

In this edition of our newsletter we focus on children's transition back to school. It will be most beneficial to the child if the home and school work together, to collaborate and communicate and agree the best way forward.

It is for this reason that this newsletter deliberately offers ideas and suggestions for parents and school staff to mutually support this process.

We have a telephone support service from Monday – Friday, 9am-5pm.

More information can be found: [here](#).

Training

If you wish to register your interest or find out more please email:

AutismSupportTeam@southwark.gov.uk

- **Cygnets , Next Steps, toileting workshop**

The AST team are offering 1:1 support for schools if they wish to discuss their schools individual needs.

Information to support September 2020 Reception Transition will be available soon....

Social Stories™ are effective methods to provide guidance and directions for responding to various types of social situations. The stories are used to describe social situations specific to individuals and circumstances while promoting self-awareness, self-calming, and self-management. Social Stories™ are not meant to change behaviour; rather, they are meant to clarify social expectations. They may use images or words to present the situation. They can be read with a child prior to a situation to prepare them and share information. (Definition from Vanderbilt University)

[Here](#) are 3 examples of social stories to support going back to school. [Here](#) is another you can edit with more detail on things that will be the same and different

[Here](#) is a simple social story for a child attending an Early Years settings

[Here](#) is a social story about social distancing at school



Question Corner...

Q: My son has really been enjoying his time at home and has been a lot less anxious. I'm getting more worried as the time to go back to school is getting closer—help!

A: To start preparing your child to go back to school it would be helpful if you sit down with them and make a list about what they enjoy when they are at school. This will help remind them of the positives of schools. (more ideas in Super Seven!)

If your child shares their worries with you about school. Acknowledging their worries and then coming up with solutions to help them manage their worries. If it's possible contact their teacher to have plan in place for how to manage their worries.

It is important that you as a parent start talking positively about school. If you are anxious about them going back they may pick up on it and that could unintentionally feed into their anxieties and worries about going. Having a positive outlook will help your child to transition back to school.

[Here](#) is a link to a feelings board with instructions how to use it

[Here](#) is a link to a way to talk with your child about and problem solve worries. Ideas of strategies [here](#)

Visuals and ideas of how a child can calm themselves down can be found [here](#).

To be added to our newsletter mailing list or to contact us with a question please email

AutismSupportTeam@southwark.gov.uk

Clicking on links in this document take you to google drive where the resources can be downloaded. If you would like us to email you any of the resources, use the email above.

Back to School

It is likely that when the young person returns to school they will be experiencing much higher levels of stress and anxiety than normal. This may affect their behaviour and engagement or may be successfully masked, but should nevertheless be given careful consideration.

Things to consider:

- Continued, consistent use of all approaches, systems and strategies that supported the young person before the Covid-19 lockdown.
- Try to minimise the number of changes that the young person will have to cope with; for example if their class is to be split to facilitate social distancing, try to keep them with preferred peers, familiar and preferred staff and in familiar rooms wherever possible.
- Plan special interest time and additional opportunities for breaks, where they child can follow their own agenda for short periods in order to increase happiness and well-being (communicated visually using a means appropriate to the child).
- The child may need to arrive later than peers and leave earlier than peers in order to avoid busy, noisy periods (in addition to social distancing measures). This should be discussed and agreed with parents.

Devise a personalised, detailed and robust plan to support the child to transition back to the setting.

Include information on:

- * Dates and times
- * Staff
- * Any changes the child may not be expecting (room, adults, peers, environment etc.) Include these in the child's social story/photo book
- * Additional adjustments to support wellbeing and happiness during the transition period

The plan should be shared with parents, the pupil (as appropriate) and all staff who will be working with the child. Work closely with parents to devise the plan taking account of the child's: responses to lockdown and social distancing measures; emotional and mental wellbeing; cognitive development and understanding. Clear visual information about what will happen when the setting re-opens including any changes. The pupil could be provided with a social story/photo book for family members to read with them in the week before the return to class.

Southwark's Educational Psychology Service have produced the first of a series of documents & videos aimed at supporting schools with transition for all children, it can be found [here](#)

Super Seven



Here are some activities to try at home:

- Practice your journey to school (make a map, take pictures along the way).
- Look at pictures/school website to familiarise the child with the school setting. Do you have an old school books, photos of friends to look at?
- Meet up with/video chat with friends from school.
- Make a list of things they are looking forward to back at school.
- Write a letter/draw a picture to share with your teacher.
- Take some photos of you with your favourite things to show the teacher.
- Practice putting on school uniform .

Resources to Support Transition

A visual calendar can be used to support children knowing when they will be in school, [here](#) is a guide for parents. [Here](#) is an editable calendar for June and July, [here](#) is one for August and Sept. [Here](#) are instructions and symbols for the calendar.

Visuals to support handwashing are [here](#).

A one page profile is a simple summary of what is important to a child and how best to support them, it allows information to be shared quickly.

How to write a one page profile guide is [here](#) with examples [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). Twinkl also have guides and proformas. A parent information gathering sheet is [here](#). A sheet to support parents to share information with school about their child's experience of lockdown is [here](#).