



START SMART!

Strategies for Conquering Back-to-School Anxiety

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Outline of Webinar



Provide tips and ideas to help create a positive, smooth, and predictable transition into the new school year.

Answer questions and comments from you!



Opening thoughts:

A new year, place, or crowd is hard for everyone

An absence of all anxiety is impossible -and undesirable anyway

Embrace anxiety as an opportunity to grow rather than something to be feared

Not everything will work and it won't always be pretty, but it's a great problem to have!

What else you should know:



Avoid assuming children will notice or respond to the same cues or supports as others

Tend to be literal

Tend to need more explicit instruction and guidance to complete common activities

May not recognize when or why they are anxious



Two Goals for Successful Transitions:

Create a stable, predictable environment in which the child knows what to expect

Teach functional, desirable social and problem-solving skills



Create a stable, predictable environment in which the child knows what to expect:

Give advanced notice

Visit early

Create routines

Tie success back to home



Create a stable, predictable environment in which the child knows what to expect:

Give advanced notice

Talk about the new year

Describe and practice the schedule

Keep a calendar



Create a stable, predictable environment in which the child knows what to expect:

Visit early

Go to the school before the year starts

See classrooms

Practice navigation

Meet staff



Create a stable, predictable environment in which the child knows what to expect:

Create routines

Make a map

Make a book of pictures

Create social stories

Make a video



Create a stable, predictable environment in which the child knows what to expect:

Tie success back to home

Provide reinforcement for success

Give them space after school

Rewards/rest/decompression



Teach functional, desirable social and problem-solving skills for the unexpected

Ask questions

Practice for stress

Reward tolerance



Teach functional, desirable social and problem-solving skills for the unexpected

Ask questions

What makes them anxious?

What are they looking forward to?



Teach functional, desirable social and problem-solving skills for the unexpected

Practice for stress

Create routines and supports there

Focus on coping and asking for help

Notify the staff



Teach functional, desirable social and problem-solving skills for the unexpected

Reward tolerance

Success can be asking for help or taking a break, too

Set reasonable goals –it may not be all day, every day at first

Questions or Comments?



Remaining time for questions and additional discussion of situations/behaviors/tips

Some Resources:

<https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/transition-back-to-school-with-autism/>

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/blog/17-tips-help-transition-back-school-kids-autism>

<https://www.jnj.com/health-and-wellness/13-ways-to-help-prep-child-with-autism-for-back-to-school-season>

<https://www.chla.org/blog/physicians-and-clinicians/back-school-tips-kids-autism-spectrum-disorders-asd>

<https://speckidsaba.com/back-school-strategy-kids-autism/>