Transitioning into Kindergarten
By
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Information is based on presentations given by Michelle Self at the National Williams Syndrome Conferences in 2006, 2008, and 2010 on “Transitioning into Kindergarten.”

1. Gather Information on Your Child
   a. Does your child have an alternate learning style? – musically, verbally, visually – Many of the children with WS learn better through music or verbally and not visually. Does your child look away when you are looking at picture books?
   b. Does your child have special interests?
   c. How do you work with your child at home?
   d. How does your child react to unexpected situations?
   e. Is your child able to work independently?
   f. How much prompting does your child need, if any?
   g. How does your child react to crowds and commotion?
   h. Is your child easily distracted? By what?
   i. How do you keep your child on task?
   j. Does your child display any special behaviors when he or she is agitated?
   k. What does your child enjoy and how do you have fun together?

2. Create a Student Profile
   a. One page of information to give to the teachers, therapists, anyone you feel needs to understand your child
   b. Complete as many of the questions above that you think help describe your child
   c. Describe your child and family
   d. Include activities and successes
   e. Keep it simple but complete – one page front and back at the most

3. Know your Rights
   a. IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
      i. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – the regular classroom with an aide is less restrictive than a resource room
      ii. Individual Education Plan – remember INDIVIDUAL – they shouldn’t say “we don’t do that” or “we don’t have a program for that”
      iii. Great website and training - www.wrightslaw.com
   b. State laws – your state laws can’t provide less of an education than IDEA
   c. State education standards
4. **Before the INDIVIDUAL Education Plan Meeting**
   a. Read the evaluation – MFE, ETR (whatever it is called) – determine if the information truly represents your child
   b. Determine what YOU want for your child
      i. What type of placement?
      ii. What type of services?
      iii. Request a draft of the IEP 5 days in advance
         1. Gives you a chance to review the information
         2. Lets a friend or advocate review areas of concern
         3. Helps you understand where there may be issues

5. **Kindergarten Placement – Remember – your child is on an INDIVIDUAL Education Plan – Lots of options**
   a. Regular classroom
   b. Regular classroom with an aide
   c. Resource room mainstreaming with an aide
   d. Resource room
   e. Special education class room
   f. ½ day regular classroom and ½ day resource room
   g. Other possibilities???

6. **Observe and Question**
   a. How many children are in therapies or pull out with your child?
   b. What is your child missing in the classroom if they leave for intervention services?
   c. Is your child accessing the curriculum in the placement you choose?

7. **Possible Accommodations**
   a. Extra time to complete assignments
   b. Assistance
   c. Foot stool
   d. Scribe
   e. Slant board
   f. Special seating
   g. Different paper
   h. Aide or paraprofessional
   i. Additional ideas – www.fape.org

8. **Possible Modifications**
   a. Alternative assignments
   b. Shorter assignments
9. **How do I ask for an Aide or Paraprofessional? – DON’T**
   a. Determine WHO is going to provide the support – You never want to ask directly – to easy to say NO
   b. If you feel your child needs the support of a person, then ask whichever pertains –
      i. Who will escort my child to the bathroom for frequent bathroom breaks?
      ii. Who will help scribe since my child can’t write or has difficulty?
      iii. Who will make sure that my child does not go with a stranger?
      iv. Who will help my child stay on task during the class period?
      v. Who will watch my child during recess to make sure that they
         1. stay on the playground
         2. aren’t bullied
         3. get to the restroom…

10. **Create a Win-Win Situation**
    a. Communication – work with the teachers
       i. Email
       ii. Informal meetings before and/or after school
       iii. Home communication notebook
       iv. Daily communication form
       v. Phone calls
    b. Find an ally – a teacher, librarian, secretary, principal…
    c. 1st week of school – find something positive to tell the teacher – create positives

11. **Kindergarten should be fun!!! Make sure your child is learning but still having fun!**

    Please contact me with any specific questions or concerns.

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