



Different occasions at school checklist

Name:

Date:

Which of these strategies would be useful to support your child?

- Visit the new location in advance to become familiar with the environment.
- Take pictures of the new environment or use images from the internet to create a visual support for the event.
- Practise the change beforehand (for example, roleplay the situation with your child).
- Monitor for stress levels.
- Expect fluctuation in readiness and adjust support at home accordingly.
- Talk with your child about upcoming changes in routine and plan what support they might need.
- Use a visual schedule at home and update with changes due to special occasions.
- Use or develop social stories including photos or pictures showing what an event might look like.
- Talk about strategies your child can use if activities don't go to plan.
- Establish whether your child will have access to a support person during the event.
- Discuss with your child a signal they could use to indicate they are feeling uncomfortable, and let the school know about the signal.
- Offer your child a fidget or comfort toy to take to school when a different occasion planned. (You could leave extra toys at school for unexpected changes in routine.)
- Give them calming 'lucky charms' to take to school in their pocket when there is a different occasion is planned.
- Provide your child with noise-cancelling headphones or sunglasses for use during the event, if needed.
- Include your child in preparing their clothes, bag and any special requirements needed for the event the night before, explaining what will be the same and different to their standard day at the following day's event.
- Remind your child to use calming activities at school if they feel overwhelmed by a change in routine (for example, breathing or relaxation strategies, colouring in, listening to music, playing with Lego).
- Ask your child what they think might be helpful if they start to feel overwhelmed.
- Other



Resources for families: <https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/parents/topics/autism-families/starting-school/>