

# Easing transition:

## 10 tips for parents of students with special needs

To help ease the transition for students with special needs during this school year, here are some helpful tips:

**1. Visit the school site with your child.** Point out bathrooms, the cafeteria, office, playground, etc. Older students may benefit from printed maps with time schedules. Talk to your child about exciting new classes, activities and events he or she can participate in.

**2. Help your child reconnect with schoolmates.** Ask if your child's school has a buddy system or if students in school leadership are available to help as mentors or guides.

**3. Review Individual Education Program (IEP) goals.** Ensure the goals are still relevant and note the date of the annual review. Remember, you can request an IEP review anytime. And be sure to discuss assessment accommodations for your child – see page 11 for more.

**4. Connect with the teacher.** Write a brief introduction about your child (including a photo) with his or her likes and dislikes, social/emotional set-offs, motivators, methods of communication, pertinent medical information and any other important information. The more proactive and honest you are, the better teachers and school staff will be able to meet your child's needs.

**5. Help plan an ability-awareness training.** If your child is in a general education class, consider helping to plan an ability-awareness training with the class. Make sure to get buy-in from your child first. Write a story for the other kids so they can

understand what makes him or her unique, and things that may be difficult for your child.

**6. Keep paperwork organized.** Create a family calendar of school events, special education meetings, conferences, etc.

**7. Continue learning.** Stay up-to-date on special education news and legislation, so you can advocate for your child, and all children.

### For more information

Get answers to these questions and more information at [www.capta.org/special-needs](http://www.capta.org/special-needs):

■ “How do I determine if my child has special needs?”

■ “What are the types of services available to my child?”

■ “What is the school psychologist's role?”

■ “How do I begin the special education process?”

■ “What is an individual education program (IEP)?”

■ “What questions should parents ask?”



**8. Create a communication log.** This will help ensure that you and the school staff are on the same page. Be sure to note the dates, times and nature of the communications you have.

**9. Attend school events when possible.** School events such as back-to-school night and parent-teacher conferences offer a great opportunity to meet staff and other students and families.

**10. Offer to help, either in the classroom or at PTA-sponsored events.**