BACK TO SCHOOL WITHOUT TEARS

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GOALS

1. Understand why going back to school is difficult

2. Understand home based strategies for making back-to-school transition easier

3. Understand school-based strategies for making back-to-school transition easier
Why is transitioning back to school so difficult for our kids?

Unpredictable * New * Change

SCARY!
DEFINITION OF ANXIETY...

...recurring or constant feeling of fear or dread of a PERCEIVED threat that is triggered by specific situations, stimuli, or the body's natural "fight or flight" response

dictionary.com (emphasis mine)
STATS

- Estimates of prevalence of anxiety disorder range from 8.7 to 21.9 percent in children with ID

- Studies estimate the prevalence of anxiety disorder in children and young people with autism range from 13.6 to 84 percent
FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH ANXIETY

⇒ Need for routine and structure
⇒ Difficulty coping in social situations
⇒ Difficulty talking about feelings, needs, & wants
⇒ Difficulty understanding language such as instructions
⇒ Difficulty coping with sensory information
SCHOOL ANXIETY ISN'T A CASE OF "WON'T", IT'S A CASE OF "CAN'T."

-KAREN YOUNG
Calm
Be your child's source of calm.
Don't let them see your anxiety!
STRAATEGIES FOR HOME

Planning

Organization
START A "SCHOOL ROUTINE" EARLY

- Wake up earlier
- Earlier bed times
- Decrease screen time
- Add homework time
CREATE VISUAL SCHEDULES
NEW CLOTHES:

1. Go shopping early. Don't wait until the week before school.
2. Let them wear new clothes and shoes to break them in.
3. Cut out all the tags.
4. Include them in the shopping as much as possible.
Schedule eye and dentist exams before school starts.
MEAL PLAN
SOSIAL NARRATIVES

1st person

Child's point of view

One topic each story

Read often
Have behavior strategies in place. Be prepared to positively reinforce the things that go right!
DON'T schedule lots of fun stuff the week before school!
STRESS THE POSITIVES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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Don't overschedule the first few weeks.
Have safety measures in place if needed
SCHOOL STATION
Write out the student's daily schedule on an index card. Include times for bathroom breaks.
COLOR CODE
A-DAY/B-DAY
INFORMATION SHEET

- Basic information
- Emergency information
- Likes/dislikes
- Favorite things
- Things that work at home
- Things that don't work
DRIVE BY THE SCHOOL
Ride bicycles in the parking lot
Ice cream on the playground
Make a donation of school supplies
Picnic at the school
WALK THE HALLWAYS

♦ If possible, video walking the route to classrooms

♦ Make sure student can find important areas like bathrooms, cafeteria, front office, etc.
MEET THE TEACHER

before

“MEET THE TEACHER”
PEER PARTNER/MENTOR
I'm lost. Can you help me find my class, please?
IF STUDENT IS IN ALL GEN ED CLASSES:

- Make sure teacher and staff are aware your child will be in their class
- Find out if teachers have received training
- Make sure all staff know how to interact with your child (cafeteria workers, librarians, coaches, etc.)
- Make sure teachers have received and are aware of all necessary accommodations
Middle School/High School Specific:

♦ Provide opportunities to practice opening and closing lock on locker

♦ Read through the student handbook and code of conduct with student

♦ Explain that each teacher will have own classroom rules and that the rules may be different

♦ If your student has a diagnosis, discuss disclosure
HAVE A GREAT SCHOOL YEAR!
Thank You!

For questions or more information:

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