



5 Actions for Advocating for Your School-Age Child

How to Prepare Your Child on the Spectrum for School

1. Know Your Child

Keep a journal of your child's triggers, sensory likes or dislikes (sights, sounds, tastes, etc.), and behavior patterns. Your knowledge of these patterns can prove instrumental in the school setting allowing teachers and administrators to foster a safe classroom environment where your child can thrive.

2. Research Schools & Plan a Visit

Explore schools in your district from grades pre-K to elementary and inquire about their programs for children on the autism spectrum. Make a list of potential schools and schedule a meeting and tour with a principal, assistant principal, or administrator.

3. Prepare Your Child

Get your child excited about school! Use videos or visual prompts i.e., illustrations of schools, teachers, and students to help your child understand. Set the stage for success by establishing structure, organization, and a schedule at home. Be sure to complete a site visit and tour **with your child** before their first day.

4. Establish Relationships

Consider teachers and administrators your partners for success. Together, you will work to establish a safe environment where your child can thrive. Communicate with school staff as often as necessary and get to know your child's classmates and parents as well to maintain a healthy ecosystem of support.

5. Know Your Rights

Know what an IEP is, know your rights as parent, and know what your child is capable of doing and what they have yet to do. I.e., if you know your child is verbal, they should not be placed in a non-verbal environment as it will not support in thriving and reaching their highest potential.