

# Back to School, with Confidence:

## *A Transition Tip Sheet*



### ✓ Create a Visual Countdown

Use a simple calendar or visual countdown to show how many days are left until school starts. Cross off each day together, and talk about what's coming next. This works well for return-to-school after summer break, winter holidays, or even a long weekend.

[Download a Sample Calendar Here](#)

### ✓ Use Social Narratives

Help your child preview the school environment. Use a social narrative or storybook that explains what the school day will look like. You can ask your child's school for photos of the classroom, teacher, and key places (like the bathroom or library) to include in the story. Quietly review together and encourage questions.

### ✓ Ease into the Routine

Begin shifting home routines to reflect the school day, including consistent mealtimes, dressing routines, and earlier bedtimes. Consider using visual schedules or simple checklists to build comfort and independence. Teaching how to use these tools in advance can be very helpful.

### ✓ Practice Key Skills

If your child is expected to do certain tasks at school (like dressing independently, using the bathroom, or opening lunch containers), begin practicing those specific skills now. Teaching in small steps can build confidence and reduce stress later.

### ✓ Introduce & Rehearse Transitions

Start practicing small transitions throughout the day at home, such as moving from one activity to another. Share successful transition strategies (like the use of transition warnings or objects) with your child's teacher so they can be used in the classroom too.

### ✓ Create an "All About Me" Sheet

Introduce your child to the school team with a personalized one-pager. Include important information such as your child's interests, strengths, communication style, challenges, and calming strategies. This helps educators build a meaningful connection right away.

### ✓ Share Medical & Sensory Information

Make sure the school is aware of any medical needs, medications, sensory sensitivities, allergies, or emotional/behavioural concerns that may affect your child's experience.

### ✓ Set Up a Home-School Communication System

A consistent, easy-to-understand communication method between home and school can make a huge difference. Use a system that works for your child's comprehension, such as written notes, visuals, or symbols.

[Download a Sample Home-School Communication Log Here](#)

### ✓ Plan for Transportation & Drop-Off

If your child is taking the bus, consider reaching out in advance to the driver or school administrator. If you're driving them, you can help your child become familiar with the drive by practicing the new route together. Consider a shorter first day to ease the transition and allow space for troubleshooting.

### ✓ Coordinate with Before/After School Care

If your child is attending extended care, make sure staff are informed of any important medical, behavioural, or sensory needs, especially if they differ from those during the school day. Consistency between environments helps with regulation and routine.

**Transitions take time and support. Kinark is here to walk alongside you.**

