

COUNTDOWN TO A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL YEAR FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM

As the summer break winds down and the new school year approaches, it's time to prepare for a successful transition for your student with Autism. Use the tips below to ensure a smooth start to the academic year. Not all of these tips will apply to every student, but are a good starting point to prepare for back to school.

1 MONTH BEFORE

- Create and share a [social story](#) with your student to show them what to expect in the new school year.
- Continue to practice social skills.
 - If open to the public, take your elementary-aged student to play on their school's playground a few times. Familiarize them with the layout, suggest ways for them to play safely, and [model potential peer interactions](#).
 - Engage your middle and high school-aged students in conversation practice. Participate in role-playing exercises to practice different [social scenarios](#) they might encounter at school.
- If your student will be using a [combination lock](#), practice this skill at home.

3 WEEKS BEFORE

- Refresh documents to share with the school. Collaborate with your student to update and refresh their [One-Page Person-Centered Description](#).
- If your student has a [504](#) or [IEP](#), reread it prior to the start of the school year to refresh your memory on their goals and progress from the prior school year.

2 WEEKS BEFORE

- Begin practicing getting back into a routine, including [sleep schedule](#), meal schedule, grooming, and dressing. Establishing consistency in these areas will help your student adjust smoothly to the school routine.
- If your student eats lunch at school, practice eating a packed lunch at home.

1 WEEK BEFORE

- Organize your home for back to school and create a [distraction-free location](#) for your student to do homework.
- Email your student's academic team and new teacher to introduce yourself and your student. Share your student's One-Page Person-Centered Description. Ask the school team if you can clarify anything about your student's needs, strengths, and goals before the school year begins.
- If your student's school allows an opportunity to visit the building before the school year begins, take time to walk the halls and ensure they feel comfortable.

Considerations:

Anxiety is something that all kids experience. A [poll](#) by Nemours Children's Health reported that 86% of children worry some of the time. If you see your student worrying a lot or feeling sick, like with stomachaches or headaches, it's a good idea to talk to their doctor. The doctor can decide if they need to see a mental health specialist.

Conclusion:

By following this countdown guide and proactively addressing the unique needs of students with Autism, you can set the stage for a successful and fulfilling school year. Remember, preparation is key, and with the right support and planning, your student can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

At ASGA, we are committed to supporting families every step of the way. Please reach out to our HelpLine at 330-940-1441 x1 or info@autismakron.org for assistance whenever needed.

Wishing your student a smooth and successful transition back to school!