

FDLRS Record

Newsletter for the University of Florida FDLRS-MDC program in Jacksonville

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Transition Resources

by Audrey Bringman, M. Ed.

Transition is a time of change and a process involving many areas; it includes the move from high school to postsecondary opportunities such as work or college and the transition from pediatric to adult healthcare. It is a collaborative effort that involves active participation from the emerging youth with disabilities, the family, school personnel, healthcare providers, colleges, and local agencies such as vocational rehabilitation.

Discussions about transition should start fairly early; in the school setting, they begin at individualized education program (IEP) meetings by age 14, if not earlier. Transition discussions with pediatric healthcare providers can start whenever the family feels comfortable, but it is important to know when the healthcare provider may discharge patients due to age. It is important to note that the emerging youth is an integral part of the transition process and should be given the opportunity to be a self-advocate and practice self-determination skills early on in order to convey academic, career, independent living, and healthcare goals.

It is important to understand that transition is a process, and should be done over time to ensure a successful and positive transition experience. It is important for all members of the transition team to be supportive, particularly when the youth takes initiative and makes decisions that will impact his or her future. Florida has two websites dedicated to providing resources in the areas of healthcare and educational transitions, they are FloridaHATS and Project10.

References and Resources:

- Project10 Transition Education Network. (2019). Retrieved from <http://project10.info/>
- Florida Health and Transition Services. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.floridahats.org/>



OUR SERVICES

Who we Serve:

- Individuals between the ages of 3 & 22 who have not graduated high school.
- Who are struggling in school and have complicated medical, behavioral, developmental, &/or social histories
- And who reside in Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, & St. Johns counties

Services for Families:

- Comprehensive, multidisciplinary assessment, which may include psychoeducational, emotional-behavioral, &/or developmental pediatric evaluations
- Feedback sessions and a report detailing our findings
- Assistance in planning for your child's educational and psychological needs
- Trainings for parents covering a variety of topics

Services for the Community:

- Training/consultations for educators, students, & other professionals
- Educational consultation and support services: This can include collaboration with school personnel to facilitate school placement & provision of services

Beating the Summer Boredom Blues

by Ashley Parker, MS CCC-SLP

Planning the summer can be a daunting task for any parent, but especially so for parents of children with exceptional educational needs. Being out of the routine of school, combined with more free time, can be a recipe for boredom, increased behavioral difficulties, and it can increase the temptation to plop kids in front of a screen to keep them entertained. Below, I'll outline some activities that can be done at home or in the Jacksonville metro area for low or no cost to keep your children entertained, learning, and most importantly, involved with something other than a screen!



1. Get cultured and visit a museum!

The Cummer Art Museum and Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) have hands on activities for children of all ages and the Cummer Museum has gardens great for walking around and taking in the scenery along the St. John's River. The Museum of Science and History (MOSH) also has interactive exhibits and a planetarium to explore the skies over Jacksonville. The Hands-On Children's Museum offers participatory learning for children of all ages and ability levels!

2. Visit Wild Florida and get outside!

The Jacksonville area boasts an abundance of State Parks and Nature Centers that are available at little to no cost. Some great parks with educational centers or activities include the Guana River State Park (which also boasts a

"sensory trail", which allows hikers of all ability levels to participate in the outdoor learning experience), Tree Hill Nature Center, Timucuan Preserve and Kingsley Plantation, and Castillo de San Marcos.

3. Go hunting for Sharks Teeth at Mickler's landing in South Jacksonville, or go up to Fort Clinch State Park in Nassau County for the ultimate scavenger hunt!
4. Cool off at a Splash Park! Sunshine Park in South Jacksonville (no cost), or the huge Splash Park at Hanna Park (\$5 entrance fee per car) offer the fun of playing in the water with the safety of it being a fenced-in splash pad!
5. Go to the public library for story time and to check out books to read as a family or on their own.

Libraries are unsung heroes of beating boredom and increasing exposure to language in the home and many sponsor events or activities at no cost to families.

