



## Transitioning Group Discussion

Inclusive Education Peer Group Meeting

November 17, 2020

Thank you for attending our Inclusive Education Peer Support session in November. It was our last peer group for this year and we shared information through an in-house presentation focusing on transitions as this is a conversation that many families will be focused during the last few weeks of school.

### Key Takeaways

- Communicating your **Vision** for your son or daughter with the school is very important so that everyone involved is working towards the same end goal. Most school leaders/teachers are appreciative of this.
  - If you need help crafting a vision for your son or daughter check this resource by [Wendy Stove](#) on our website. There are also many examples of vision statements and presentations for other families on our website.
  - Remember to also help the school understand who your son or daughter is. Maybe by providing a photo/s highlighting an interest or a photo of your child in a valued role. (helps build meaningful conversation with your son or daughter and can shift mindsets)
  - Introduce your son or daughter using valued roles (e.g bike rider, swimmer, party planner ) as opposed to what they like to do.
- Importance of knowing the teacher(s) - A name and an image to go with it. Teachers can make a small video clip to introduce themselves. Send a letter or craft a social story around introducing them and the new classroom.
- Importance of having visual aids that are clear, consistent and age appropriate. Make sure to share with your school the visuals that your son or daughter is comfortable with.
- Little things that are good to know: they go a long way in making a successful transition.
  - Does the school have bubblers (Can my son and daughter work out how to use them?)
  - Where are toilets located (are they easily accessible? What strategies can the school put in place that will help them use them independently or with support from a peer)



- Do they have hand dryers in the toilets? (if your son or daughter is uncomfortable with loud noises then knowing these little details will help!)
- How many breaks do the school have and what times?
- Regular things that happen in school every day. eg. small school assembly every morning.
- Special events that will happen in term one e.g. swimming carnival - how to prepare for successful participation.
- Uniforms: New vs Old. How comfortable are they? pay attention to how well it fits. Unfortunately image goes a long way in creating lasting impressions. So you want your son and daughter to put their best foot forward.
- When do they wear sports uniforms? Do they wear the uniform all day or do they get changed?
- If going to the school drive past the school, to understand how pick up and drop offs are going to look like. Help your son and daughter also understand the process before it actually happens.
- Take time and effort to build relationships and networks
  - Getting involved in school P&C.
  - Make note of other families that live close by who might have children in the same school. Arrange playdates or meet ups outside of school to help these relationships to grow.

## Transition to High School - Key Takeaways

- Research: Find out from past year 6 students through family connections/friends. e.g. what was the biggest challenge for them when they went to year 7?. And then use this information to frame your thinking around what supports your son or daughter might need. e.g Most students who start high school find using a locker challenging.
  - What kind of lock do the high school locker have? Combination or Key? Have some strategies in place to help your son or daughter practice this.
  - Placement of the locker (requesting a locker that suits your son or daughter's height.) Maybe go for the locker at the end to avoid overcrowding.
- Get to know your "go to person" at the school. So you establish a clear line of communication.
- Orientation day: using a social story to help your son or daughter understand what will be happening during orientation.
- An adapted orientation booklet for your son or daughter to help navigate the school and understand the processes. You can ask your school if they have an orientation booklet? If not, you could share the one attached for them to adapt.
- Share resources and strategies that have worked well in primary school. Be mindful of how the teachers are receiving these information. Gradually introduce them as you don't want to overwhelm them.



- Discuss what will happen when a teacher is away so that your son or daughter can manage the change successfully with appropriate support.
- Talk about what supports are available for your son or daughter. Make sure the school understands what your goals are around that support. We do not want our sons and daughters to be taught helplessness. We want them to build and learn skills.
- Have conversations around a timeline for fading support from teacher assistants. Look at alternatives. Peers are a great source of natural support that can help build lifelong connections.
- Time table: Investigate what cycle the high school operates on (e.g. 7 Day cycle). Explore different strategies on how to customise/adapt the time table so that your son or daughter can understand and use it successfully.
- Working in partnership with the school and working on strengthening that relationship is very important for genuine inclusion to happen.
- Looking at ways that can help peers make connections. e.g. having a sticker of your favourite sports team on the laptop this can help start conversations.

## **Thank You**

This was our last peer group for this year. Thank you for joining us and sharing your ideas, strategies and stories to help us all work towards creating inclusive educational outcomes for our sons and daughters.

If nothing else, this year has proven to us the power of being connected and 'thinking outside the box' for solutions. We hope to continue to share stories and support families looking for inclusive life choices through our many peer groups.

