

How to Prepare when Transitioning from Elementary to Middle School for Students with Disabilities

These are common types of concerns students and families have before middle school starts.

How do I find my classes?

What do I wear for PE?

How do I open my locker?

When is lunch?

When do I go to the bathroom?

Before the end of the year in elementary....

Ask the IEP/504 team for a transition meeting.

- Focus on the new changes
- Request that staff from the middle school attend, such as members of the IEP team

Before middle school starts...

- Go to all the events the school hosts
 - open houses
 - back to school night
 - school tour
- Go online to find any information related to the new school
 - calendar
 - schedule with lunch and passing period information
 - school events
 - school supply lists
 - technology policies
 - familiarize with the new teachers
- Discuss and plan transportation
 - where is the bus stop
 - what are the pick up and drop off times and locations
- Find a peer for your child that who will be attending the same school

When middle school starts...

- Familiarize yourself with your student's IEP and gen ed team
- Consider having your student join a school sport or club
- In writing, contact the IEP team/case manager if there are any concerns in the first 4-6 weeks
- If unresolved, request in writing an IEP review meeting
- If appropriate, consider having the student participate in the meeting
- At parent teacher conferences, ask about:
 - the curriculum used
 - what supports are available such as study groups, tutoring etc.
 - homework policies
 - ask about how accommodations are being implemented

Talk with your student about what is working and what isn't at school.

BE PROACTIVE! Discuss and help your student problem solve potential concerns in school:

- Discuss how to organize school supplies
- Discuss lunch arrangements (bring your own, buy lunch, etc.)
- Introduce the idea of having to change for PE
- If there are mobility and sensory concerns, brainstorm solutions

If your student already has trouble with transitions in general, make sure the IEP team has a well written plan to support your student through their specific needs above and beyond what all children might experience.