6. Cook fun, kid-friendly recipes where kids can work on selecting ingredients, measuring, and stirring.

At home, parents can make sure to set timers to ensure children aren't spending too much time watching TV or playing on their tablets. Kids across ability levels benefit from visual timers to help them visually track how much longer they screen time. Additionally, setting a schedule for the day and sticking to it (bedtime included!) will help children not only know what to expect throughout their day, but will help to reduce the anxiety and increased behaviors that can come along with the uncertainty of not having formal school for 6-8 weeks. Most importantly, HAVE FUN while you are helping your children learn and grow as they march toward the next school year!

References:

- Bafale, Cara (2009). 25 Activities to keep Kids' Brains Active During the Summer [Web log post]. Retrieved April 24, 2019 from https://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev073.shtml
- St. John's Pediatric Dentistry (2019). 39 Must-Do Family Fun Activities. Retrieved April 24, 2019 from <https://stjohnskids.com/blog/things-to-do-in-jacksonville-fl/>
- Visit Jacksonville and the Beaches (2019). Free and Affordable Family Activities. Retrieved April 24, 2019 from <https://www.visitjacksonville.com/things-to-do/family/free-affordable/>

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FDLRS-MDC serves
Baker, Clay, Duval,
Flagler, Nassau, &
St. Johns County.

Structuring Summer Break

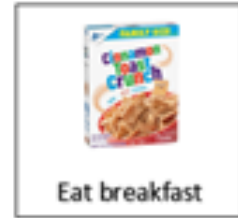
by Chelsea Pierce, M. Ed..

Generally, when we think about "Summer," we imagine trips to the beach, pool and lots of playtime! It's important to allow your kids to be kids, and to experience the time off from school. However, this does not mean they need a break from set expectations and structured schedules. But, how can we "structure" summer days while still allowing our child (and ourselves) to truly enjoy this mental break?

The first thing you'll need to do is think about what goals you'd like for your child to work on during the summer. For instance, if your child is a struggling reader, you may choose to encourage reading or fine-tune areas of need by hiring a tutor. Create a list of academic needs, and brainstorm ways to enhance those skills. After considering these goals, you can create a list of fun, summer activities and trips you'd like to take with your child. This may include: going to the beach, making cookies from scratch, going to story time at the library, visiting the local pool or even going to grandma's house! These will be fun, activity-based opportunities.

Keep your set structure in mind. For instance, think about the weekly trips and tasks that you and your child must complete. Do you take a weekly trip to the grocery store? Do you go to the dry cleaners every Wednesday morning? Do you check your mailbox every other day? This would also be a good time to think about chores you may choose to introduce. These could be anything from washing the dishes, to taking out trash or feeding the dog. These are activities that will need to be included in your Summer Schedule. You may also look at life skills/self-help skills, and create a list. For instance, if your child depends on you consistently to prepare snacks, do their laundry, etc., you may want to focus on these areas as "areas of need" for the summer.

Once you've created these "banks" of tasks, you have a few options as to how to communicate this schedule to your child. You'll want to post it somewhere accessible to your entire family. You may choose to create a weekly or daily schedule. You may create "visuals," or images that represent each task. If you stick Velcro or a magnetic strip on the back, you can



Eat breakfast



Grocery store



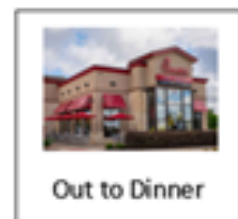
Dance class



Tablet time



Help with Laundry



Out to Dinner



Reading Time

always “change out” the daily routines. It is helpful to either remove the visual from the board once a task is completed, or you can create check boxes to “check off” what activities have been achieved. Ensure that your child is gaining access to preferred tasks (video game time, tablet time, unstructured play time, etc.) However, make sure that these tasks are time-monitored, as well as mixed in with other productive activities. I’ve included some examples of daily schedules with this article.

