

ABA in the Classroom

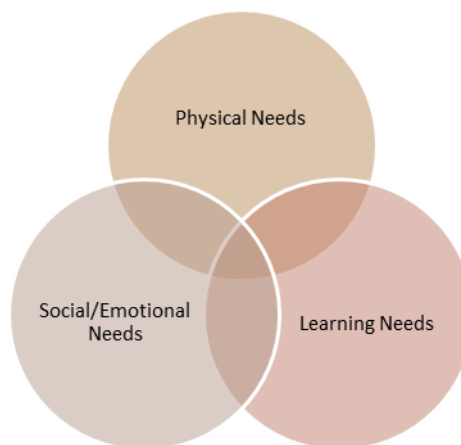
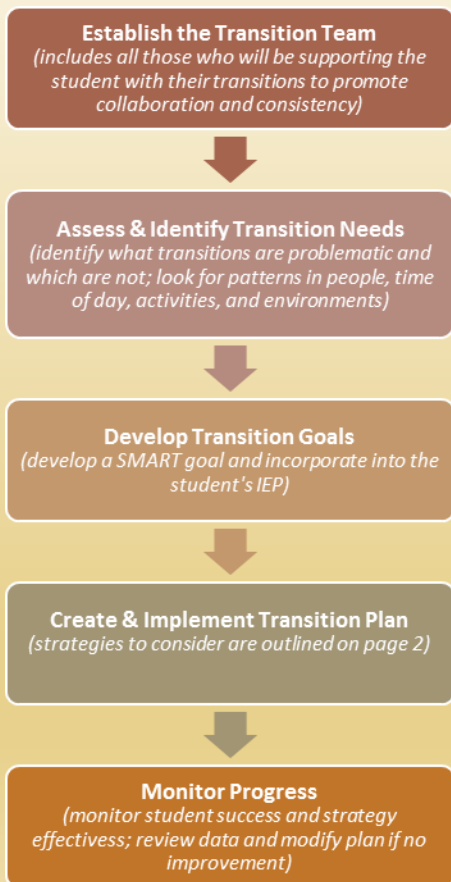
Transitions



Transitions indicate change, and change can be difficult for many students, including students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Policy/Program Memorandum 156: Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs, which came into effect September 2014, outlines that a transition plan must be in place for all students who have an IEP. In planning for transitions, three areas of need should be addressed:

Transition Planning Process

The following transition planning process should be considered for both micro and macro transitions:



The physical, social/emotional, and learning needs of the student should be considered when developing a transition plan to determine if, and what types of supports are required. Should the student require no transition supports, “no actions are required” should be stated. Planning should be outlined for both micro and macro transitions to provide structure and predictability and to support a decrease in anxiety and challenging behaviour, promoting a successful transition experience.

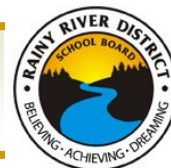
Micro Transitions

Include day to day transitions, such as entering and exiting the school, recess, moving from one activity to the next, or switching from one class to the next.

Macro Transitions

Include larger transitions, such as entry to school, grade to grade, school to school, elementary to secondary, secondary to post secondary, and transitioning into adulthood.

“Effective transition planning is important. Individualized transition plans that reflect a student’s strengths and needs provide the foundation for successful transitional experiences that support the building of student resiliency” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013).



Common ABA Strategies to Consider During Transition Planning

Micro Transitions

- **Increase predictability**
 - Visual schedule
 - First/then visual
 - Visual/verbal warning or count down of the time left before a transition (Time Timer®, “One minute left”)
 - Social narratives to help prime the student of upcoming transition expectations
 - Transition cue/object
- **Provide choices**
 - Can be effective for challenging behaviour demonstrated in an attempt to escape, avoid, or delay a transition
 - Choices can be offered between activities (read book or write journal), or within the activity (write journal with pencil or on computer)
- **Functional Communication Training (FCT)**
 - If a student is demonstrating challenging behaviour to escape, avoid, or delay a transition, functional communication training can be used to teach the student how to communicate/express this in a more functional way (such as requesting additional time or a different activity)
- **Teach calming strategies**
 - Techniques can be taught through modelling, prompting, and reinforcement, and is helpful for students who become upset during transitions
- **Teach self monitoring**
 - Increases student independence by teaching a student to self monitor and move onto an activity independently, followed by reinforcement (Picture Activity Schedule)
- **Reinforcement**
 - In order to strengthen a behaviour, it is important to reinforce that skill; reinforcement is fundamental principle of ABA

Macro Transitions

Entry to School

- Welcome book or DVD outlining various places and people in the school
- Schedule school and classroom visits, and prepare for new routines (practice dressing/undressing for recess, eating a packed lunch, riding the school bus, etc.)
- Incorporate student preferences into daily activities
- Possible gradual entry with outlined timeline that is monitored closely

Transition Between Grades/School

- Increase predictability through video, social narrative, or other visual support to compare and contrast the new environment
- Schedule classroom/school visits
- Build student rapport through non-contingent reinforcement (acknowledging all positive behaviours and positive behaviour attempts)
- Create a transition box/kit with student supports from the previous year
- Plan for the generalization of skills that you wish to see transfer between grade/schools and plan to teach new skills ahead of time (learning how to read a schedule or use a lock when transitioning to secondary school)

Transition to Adulthood

- Support the student in functional life skills (daily living and life skills, paid employment) through modelling and role-play
- Connect the student with community services
- Include student voice when creating goals and planning for transitions

References:

- Ontario Ministry of Education (2013). *Policy/program Memorandum No. 156: Supporting transitions for students with special education needs*. Retrieved August 28th, 2015 from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/ppm156.pdf>.
- Geneva Centre for Autism (n.d.). *Applied behaviour analysis certificate course for educators* [Course handout]. Geneva Centre for Autism Training Institute, Toronto, Ontario.

