those with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), **transition challenges and fears** are often increased. It can be anticipated that the current unique circumstances surrounding the return to school will be particularly difficult for yp with SLCN. **Care-filled transition supports** will be essential.

All transitions should be regarded as **processes not events**. Although the majority of children and yp will be returning to a familiar establishment, **new social rules and expectations** and **adjustments to routines and the physical environment** mean that it will be important to prepare for this process.

This guidance uses the **Six Principles** of the Scottish Children and Families Transitions Position Statement to highlight good practice and to link practitioners to supporting resources for yp with SLCN.

[https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/faculties/hass/education/transitions\\_statement.pdf](https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/faculties/hass/education/transitions_statement.pdf)

### ***Aspirations: child-centred and grounded in nurturing principles***

- Effective Transition Procedures for Children and Young People with Speech, Language and Communication Needs  
[http://www.goglasgow.org.uk/content/usergenerated/file/2019/everychildisincluded\\_effectivetransitionproceduresforchildrenandyoungpeople.pdf](http://www.goglasgow.org.uk/content/usergenerated/file/2019/everychildisincluded_effectivetransitionproceduresforchildrenandyoungpeople.pdf)
- Language and Communication Friendly Establishment Guidance's key indicators promote a responsive physical and learning environment  
<http://www.goglasgow.org.uk/content/usergenerated/file/2019/ecii%20language%20and%20communication.pdf>
- Education Scotland have produced a range of resources aimed at supporting ASN transitions during COVID 19 which signpost to a range of supports  
[https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/transitions?fbclid=IwAR3DpidJd\\_Ew5510DveXHqKSGIKyIErxBNvaSZwKgwq5NFN0MsHMMusFUf8](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/transitions?fbclid=IwAR3DpidJd_Ew5510DveXHqKSGIKyIErxBNvaSZwKgwq5NFN0MsHMMusFUf8)

### ***Expectations: effective communication to ensure yp, families and practitioners are 'co-navigators'***

- Anchor yp in facts and points of certainty over the day. Describe the situation by clarifying what is happening. Clear visual supports will be helpful.  
<https://www.scottishautism.org/services-support/family-support/information-resources>  
<https://accesseasyenglish.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/We-need-space-between-us-Version-2-Easy-English.pdf>
- Develop shared language of understanding. Social stories and comic strip conversations can rehearse expectations and social rules  
<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx>
- Consider fear of health risks and heightened separation anxiety - consider permissible transitions objects/sensory supports.
- Explore the National Autism Implementation Team (NAIT) guidance to support families during this transition <https://www.thirdspace.scot/nait/covid-19-return-to-school/>



### **Opportunities: for renewal and development**

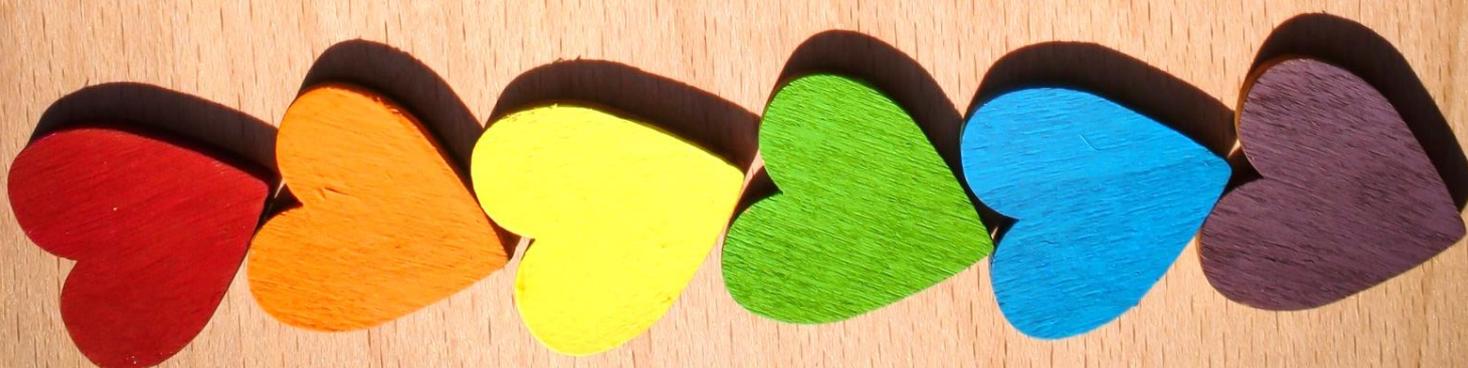
- Prioritise regulation and relationship. Explore brainstem calmers and sensory preferences and build into routine. Suggestions to support individualised planning can be found at <http://www.autismtoolbox.co.uk/sensory-differences> and <https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/>
- Infuse playful, motivating and predictable materials/topics in planned activities. Consider a structured, but low social/task-demand curriculum in initial stages of transition. If necessary, use visual supports to scaffold the yp in making choices.
- Learn from successful new home routines – but don't assume that skills will transfer. Plan to re-teach/re-learn familiar skills in new settings  
<http://www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1143/Supporting%20Children%20with%20LD%20&%20ASD%20with%20COVID%20Isolation.pdf>

