

Surviving the Transition to secondary school: A Parent's Perspective

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DURING elementary school

Start the dialogue with your school about appropriate placements and share any preferences or opinions.

DURING elementary school

- ▶ Identify the full range of options that may be appropriate for your child.
 - ▶ Advanced Academics (Gifted programs)
 - ▶ Non-Categorical Programs—often mild ID--at Base School
 - ▶ ABA Site
 - ▶ Other Specialized Settings (Programs for ID or Comprehensive Service Sites)
 - ▶ More Intensive Settings (Kilmer, Key in FCPS)
 - ▶ Private Placements

DURING elementary school

Push for inclusion (if you believe it's appropriate for your child). This gives you firmer footing for less restrictive placements and more options later on.

DURING elementary school

- ▶ Visit each site the IEP is likely to consider or sites you'd like them to consider.
- ▶ Talk to parents of children in the programs of schools you're visiting (POAC-NoVA listserv can often help 😊)
- ▶ Prepare questions.
- ▶ Ask for any policies you question in writing.
- ▶ Keep an open mind and listen.
- ▶ Collect contact information so you can follow up.

DURING elementary school

Start to prepare your child!

- ▶ Have them visit schools under consideration for fun activities
 - ▶ PTA sponsored events, such as basketball games or bookfairs
 - ▶ I Can Shine Programs
 - ▶ Plays or performances

DURING IEP

Get any agreements the school informally made about curriculum, classes, inclusion or accommodations during visits or discussions in writing.

AFTER IEP

Don't let your anxiety rub off on your kid!

AFTER IEP

- ▶ VISIT school with your child: Arrange tours through Special Education Program; teacher workdays immediately before school begins allow you to walk through schedules and meet staff.
- ▶ Use positive language to discuss the new school.
- ▶ Create positive associations with the school for your child—make it fun!
- ▶ Use pictures and social stories, if appropriate, to help familiarize them with school and staff.

AFTER middle school begins

- ▶ Try to identify a typical peer that will look out for your kid (especially on bus or less supervised settings)
- ▶ Try to “lighten the load” while your child is adjusting to new demands—put off afterschool activities if possible
- ▶ Establish a homework routine
- ▶ If you haven’t met them already, introduce yourself to your child’s teachers; trade contact information and tell them to let you know if there are any problems