



Learning Links

Transitions: Creating a Bridge



lee pesky learning center

Transitions: *Creating a Bridge*

Starting a new job...moving to a new home...all of us have experienced change or transitions in our lives. Children make several transitions during the course of their academic careers. While some transitions are easier to make or adjust to than others, the following suggestions are some common strategies to help your child transition from one academic level to another.

General Tips:

- Begin talking early with your child about upcoming changes to allow time for your child to start making the mental shift.
- Allow your child to share hopes and fears associated with changes.
- Share your own success stories and remind your child of transitions already made successfully.
- Whenever possible, have your child tour a new school classroom or meet with the teacher. Many schools offer “open house” nights; this is a great opportunity for your child to get an idea about what will happen when school starts next year.
- Begin the shift to your child’s school year bedtime routine several weeks before school starts.
- It is never too early for children to understand how they learn and to ask questions! This is the first step to self-advocacy, which is a lifelong tool.

Primary elementary to intermediate elementary school:

- More will be asked of your child when transitioning to the intermediate grades; so don’t be surprised if more homework is brought home.
- If possible, arrange for an older student to act as a guide to help your child make the transition.
- Help your child come up with a system to keep track of increased homework. There will be a lot more to keep track of, and you may need to do more cuing or “reminding”.

- Encourage good homework habits; provide a quiet study area with all needed supplies; and give reminders to take short, frequent breaks.

Elementary to Middle or Junior High:

- Middle or junior high school means even more transitions as your child needs to navigate from class to class and will have several teachers (with several teaching styles!). Remembering locker combinations is an added stress. Your child will benefit from one or more “dry runs” with the opportunity to walk the route from class to class and practice opening the locker.
- Your child is also entering a growth spurt during these “teen” years. Allow time for plenty of sleep.
- If possible, arrange for an older student to act as a guide to help your child make a smooth transition.
- *Academic Coaching* may be helpful to teach your child how to manage time, get (and stay!) organized, learn self-advocacy skills, and fine-tune social skills.

Middle or Junior High to Senior High School

- A campus visit and opportunity to trace the school day route will be helpful, just as it was for your child when beginning junior high or middle school.
- If possible, arrange for an older student to act as a guide to help your child make the transition.
- Encourage your child to start exercising self-advocacy skills.
- Get to know your school counselor.

High School Students Transitioning to College:

- Help your child to really understand his own learning needs.
- Be prepared with updated testing; documentation is needed to apply for accommodations.
- Encourage your child to apply to schools that are “LD-friendly”.

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- Make campus visits and find out what resources are available (tutoring, writing labs).

Give your child the following tips:

- ⇒ Remember to identify yourself as a student who needs accommodations, *each semester*.
- ⇒ Hone up on self-advocacy skills – this is one of the strongest and most useful tools!
- ⇒ Make sure to understand the rights and responsibilities as a student with special needs.
- ⇒ Balance your course load and be realistic about what you plan to accomplish.
- ⇒ Remember parents can offer support, but the decisions and outcomes are yours.

Recommended Books:

Annie's plan: Taking charge of schoolwork and homework. Kraus, J. (2007). Magination Press.

How to help your child with homework: Every Parent's Guide to Encouraging Good Study Habits and Ending the Homework Wars. Radenich, M. & Schumm, J. (1997). Free Spirit Publishing.

Ready or Not, Here Life Comes! Levine, Mel. (2005). New York: Simon & Shuster.

Students with disabilities preparing for postsecondary education: Know your rights and responsibilities. US Dept. of Education. (2005).

The school survival guide for kids with LD. Cummings, R. & Fisher, G. (1991). Free Spirit Publishing.

Web Sources:

FastWeb - www.fastweb.com (scholarship opportunities)

Free Application for Federal Financial Aid - www.fafsa.ed.gov

National Center for Learning Disabilities - www.LD.org

National Education Association - www.nea.org



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