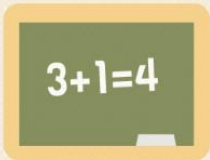




The Autism Program
AT BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER

Back to School Guide 2019

It's back to school season, and the Autism Program at Boston Medical Center is here to help you prepare!



Back to School

Back to school is just around the corner and this time of year can be both exciting and stressful, especially for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

Individuals may get nervous about starting a new school or going back to school. A big part of a successful first week of school is preparation and establishing a routine.

Being involved with your child's education is important, but it's also hard work. Here are some tips, tools, and resources to help you set up for success.

Did you know ?



LABOR DAY IS THE UNOFFICIAL
END OF SUMMER AND THE
START OF THE BACK TO
SCHOOL SEASON.

Getting Ready for the First day of School

#1 Wake up!



#2 Eat breakfast



#3 Get dressed



#4 Brush teeth



#5 Put on your backpack



#6 Go out the door



I'M GOING TO SCHOOL!

Hi, my name is _____.

I'm going to the _____ School.

I will be in grade _____.

To get to school, I will take the _____.



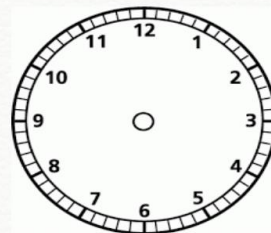
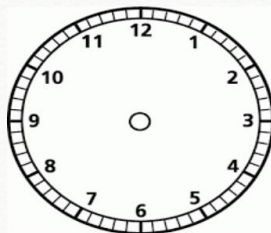
My favorite things to do at school are

_____.

Some people I know at school are

_____.

My school starts at _____ and ends at _____.



My Weekly School Schedule



Name: _____

Time/
Period

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

End of School Day Checklist

Before getting on the bus, or your parent's car, ask yourself if you have everything with you!

#1

Backpack

#2

Lunch box/bag

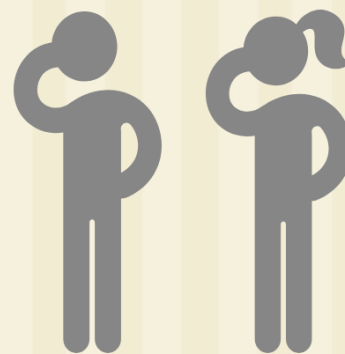
#3

Homework/papers

#4

Jacket/Sweater

Do I Have
My ...



School Communication Tips For Parents



Communication between parents and teachers can be helpful for a child's growth and learning. In order to know how your child is doing in school, consistently talk to their teachers, 1:1s and any support staff that are working with your child.

Asking teachers for daily or weekly feedback is perfectly fine, and it's encouraged to do so! If there is not a communication plan in place, ask that one be created that meets your needs, and works for staff as well.



Tips/Strategies for Communication with teachers/staff

- **Build trust/relationships.** Forming a relationship with your child's teacher can be really helpful in supporting good communication. Make a plan to meet teachers and staff before the start of the school, and if possible, set up other opportunities to meet face to face (that are not conferences or IEP meetings).
- **Provide teachers with a personal notebook for your child.** This notebook can act as a behavior log or a daily/weekly journal. Ask teachers to write about any changes of behavior, your child's successes/challenges for the day/week, their social interactions, or anything else that you as a parent may want to know. You can also use this to update staff, for example, if your child uses a new skill at home or didn't sleep well the night before.
- **Create a profile of your child for their teachers and staff.** This is a great way to share all of the wonderful things about your child, and also the things they are working on or needing assistance with. While your child might have an IEP, this profile can highlight all of the unique elements that only you as parent can understand and share (see page 8).
- **Encourage phone calls, texts, and e-mails.** Busy schedules can get in the way of meetings, so let teachers and staff know if you are comfortable with phone calls, texts, or emails. This can be an easy way to stay in the know.

Create a Personal Profile

For the school year, think about developing a personal profile for your child. This brief 1-2 page summary can highlight important information about your child's strengths, interests, learning style, things they're working on, and ways to help them feel calmer and safer in school.

