

## A Parent and Carer's Guide to

# Starting school

**A guide for parents of children  
with Autistic Spectrum Disorder**



The Early Years Communication and Interaction Team can:

Talk directly with you about your worries and concerns.

Help your child's setting and school to plan and prepare for your child starting school.

Refer your child on to the school Autism Outreach Team for continued support if this is needed



## Contact us:

**Early Years Communication and Interaction Team**

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Leicestershire  
**SEND**

With transitions from home to nursery and then to school, many children can find change difficult, even more so for those on the autism spectrum.



## Making plans

Talk positively about starting school. Use pictures and photographs to create a simple visual strip showing what will happen.

Describe what will be staying the same including friends, favourite toys or books.

If your child has not been to a nursery or pre-school, practice spending some time away from them.

As the start date for school draws closer use a calendar to help count down the days.

Try not to tell your child what they will be doing at school without checking first, to avoid disappointing them.

When returning from school visits, avoid confrontations and give your child space to let off steam if they need to.

## School visits

There will be opportunities for you and your child to visit the school and spend time in class with other children and their teacher. Working closely with school staff will reassure you.

School staff may visit your child's pre-school or nursery to see them in a familiar environment and talk to those staff who already know them. Your school may welcome a visit from a familiar member of staff (often a key-person) to help support your child.

## Getting ready for school

Include your child in a shopping trip to buy school clothes.

Photographs of each item help with a visual schedule for dressing and undressing.

Fastenings such as velcro, easy zips or elasticated waists can support independence.

A favourite character school bag might be familiar and enjoyable for your child.

## Travelling to school

Tell your child and the school who will take or collect your child.

Whether walking to school or travelling by car, practicing the journey can reduce stress.

If you are using specialist transport, provide them with useful information about your child.

Use a photo of the destination to help your child.

## Ready parents

Make a 'to do' list or use a diary for important activities, dates and times.

Establish routines in advance with your child, including earlier bed times.

Practice activities such as getting dressed or opening packed lunches.

Being confident in your child's teachers will support your child's trust in them too.

Establish a good link with somebody at school that you can talk to.