



## Back to School Tips: Elementary School

**Going back to school can be a stressful time for both parents and students. For children with ASD this can be an especially stressful time of year. The following tips may be helpful to families who are transitioning into the new school year.**

### **Adjusting to a new wake-up schedule: start at least 2 weeks before school starts!**

- Start setting the alarm earlier in the days before school starts. Gradually setting the alarm earlier by 15 minutes every few days may help ease students back into earlier mornings.
- Make bed-time earlier in the days before school starts. Again, gradually adjusting bedtime by 15 minutes can help make the transition to earlier bedtimes smoother.

### **Visit the school and classroom before the first day**

- Contact the school to have your child visit a few days before school starts. This can help a child with ASD ease anxiety that can come from being in a new environment.

### **Visit the teacher before the first day**

- Meeting the teacher before the first day can help with this transition.
- Many schools offer back-to-school nights or orientation but, these can often be too noisy or overcrowded for families with ASD. Contacting the school to visit the teacher before school starts can help avoid potentially overwhelming situations.
- Introduce yourself to the teacher as the parent. Learn to work together in order to meet your child's needs before the first day!

### **Go over "hidden-curriculum" of school social rules**

- Some children may adjust easily to the social demands of the classroom but, children with ASD may need more reminders of what behaviors are acceptable in school and what behaviors are not.
- Create social stories of appropriate behaviors for the classroom.
- Make a picture schedule of the school day.
- Color-code notebooks or folders for different subjects. This can be included in your picture schedule.

### **Get your child's medical information in order**

- If your child has dietary issues, confirm with the school how they will be managed.
- Figure out who your emergency contacts are going to be and provide the school with up to date contact information.

*This information sheet was developed by the Autism Services, Education, Resources, and Training Collaborative (ASERT).*

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