NHS
Lancashire &
South Cumbria
NHS Foundation Trust

Transitions

The information contained within this newsletter can be adapted for use with environmental, emotional, development, tasks at any time regardless of any diagnosis.

Things to consider around Transitions

Not all children and young people find the move from one year to another difficult as they may be excited about trying new things, meeting new teachers and possibly learning a new subject. It's important to focus on the positives if your child or young person is worried about this step. It is also important to validate their worries as some children can find this difficult so listen to their concerns and help them find solutions. Ask for support from school if needed.

In school transitions from one year to another can be difficult for some children especially if moving to a new classroom or part of school. Speak to the class teacher in the summer term about any transition plans or questions you might have.

Young Minds have developed a resource to support children and young people to understand the transition in Primary school. **youngminds.org.uk/professional/resources/supporting-school-transitions/**

Schools will often have their own transition planning tools for children with additional needs, so please speak to them if you have any concerns as soon as possible.

Transition to High School Top Tips

• Try and ask the young person what they are worried and excited about. Use this as the basis for any support strategies. Don't assume they will have problems with certain aspects, they might have their own strategies already. When you see them at the end of the day, remember they might need a rest and some food before talking about school... Lots of children struggle with open ended questions such as 'Did you have a good day'. So you could try to ask specific questions such as:. Did anything funny happen at lunchtime? Tell me 1 thing that made you smile / happy today? What was your favourite part of the day? Did you meet anyone new? What was the hardest thing about today?

• Home-school communication - Is there a person the family can contact about any issues and what is the best way to get in touch? Please remember this is daunting for all parents of first-time year 7 starters. There may be a few hiccups to start with but hopefully your young person should settle in fairly quickly. If there are any major concerns, try to find a solution and contact the school where necessary. Please be patient and provide solutions if possible as you know your young person best, school will have strategies ready to go but it's important that young people are given the opportunity to try for themselves first to build their confidence, self-esteem and independent skills.

• New uniform – Check the school policy and don't leave it too late to buy what you need. School shoes are an issue for some, buy early if possible so they have time to try them on and get used to them. LABEL EVERYTHING! AND show them where their name is on their clothes so they can check it's theirs. I guarantee they will lose at least one thing including coat, calculator, drinks bottle & PE socks! Asda (George Online) do some great sensory friendly pieces of uniform as do M&S

• Do they take a mobile phone? There are lots of apps you can install to track their journey, with their consent, if you need that extra reassurance they have made it to school or have set off home. Mobile phone rules – Schools have different policies around phones in school, please make sure to check these out before they start.

• Forgotten items - What to do if they forget their PE kit, pencil case, lunch. Who can they ask for help? Lost items - What to do if they leave their PE kit, coat, lunch box etc. and can't find it. Does it get taken to a specific area? If so, where and how do they access it? Make an easy to read list of what ifs and put it in their pocket / pencil case / phone case. Keep copies as they may lose those too!

• Homework – expectations and explanations. Consider if the young person will need help recording homework details in their planner. Asking the teacher or Learning Support Assistant/Teaching Assistant to check they have the right info recorded saves a lot of stress and worry. Does the school offer homework support sessions? Some young people have a mental barrier with completing homework at home. Can they access the library after school or have access to support during the week to help with homework issues?

Carol Gray- Social Stories

Carol is best known for the development of Social Stories, a respected evidence-based practice used worldwide with people with autism of all ages. Carol is also known for initiating a very effective social philosophy that 1) 'abandons all assumptions', 2) regards both the typical and autism perspective as 'equally valid', and 3) recognizes the 'social impairment in autism' as shared (noting the well-intentioned but nonetheless misguided mistakes of parents and professionals). She has completed ground breaking work on some of the toughest topics in autism by reviewing the research, developing new theories, and proposing practical instructional strategies, most notably Gray's Guide to Bullying (2004) and Gray's Guide to Loss, Learning, and Students with ASD (2003).https://carolgraysocialstories.com

Visual supports

Visual supports are a communication tool that can be used with autistic people. They can be used in most situations, are adaptable and portable. https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/communication-tools/visual-supports

If you have a child with special educational needs or a disability and are looking for a school for them, you may find information from SENDIAS useful please visit their website for more details **lancssendias.org.uk/information-and-advice/choosing-a-school/**

As parent carers, we always prioritise the needs of our children. Their wants and needs come first, as they should. However, to maintain this level of support for our kids, it's important that our own wants and needs are also taken care of. If you can make time for yourself, you absolutely should and you should also NOT feel guilty for it. As the saying goes, you cannot pour from an empty cup. Your own mental and physical health can be impacted by the constant level of stress you experience when raising a child / children with additional needs. Everyone has different ways of keeping themselves going. Even planning something can give you a boost to keep you going until you can find the time. If you are lucky enough to have friends or family that have offered to help, take them up on it. It might not happen often but if they can give you a break now and again, it will help.

Suggestions include: wild swimming with a local group has become increasingly popular, going for walks, talking with friends, meeting other parent carers on virtual or in person groups, sleeping whilst the kids are being looked after / at school, doing something creative like writing, arts and crafts, making clothes, decorating, or even going to work can be a way to make you feel like you again. This is not a complete list and you may find you already have your own strategies. Whatever it is, if it brings you joy, is healthy and makes you feel like you again, **don't feel guilty for making the time to do it! Your children will notice the difference in you too.**

If you feel you are struggling and need support for your own mental health, please speak to your GP. For urgent advice and support call 0800 953 0110

For a range of mental health support charities please go to https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/