Preparation for transition is critical for individuals on the spectrum. Most individuals benefit from knowing what to expect when change occurs. When transitioning from one school year to the next, it is a good idea to prepare individuals, teachers, related service professionals, and support staff prior to the transition. When students arrive on the first day, classrooms and staff should be ready to seamlessly implement and continue successful programming and strategies. This need for preparation is also necessary for similar life transitions, such as starting a new job or moving to a new community.

Preparing Individuals for Transition

To prepare individuals, it is important to consider their specific needs and methods of communication. Some individuals process information when they can view actual photos or videos, some can grasp concepts with symbolic representation, and some only need written language. Most, if not all, benefit from having the information presented to them visually. Here are some of the strategies to prepare individuals for a transition to a new experience, such as a new school or classroom and teacher.

- Share Individual-specific Information:
  - Work with the individual to create a video, worksheet, or photo album to help new staff get to know interests, strengths, and differences
  - If individuals are able to understand their IEP, remind them visually of their goals, accommodations, and expectations to being process of self-management
  - Video or photograph individual during work to show specific strategies to staff
Use narratives to prepare:
- Include actual photos when possible (areas, people, classroom, etc.)
- Create video narratives touring new schools or classrooms to share with all students transitioning
- Create a classroom visual that includes pictures of classmates/workmates posted with their names, to help individuals get to know their new group
- Include visual routines or expectations
- Prepare peers and classmates for expectations and accommodations (fair versus equal)

Set up visits and tours:
- Tour the new building or classroom and include peers whenever possible
- Consider capturing videos or photos during or before visit to replay
- May need to be multiple trips and initially during quiet times (few students, breaks, etc.)
- Use visual schedules and supports to orient during visit
- For older students, practice lockers, routes between classrooms, locating bathrooms, etc.
- Tour lunch rooms and playgrounds or special areas, such as calming areas
- Practice car or bus routes and routines, lunch routines, and other routines that have changed