

END OF YEAR TRANSITIONS AND CELEBRATIONS



Tips for Effective Transitions from Grade to Grade

Educators play a critical role in successful transitions.

The “Warm Handoff Protocol”

- Help prepare the next team by documenting successful strategies and supports that may not be captured within the IEP document. What works best for the student?
- Engage in Vertical Planning meetings to pass along information.

Managing “Transition Anxiety”

- Help prepare the student for the next grade level by painting a picture of what it looks like.
- Help prepare parents for the next grade level by holding thoughtful transition meetings and sharing transition resources. (PreK, Kinder, Middle, HS, Adult)

Collaborative Transition IEPs

- These meetings play a critical role in helping parents with the transition. Move beyond compliance and work to create an agenda that meets the needs of all team members. This requires more than 15 minute meetings and thoughtful participant invites.

Tips for End of Year Celebration Successes

Reducing Anxiety through Predictability

- End of year events often alter the routines our students rely on. By pre-teaching event sequences, using visual schedules, and practicing in the actual celebration spaces, we replace the “fear of the unknown” with a clear plan. When a student knows exactly what to expect, they can focus on the celebration rather than the disruption.

Empowering Families for the Transition

- Closing a grade/school chapter can be as overwhelming for families as it is for students. By providing precise logistics—like sensory-friendly maps, quiet zones, and arrival timelines—we remove the guesswork. This allows parents to focus on celebrating their child’s growth rather than managing a crisis.

Fostering Autonomy and Dignity

- Participating in final milestones is a powerful exercise in self-determination. When we prepare students to navigate social expectations and ceremony protocols, we give them the agency to claim their own success. Proper preparation ensures that the final “finish line” is a moment of dignity and independence.

