

the one you didn't know you needed Back to School Checklist



Every store has a list for pencils and folders. This is the other list. It covers the things that actually determine how the first month goes for an autistic child, and it's built for the person doing all the work. That would be you.

THREE TO FOUR WEEKS OUT

- ☐ Pull up the IEP or 504 and confirm it is current. Note anything that needs updating.
- ☐ Find out who the teacher, classroom aide, and case manager are this year.
- ☐ Write an **About My Child** one-pager and email it before the school year swallows everyone. What they love, what dysregulates them, what helps, what to never do, how they ask for help.
- ☐ Start shifting bedtime and wake-up in fifteen minute steps. Not all at once.
- ☐ Get medication and health forms to the school nurse.
- ☐ Go stand outside for three minutes. Not to accomplish anything. **Fresh air counts.**

TWO WEEKS OUT

- ☐ Drive or walk the route. Visit the building if it is open, even just the parking lot.
- ☐ Take photos while you are there. The school, the door, the bus stop. Use them in a social story.
- ☐ Buy and wash clothes early so tags, seams, and stiff fabric get sorted out now, not on day one.
- ☐ Trial run the lunchbox at home. Prep as much as possible. Breakfast, lunch and dinner to help ease the mental load.
- ☐ Ask whether the bus driver and aide have been assigned yet. Provide any needed information to the transportation department.
- ☐ You do not have this all figured out yet. One thing at a time. **It is all figure-out-able.**

THE WEEK BEFORE

- ☐ Confirm transportation, seating, and any harness or safety vest if needed.
- ☐ Ask your child's team: what is the plan if my child is dysregulated, and what does it look like for them to get back to a good place?
- ☐ Pack the backpack together, same order every time. Let your child do the steps they can.
- ☐ Set out day-one clothes so the morning has fewer decisions in it.

THE NIGHT BEFORE

- ☐ Communicate with your child what tomorrow will look like.
- ☐ Charge the devices. Find the shoes. Put the backpack by the door.
- ☐ **You are doing great! Everyone get good rest.**

THE FIRST TWO WEEKS

- ☐ If you aren't happy with the level of communication from your child's team, say so.
- ☐ Protect the hour after pickup. After-school restraint collapse is real, and it is not misbehavior.
- ☐ Keep a running note of what is working and what is not. That note becomes your evidence at the next IEP meeting.
- ☐ Expect a hard week somewhere in here. Plan for it instead of being blindsided by it.
- ☐ Nobody sees the phone calls, the forms, the advocating, the 2am worrying. **You are doing a great job.**

If you only do three things

- 1 Send the **About My Child** one-pager. Teachers read them in week one.
- 2 Walk or drive the route and take photos.
- 3 Make sure breakfast, lunch, clothes, shoes and backpack are all prepped the night before.

You've got this.

And if you don't today, you can have it tomorrow. Free to print and share.