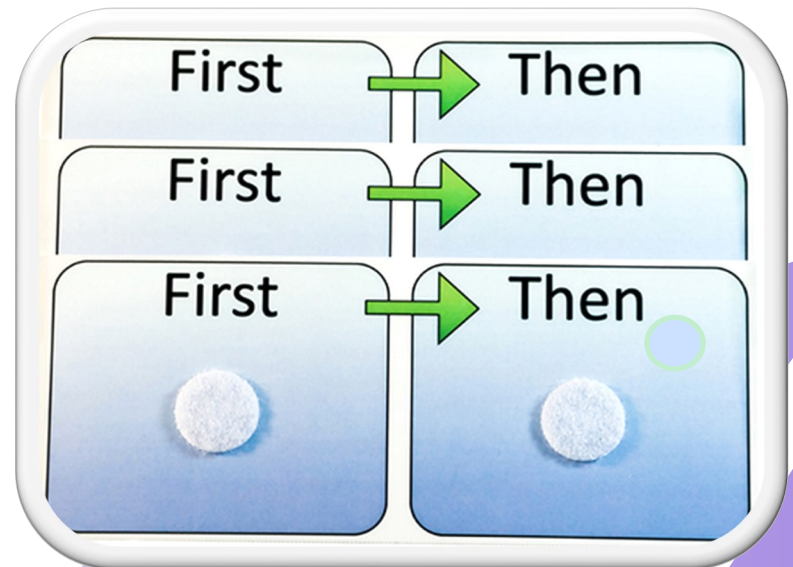
Helpful Resources:

Arky, B. (n.d.). Strategies for a successful summer break. Retrieved from <https://childmind.org/article/strategies-for-a-successful-summer-break/>

Mueller, K. (2013). Summer routines help keep kids thinking and moving while school's out. Retrieved from <https://pulse.seattlechildrens.org/summer-routines-help-keep-kids-thinking-and-moving-while-schools-out/>

Williams, M. (2014). Transitioning a child with special needs from summer relaxation to school routines. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2014/08/22/transitioning-a-child-with-special-needs-from-summer-relaxation-to-school-routines/>

✓	Wake up and get dressed
✓	Eat breakfast
✓	Go to the library
✓	Slime making with Brian
	Take out trash
	Math tutoring with Ms. Rachel
	Go to the Movies
	Eat dinner
	Bath time
	Bed time



Study Skills = School Success

By Marlena Jenkins, M.S., BCaBA

Studying for school related activities and assignments, can be a daunting task. We hope that you and your student will find these tips easy to implement and reinforce over time, both in and outside of the classroom.

Please keep in mind that many of the tips listed within this article are topics that would be appropriate for discussion at your student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Meeting, 504 Plan Meeting or Parent Teacher Conference. Giving the educational support team insight on the strategies used outside of the classroom, are just as helpful as discussing what is being done within the classroom. Since learning occurs in all locations, practicing proactive and healthy learning habits sets a foundation for educational success and growth.

Designate a homework location in your home

- Find a space that is quiet and away from distraction
- Find a space that is near a restroom
- Keep this area stocked with homework supplies (pencils, pens, erasers, paper, calculator and any other needed materials)
- Mount a clock on the wall or a shelf to keep track of your time limits
- Labeled bins that will store writing paper, scratch paper, tape, stapler, and other items
- Make sure you clean your homework area after each usage so it is ready for you the next time



Using an 'In and Out' bin

- Take 2 bins, baskets or shoe boxes
- Label one bin 'IN' and label the other 'OUT'
- Place papers that need to be checked by your parent in the 'IN' bin
- Once items have been reviewed by your parent, they will place them in the 'OUT' bin
- Check the 'OUT' bin every night and place the 'OUT' bin items in your folder so they can be returned to your teacher by the designated due date

Organizing your notebook

- 2-pocket folder for each class/subject
- Place a label on the left side pocket that says 'take home' and a label on the right side that says 'return to school'
- Place the items you or your parents need to review in the 'take home' pocket. **AFTER** you or your parents have reviewed the items at home, place the items in the 'return to school' pocket and give them to your teacher during the class

Tip: Match the folder's color to the color of your book cover (for example, red book cover, red folder = science class)

General Note-taking Tips

- Use index cards to write definitions to new terms that you found while reading
- Place key words on a list and notate synonyms (words that mean the same) and antonyms (words that mean the opposite)
- After reading a chapter of text, write a paragraph that summarizes the information you read (this will be helpful when you are reading larger chapter books)

