Transitions can be hard. (You can check out our discussion on how transition affects those with autism here). Here is a tool sheet to help make transitions for your child with autism easier and less stressful for them.

**Transitions Tool Kit**

**Prepare ahead of time**

Many transitions are unavoidable, so preparing for them is the best way to cope. The use of a schedule is a great way to help your child feel prepared. You can write down daily activities or even use a picture schedule.

One way we prepare for the day is by picking out our entire outfit the night before. That way there is no morning meltdown due to lost items and not having time to search for them. Any way that you can prepare ahead of time will be a huge help for your child.
Using Social Stories

Social stories are an amazing resource created for those with autism. They explain step by step what will be happening. You can purchase ones like Going to the Doctor for major events or the Social Stories book for everyday items. I think some of the best ones are those you make yourself. They can be personalized to the child's needs and situation.

Break it down

Making tasks seem smaller helps dramatically when transitioning. Smaller steps are easier to achieve, and allows the parent to see any specific causes of anxiety. This can be done verbally, or even through picture cards.

Clearly show when tasks end

Sometimes, children may not fully understand a task has ended. This causes transitions to be tough. The best way to avoid this is to make it clear when a task is over.
If using a picture schedule, have them place the completed activity into the "done" section. To verbally acknowledge the completion of a task, make sure to have their attention and say, “We are now done with _____. Now will do ____.”

**Use Transitional Cues**

Another great way to verbally prepare for transition is through transitional words. Make sure to use words like first, then, after, next, now and later. Some children work better with tangible cues. You could play (or sing) a certain song for cleanup, bye-bye time, and meals. Make sure to give plenty of time so they can mentally prepare for the transition.

**Using a Timer**

Time is an abstract concept. So, turning that into something visual is a great help! Any timer can work. To help with understanding the concept of time in a concrete way, a visual timer is best. [Visual timers](#) make it where the time 'disappears' as it counts down.

**Use landmarks**

Is it easier to go on a trip when you know where you are going? Of course! The same can be said for transition. Moving between tasks is so much easier when they can see where they have to go.
One way to do this is marking spaces with an X or circle made of masking tape. For example, you can mark a spot on the floor with tape for where to sit during reading time.

You can make this into a visual schedule as well! Draw out a map of the house and mark locations of the activities (where you eat, read, play, etc). Then when you are talking about it, you can use the map as a visual back up.

**Using transitional items**

Sometimes, transitions can just be plain scary! One way to reduce the anxiety of transition is having an item that can be taken from one activity to the next. There are many ways you can do this.

If the child has a favorite toy, let them carry it with them throughout the day. Another way could be to carry a photo of the room they will be going into next. Then they can place that photo in a box or location in the new room to identify the end of the transition.

**Allow Time when all possible!**

A huge part to autism is taking longer to process things such as changing focus and engaging in new activities. All the new sensory information that they begin to process in
each new situation takes time to adjust. Whenever possible, try to let them go at their own pace. If you can, schedule in extra time for the transition process.

Avoid Unnecessary Transitions

The easiest way to manage transitions is to avoid too many of them. Figuring out ways to avoid transitions isn’t as hard as it may sound.

For example, our daughter doesn’t like changing clothes. So, most nights, we allow her just to sleep in her school clothing. The plus to that, there is a little less laundry for me! For our son, the girls ride the bus and all walk home from the bus. This makes less transition in his day. We solve the dilemma of having to get my youngest daughter from the bus by having my oldest play with him while I walk down to get her.
• To access more great toolkits, printables, and visual schedules, sign up for access to our free resource library.

• To check out other great post on autism and parenting, make sure to stop back by TheMomKind.com