

Ten top tips to support your child to manage transitions within an EHC Plan: What every parent needs to know.

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1. Encourage your child to regularly make decisions, even if such decisions are from limited options.
2. Encourage your child to voice their opinions, express their needs, hopes and aspirations, not just in meetings, but in everyday life.
3. Encourage independence in your child by giving them opportunities to take responsibility e.g. by completing chores at home, in order to build their self-esteem and develop skills that will ensure that they are self-reliant in the future. Although it may be quicker to do a task yourself, rather than teaching your child to do it, the benefits of your child learning a new skill is of greater benefit.
4. Work with others who work with your child, or will be doing so in the future, to support your child through transition. Share information about the new setting with your child, including photographs of staff from the new setting where possible.
5. If your child has struggled to attend a transition meeting, it doesn't mean that they will struggle to attend one in the future, so keep involving them. Its better if your child attends for even a short while than not at all!
6. Let staff know what works for your child e.g. taking a familiar object with them to the new setting may help your child feels more at ease.

7. Ensure your child knows how their basic needs will be met when they move to a new setting - where are the toilets? Where will they have lunch? Who can they go to if they need help?
8. Ask about and explore what opportunities are available Post 16 - supported apprenticeships, continuing education, volunteering, work experience etc. in plenty of time. What are the implications of some of these for options and choices in Year 9? Instead of thinking about traditional 'jobs', that may no longer exist by the time your child is leaving school/college, explore the interests and aptitudes of your child and encourage the development of these.
9. Keep an open mind about work opportunities and roles. There are often a variety of roles within any particular industry/area of employment.
10. Maintaining the expectation that your child can, and will, make progress and achieve is important. Your belief in them is vital.

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About Alison Halliwell

Alison has worked with children and young people aged between two and twenty five years in both mainstream and specialist settings, during a career in education that spans more than 30 years. She has held positions as an advisory teacher/consultant for SEND and Inclusion in a number of authorities. As the SEND Assessment Team manager in a local council, she implemented the SEND reforms from 2014. Alison is passionate about keeping the child or young person and their family at the centre of SEND processes.