You may wish to include your child's name, age, grade and a recent picture. Other things you might want to include are:

- Likes and dislikes (e.g., sudden changes, being rushed)
- Strengths (e.g., strong reader, likes praise)
- Motivators (e.g., praise, hugs)
- Still working on (making friends, spelling)
- Triggers (change in routine, physical touch)
- Sensory sensitivities (lights, smells)
- Communication style (verbal or written, pictures, special device)
- What works for them (positive reinforcement, schedule/routine)
- What doesn't work for them (yelling, being rushed)





ELLIE STAFFORD
AGE 4
PRE - K

Teach me to soar and I will
VISION STATEMENT

We envision our daughter living a life of choice. We envision her having relationships she feels are valuable. In her future we envision her doing work that she enjoys and that makes her feel productive. We envision our daughter living a happy and meaningful life surrounded by love and support.

STRENGTHS

- Visual learner
- LOVES to read
- Knows ABC's
- Can count to 20
- Social and Kind
- Funny
- Smart
- Happy
- Loves to Dance
- Loves her Friends
- Fast Learner

WHAT DOESN'T WORK

- Being Rushed
- Sudden Change in Activity
- Negative Talk
- Yelling
- Assuming I Don't Understand

WHAT WORKS FOR ME

- Patience
- Schedule and Routines
- Praise for my Achievements!
- Include me
- Believe in my Abilities
- Positive Reinforcement
- Warn me about Transitions

WHAT I'M WORKING ON

- Talking in Sentences
- Fine Motor Skills, like Writing, Cutting Paper and Coloring!
- Gross Motor Skills, like Running!
- Conversational Speech

I LOVE My Parents, My Brothers Will & Luke,
Mickey Mouse, Taco Bell and Rap Music.

Check out this great example, and steps to make your own, from limitlessability.wixsite.com

Sensory Items List



Noise Reduction Earmuffs

Squishy Ball



Weighted Lap Pad or Blanket



Body Socks

Pop Tubes



Liquid Timer



Tangles

Sunglasses



Did you know you can find lots of sensory items at your local dollar store? Things like paint brushes, beads, and finger paint can act as sensory items too!



Bed Time Routine Tips

Set a specific time for bed. Your child's body clock will adjust much more quickly to the routine if it follows a pattern. While this isn't always possible, sticking to a consistent time for your bedtime routine will help!

Give your child a warning. You can use a timer, a visual, or a verbal prompt warning a couple of minutes before bed time to let them know about the transition.

Offer a bedtime snack. A light and healthy snack can help your child to feel full and sleep longer....just be sure to avoid anything with sugar or caffeine. Some crackers or a cheese stick is a great choice.

Get them dressed for bed. Choose clothing that is comfortable for your child's sensory needs.

Help them calm down. Does your child have a favorite book they like you to read to them? Do they prefer that you sing? Choose an activity that they can expect, and will help them to calm down and relax.

Give them a Security object. A stuffed animal or a special blanket can be an important part of a good bedtime routine.



Other Helpful Tips

- Avoid giving your child sugar or caffeine.
- Avoid electronics, and other stimulating activities an hour before bedtime if possible
- Let your child be involved in the transition. Have them pick out what to wear to bed, or what to read.

PAPER CHAIN COUNTDOWN ACTIVITY

What you need:

- 1 ½-inch by 11-inch construction paper strips (the number of strips you need will be dependent on the number of days your kids have left until school starts)
- Stapler
- Black sharpie
- Crayons and markers for decorating



How to Make the Paper Chain Calendar:

On the first construction paper strip, write down today's date in the middle of the strip.



Loop the strip into a circle, with the date facing out, and carefully staple the ends together.

On the second construction paper strip, write tomorrow's date in the middle of the strip.

Put it through the first circle, loop it into its own circle, and then staple the ends together.

Continue with each construction paper strip, writing the next dates and linking them all together.



The last strip in the link will be their first day of school.



You can find this activity, and more like it at;

<https://happyhooligans.ca/back-to-school-paper-chain-countdown-calendar/>

LET THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL COUNTDOWN BEGIN!



The days are getting shorter, the weather is getting cooler, and the Back-to-School season is right around the corner!

While back-to-school might feel stressful, it's also an exciting time of year to celebrate your child's growth and learning!

We hope this guide has helped you in easing the transition from summer time to Back-to-School!

If you have any questions please contact us at autismprogram@bmc.org or call us at [\(617\) 414-3842](tel:6174143842)

We wish you an amazing school year!



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AT BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER



This guide was
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