Helpful Resources:

UF Health Florida Diagnostic Learning & Resources System Multidisciplinary Center (FDLRS-MDC), 904-633-0770

Smart but Scattered by Peggy Dawson and Richard Guare, 2009 (book)

ADDitude Magazine (online resource), <https://www.additudemag.com/>

Getting Your Kids Back In a School Routine

by Ashley Parker, MS CCC-SLP

It is almost back to school for Duval and the surrounding counties, and that means it is time to get your children ready to transition from a summer schedule to a school schedule! There are a few areas in which children, especially those with exceptional education needs, tend to struggle as they prepare for the transition: sleep, study, and organization.

Sleep

The American Academy of Pediatrics has guidelines on how much sleep children need based on their age. For children 3 to 5 years of age, they recommend 10-13 hours (including naps) of sleep in a 24 hour period. For those 6 to 12 years old, they recommend 9-12 hours, and for teenagers, 8 to 10 hours is recommended (AAP, 2016). Setting a good bedtime routine to include shutting off screens 30 minutes before bed, having a comfortable, clean sleeping space, and doing calm activities such as reading a book before bed can all help students get the quality sleep they need to increase attention, reduce negative behaviors, and promote learning!

Study

When students need to begin to engage in good study habits, it can be hard! Reiterating "ground rules" or expectations can help. Set a designated area to do homework, remind your child of the amount of time per day they need to read, and utilizing visual supports, such as



“first/then” boards can all be helpful as children come home needing to complete their homework in a timely manner (Scholastic, n.d.).

Organization

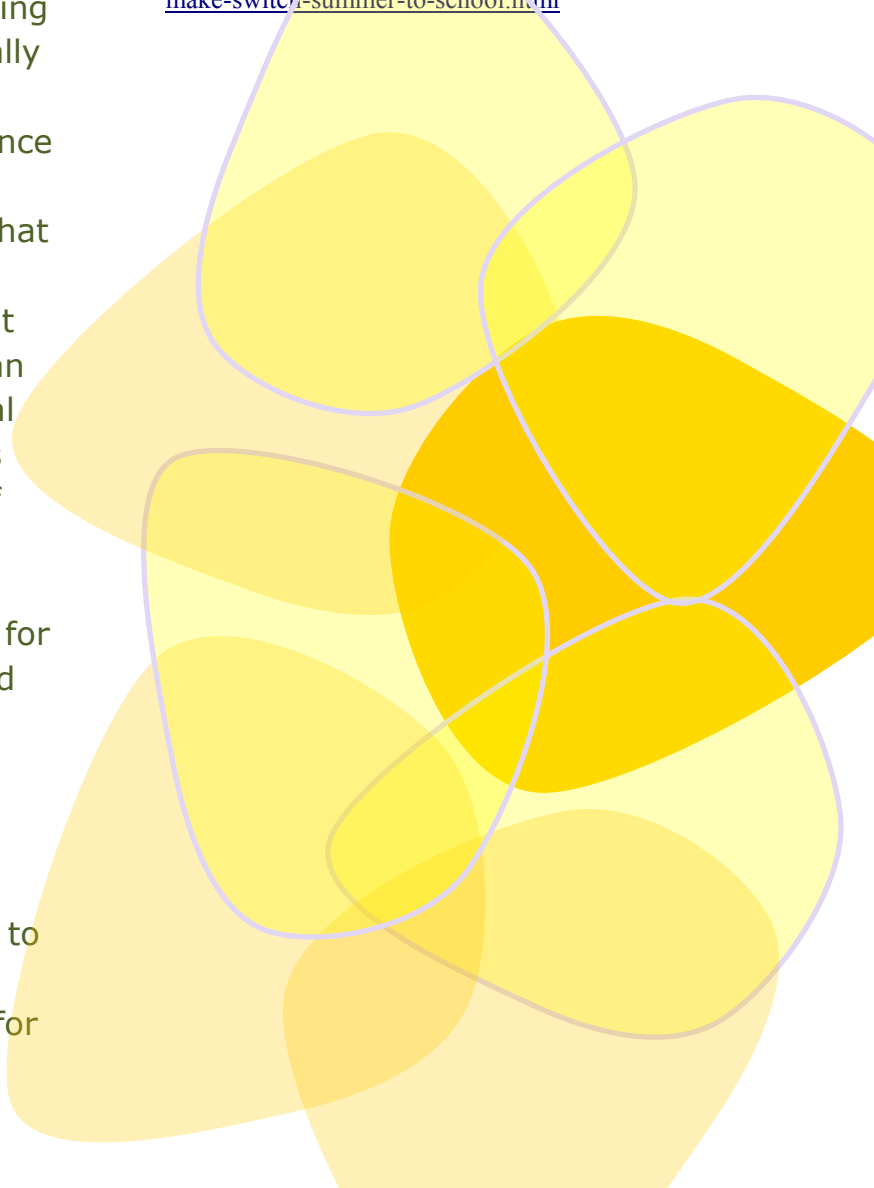
Even students who do not struggle academically or have exceptional educational needs can find starting off the school year with good organizational habits to be difficult. Doing a “trial run” of the morning routine for getting out the door in time the week before school starts can help children remember what they need to do, and when they need to do it. In terms of academics, between forgetting assignments, losing papers, and generally not remembering to do tasks, most children at some point will need assistance getting and staying organized. Utilizing visual supports such as checklists for what a child needs to do once they get home (get a snack, hang up backpack, get out homework, complete homework, then an activity of their choice), utilizing a visual or regular timer so that the child knows they need to spend a certain amount of time (15 minutes for example) on an assignment before taking a 5 minute break, and making a separate calendar for home that includes school deadlines and expectations to reinforce what is happening in the classroom can be beneficial for keeping children on track (ADHD Editorial Board, 2019).

