



# Back to School To-Do List for Parents and Students

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The HANDS (Helping Answer Needs by Developing Specialists) in Autism® Interdisciplinary Training & Resource Center is located within the Department of Psychiatry at the Indiana University School of Medicine. Support for the foundational development of the HANDS in Autism® Center has been provided through a combination of federal and state funding as well as private philanthropies. To learn more, please contact Naomi Swiezy, Ph.D. HSPP, Director, at [nswiezy@iupui.edu](mailto:nswiezy@iupui.edu).



& Learning Connection

## Prepare Yourself

- Organize your needed records  
A lot of records are needed as we send our children to school. Lists of vaccines, allergies, and medicines are just to name a few. Be prepared and have these items together to lessen your stress when school is just starting.
- Medicine  
If you will need to send medicine to school, be sure to contact your school to receive the most up to date policies. Have a note from your doctor ready with the correct dosage and times to give to the school.
- About My Child  
Give the school and teacher as much information as you can about your child. Share their strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes and other information that you find important. This will allow for the most support and smoothest transition possible before the teacher can really get to know your child.
- Emergency contacts  
Have an up to date list with correct phone numbers. This will be required by your school so you can be one step ahead.
- Put important dates on the calendar  
There will be times throughout the year that you will want to be free to go to school. Back to school night, open houses, and conferences are just to name a few. Mark these dates on your calendar in advance so you can make the necessary arrangements to attend.

## Prepare Your Child

- Talk about going to school  
Make going to school a part of your daily conversations. Books or movies can be used to explore the idea of going to school and can make the experience seem enjoyable. If your child follows a calendar, add a picture of school on the start day so they can anticipate and prepare themselves for that day.
- Adapt sleeping and eating routines  
Summer is a relaxing time when schedules can be adjusted. Start early to get your child back on a sleep schedule that will work for school. This may also affect their eating patterns as well. Think about when breakfast, lunch and snacks will be presented and plan accordingly.
- Visit the classroom and teacher  
Get in contact with your school's office to schedule an appointment to meet your teacher and see the classroom. If this is not possible, go see the building and surrounding area to help your child adjust. The playground might be a good place to start.

### Go school supply shopping

If possible, try to involve your child in shopping for their school supplies. This will allow you another chance to talk about school starting and associate fun, new things with school. They may really enjoy picking out their own lunchbox or backpack and this will help get them excited to go to school.

### Create/update a contact list of service providers

This list will help you stay in contact with the right people and make a more direct connection. Keep this list handy with your school documents so that you can reference it as needed.

## Other Ideas

### Prepare your child with a social narrative

During summer, the use of social stories would be a great way to explain what the school days might bring and get them ready for the upcoming changes.

### Visit your school

Visiting the school before it starts may also help show your child how they will be getting to school so they might recognize the route when school starts.

### Prepare Uniform

If uniforms or new clothes are going to worn, think of your child's needs and help get those clothes ready for them. Wash them well to loosen the material or cut the tags out if those are sensory needs. Allow them to wear these clothes before school starts so that they can get used to them in a comfortable setting.

### Inform Your Teacher

When informing your teacher about your child, other ideas might include any effective sensory strategies from the previous year or home, reinforcers, dislikes or triggers, and home routines

## I Will Go to School Social Narrative

Summer is almost over.



At school, there will be new children in my class that can be my friends. Making new friends can be fun!



Soon, I will start school at \_\_\_\_\_.



In my class, we will do things like learn letters, numbers and how to read!



This year I will be in \_\_\_\_\_ with a new teacher.



My new teacher's name is \_\_\_\_\_.



We will eat lunch and have time to play, too!



Most days, Mom will drive me to school.



When school is over, mom will pick me up and take me home.



Some days dad or grandma may need to take me to school and that is ok.



Going to school is fun!

