

Transition supports for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs

For children and young people with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), including those with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), **transition challenges and fears** are often increased. **Care-filled transition supports** will be essential.

All transitions should be regarded as **processes not events**. 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 young people with SLCN.

https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/faculties/hass/education/transitions_statement.pdf

Aspirations: child-centred and grounded in nurturing principles

- Review Glasgow Education Service's [Effective transition procedures for children and young people with Speech Language and Communication Needs document and appendices](#) on GPS website
- Language and Communication Friendly Establishment Guidance's key indicators promote a responsive physical and learning environment
<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/glasgowpsychologicalservice/language-communication-friendly-environment/>
- 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_Ew5510DveXHqKSGIKyIErxBNvaSZwKgwq5NFNO_MsHMMusFUf8
- The Principles of Good Transitions has key considerations, examples and resources to allow transition 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/>

Expectations: effective communication to ensure young people, families and practitioners are 'co-navigators'

- Anchor young person in facts and points of certainty over the day. Describe the situation by clarifying what is happening. Clear visual supports will be helpful.
<http://www.autismtoolbox.co.uk/visual-supports>
- 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>
- Explore the National Autism Implementation Team (NAIT) guidance to support families during transitions back to educational establishments
<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 young person in making choices.

Entitlements: environments responsive to needs and rights

- Plan how to introduce new routines, structures, people and places, pace to match child's coping capacity
<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/transitions/scotland/starting-or-switching-school>
- 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

- 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.
- ICAN have produced research which reinforces key principles in terms of effective involvement of young people with SLCN from their own perspective. It also includes insights from parents.
<https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/professionals/tct-resources/more-resources/exploring-involvement/>
- Access the Young Ambassadors for Inclusion resources
<https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=138668§ion=4.3>
- Use Transition/Communication Passports and one page plans/sensory profiles
<http://www.communicationpassports.org.uk/Home/>



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 young person feels involved (<http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk>). Consider the situation from the perspective of the pupil, taking account of their strengths, difficulties and past experiences.
- 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/advice-and-guidance/topics/mental-health/anxiety>
- 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.
<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/glasgowpsychologicalservice/resources-consulting-with-children-and-young-people/> (Password: gmwp)

“It is important to recognise that transitions happen all day, every day, for example: moving from room to room, from activity to activity or from teacher to teacher. Autistic people may often need support with small, day-to-day transitions. It’s just as important to get these right as it is to get the bigger transitions right. Establishing the best way to support smaller transitions can often help the bigger ones go more smoothly.”

Principles of Good Transitions 3 (2017), Autism Network Scotland