### **Entitlements: environments responsive to needs and rights**

- Consider opportunities to revisit class/school/friends in conjunction with introducing new routines, structures, people and places. Pace to match child's coping capacity
- Explore NAIT's Key Messages at <https://www.thirdspace.scot/nait/education-resources/>
  1. Ensure adjustments are anticipatory
  2. Listen to parents
  3. Provide predictability
  4. Use visual supports
  5. Provide a Safe Space
  6. Plan for movement breaks
  7. Seek to understand distressed behaviour

### **Participation: positive expectations develop through a participative process**

- NAIT's Sharing Information Guidance can inform communication with parents/carers and children/young people – and be incorporated into planning  
<https://www.thirdspace.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/NAIT-Returning-to-School-Information-Sharing-Guidance-and-Forms-Final.pdf>
- Consider the specific communication needs of young people – supported by visual aids (photographs of places and key people, drawings, Talking Mats, mind maps, video/virtual tours, maps, newsletters, virtual buddies)
- The Autism Toolbox (<http://www.autismtoolbox.co.uk>) has a variety of information and visual resources to guide communication with and supports for young people with ASD.
- The Communication Trust's 'Involving Children and Young People with SLCN' toolkit offers practical ideas and resources specifically around supporting the effective participation of children and young people with SLCN  
[https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/449470/involving\\_cyp\\_with\\_slcn\\_toolkit.pdf](https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/449470/involving_cyp_with_slcn_toolkit.pdf)
- Access the Young Ambassadors for Inclusion resources  
<https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=138668&section=4.3>
- Use Transition/Communication Passports and one page plans/sensory profiles  
<http://www.communicationpassports.org.uk/Home/>  
[http://www.goglasgow.org.uk/content/usergenerated/file/2019/everychildisincluded\\_effectivetransitionproceduresforchildrenandyoungpeo\\_.pdf](http://www.goglasgow.org.uk/content/usergenerated/file/2019/everychildisincluded_effectivetransitionproceduresforchildrenandyoungpeo_.pdf)



**Contributions: a sense of belonging fostered by feelings of competence and of making a contribution**

- A person-centred, strengths-based approach with trusted adults will ensure the yp feels involved (<http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk>). Consider the situation from the perspective of the pupil, taking account of their strengths, difficulties and past experiences. Reassure children and young people about what will stay the same in their lives, despite all the changes.
- Create visual, accessible narratives of lived experiences over the last few months – scrap books, photos, memory trees, scaling, social stories. Consider National Autistic Society's 'brain in hand' app to explore anxiety <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/preparing-for-change.aspx>
- The Glasgow Motivation and Wellbeing Profile (GMWP) can explore a young person's motivation and sense of wellbeing in the learning context – visual versions available for young people with SLCN. <http://www.goglasgow.org.uk/Pages/Show/1596>

**Additional Resources**

The Principles of Good Transitions with key considerations, examples and resources to allow these principles to be put into practice for an autistic person:

<https://scottishtransitions.org.uk/good-practice/principles-good-transitions-3-autism-supplement-autism-network-scotland/>

Autism in the time of COVID-19:

[www.thirdspace.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/NAIT-Newsletter-4-April-2020.pdf](http://www.thirdspace.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/NAIT-Newsletter-4-April-2020.pdf)

Visual Support Project - collaboration between health and education partners which provides a consistent whole school inclusive visual supports resource:

<https://www.thirdspace.scot/nait/education-resources>

Autism Education Trust - weekly and daily planners:

[www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/activity-and-routine-planners](http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/activity-and-routine-planners)

Call Scotland – blogs highlight free software and resources:

<https://www.callscotland.org.uk/covid-19/>

Enable – easy read fact sheets:

[www.enable.org.uk/coronavirus-information](http://www.enable.org.uk/coronavirus-information)

Young Scot – a range of information specifically designed for children and young people – including helpful advice to reduce stress and anxiety:

<https://young.scot/campaigns/national/coronavirus>