The transition from a summer schedule to a school schedule can be difficult, but staying ahead of the game with a plan for

sleep, study, and organization can make the transition easier for everyone!

References and Resources:

- American Academy of Pediatrics Supports Childhood Sleep Guidelines. (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Supports-Childhood-Sleep-Guidelines.aspx>
- ADHD Editorial Board. (2018). The Messy Student’s Guide to Organization. Retrieved from <https://www.additudemag.com/helping-adhd-students-get-organized-for-school/>
- 10 Ways to Make the Switch from Summer to School. (n.d.) Retrieved from <https://www.scholastic.com/parents/school-success/school-life/back-to-school/10-ways-to-make-switch-summer-to-school.html>





CARD-Jacksonville Parent Craft Group

by Chelsea Pierce, M. Ed.

Some of the greatest challenges faced by parents of children with exceptional needs include taking time for self-care, developing adult friendships and establishing relationships with other parents. The UF-Jacksonville Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD-JAX) **Parent Craft Group** is held once every other month at our center in Jacksonville. This group is all about parent-to-parent support, encouragement and relaxation. This group is led by CARD clinicians and is offered to parents only. Children are not to attend this group, as we discuss personal information and parents are encouraged to take this time for themselves.

If you're reading this and thinking "I'm not crafty! How can I join this group?" Don't fret! The crafts that we select for this group are guided, and are completed during each session. Generally, the group is quite small, consisting of 3-5 parents. This allows for it to be an intimate session, in which open conversation and creativity is encouraged. We start the session with a voluntary discussion and introspection. We then

introduce the craft, offer a writing opportunity, and conversation flows while crafting.

One of the mothers who attends the group frequently shared, "I could not be happier with my experience at CARD. I came home and told everyone what a great time we had last night. Laughing, talking and just being there for one another makes all the stress melt away. It's so nice to be able to share things we may be insecure about without the fear or backlash or being misunderstood. It has been such a wonderful experience for me. Being able to have time to focus on myself and have others encourage me to do so is very helpful. Spending so much time taking care of others we often forget our own needs and I know when we meet I'll have others who understand what I'm going through. Everyone is always supportive and reminds each other that our feelings are not only ok to have, but are actually quite normal."

If you are interested in finding out more about the next Parent Craft Group, please contact our Lead CARD Clinician, Marlena Jenkins at Marlena.Jenkins@jax.ufl.edu.