



# Starting Kindergarten with Confidence:

*A Guide for Parents of  
Autistic children*



Everything You Need to Help  
Your Child Thrive in Kinder!

**It can be extremely daunting for your autistic child to start kinder. This guide aims to act as a foundation of questions you can ask yourself and the educators at your child's kindergarten.**

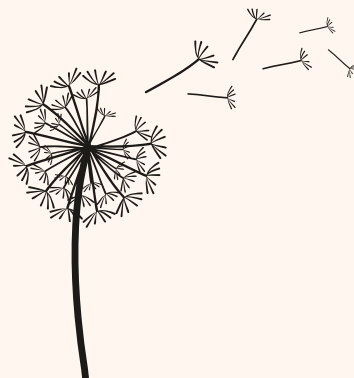
**I know you feel scared, uncertain, nervous and maybe even a bit fearful.**

**I've been where you've been and struggled without help. I don't want that for you or your 'angel', so I put together these questions to guide you and your autistic child on the journey to starting kinder.**

**As you work through the guide, I recommend opening an email up and adding your questions as you go, so when you book a session, they'll be ready to unpack.**

**You are not alone.  
You Are Seen.**

*Natalie*



# Preparation at Home

## Set Up a Routine

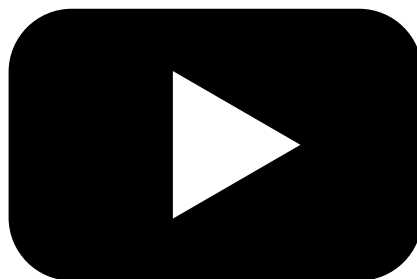
- ✔ **Create a daily visual schedule leading up to the first day of kinder.** *This could include the time you drop off your child, what your child will wear and their favourite snacks in their lunchbox.*
- ✔ **Practice saying goodbye at drop-offs using social stories.** *A great book to read is 'The Invisible String' by Patrice Karst.*
- ✔ **Establish a consistent morning and evening routine.** *By setting up these routines you are giving your autistic child something that they can control. Going to kinder can feel like the child is very much out of control and out of their comfort zone. These routines help the child understand what's next.*



# Preparation at Home

## Teach Essential Skills

- ✔ **Show your child how to open and close their backpack and lunchbox.** *A great way to start teaching your child this task is to give them their lunch or snack in their lunchbox when you're at home. This helps them get familiar with the lunchbox and the routine.*
- ✔ **Teach basic self-help skills like washing hands and using the toilet.** *A great resource for teaching how to use the toilet is 'Tom's Toilet Triumph' for boys and 'Going to the bathroom #1' for girls.*
- ✔ **Use role-playing to practice turn-taking and following simple instructions.** *Feel free to print the visuals I've created at the end of this checklist.*



# Sensory Readiness

## Pack a Sensory Toolkit

- ✔ Provide the kinder with a range of sensory toys you feel will help keep your child regulated. *These can include fidget toys, noise-canceling headphones, chewable jewelry or a weighted vest).*

Prepare a calming “go-to” item for comfort. *This could include your child’s favourite stuffed toy or blanket, if allowed).*



# Sensory Readiness

## Plan for Sensory Challenges

- ✔ Be sure to provide the lead educator with a list of your child's triggers. *The list lets the educators know what to be aware of when it comes to your child so that they can avoid putting them in that situation where possible. You may also want to provide them with a coping strategies list so that the educators can provide the necessary supports to assist your child.*

**Don't talk about Kinder, Show what Kinder is like.** *In order to gain some exposure to what Kinder is actually like, you may want to google Kinder Circle Time so that you can visually show your child what parts of Kinder look like.*



# Questions to Ask the Educators

- ✔ How do you handle sensory meltdowns?
- ✔ What's the plan for accommodating my child's sensory needs?
- ✔ Are there quiet spaces available for children who need a break?
- ✔ How do you support children during group activities?
- ✔ Can we schedule regular communication about my child's progress?
- ✔ Can allied health professionals (Speech, OT and Psych attend meetings at kinder?



# School Visits and Orientation

## Familiarise your child with Kinder



**Schedule a visit to the kindergarten with your child.** *Allowing your child into the space they'll be about to enter is a powerful way for them to become familiar with the space, sounds and smells. They can also become familiar with the furniture they will be sitting on/at as well as the rug or carpet that is on the floor where they'll be doing circle time.*



**Have the lead educators send you a social story that includes photos of the different spaces - book corner, painting area, bathroom, playground, etc.** *Our brain learns through pictures, so by sharing pictures with your autistic child you're giving them some insight into where they're going.*

# School Visits and Orientation

## Familiarise your child with Kinder



Have the Kinder send you photos of all of the educators including aid staff so that your child can start to become aware of their names. *You might want to go one step further and ask what each of the educators interests are. If your autistic child is verbal you can use this as part of your ‘getting to know the staff’ chat and if your child is non-speaking you may want to include it in the social story. Having a common interest between the child and the educator will create a sense of safety for your child.*

Be sure to share a ‘Getting to Know Me’ letter with your kinder. You will find a free copy at the end of this checklist. *The aim of the getting to know me letter is to help the educators better understand your child so that they can use this information to create a safe space for them.*



# The Night Before and First Day

## Prepare Together

- ✔ Pack your child's bag together and review the day's schedule.
- ✔ Include a favorite sensory tool or comfort item for the first day.
- ✔ Stay Calm and Predictable.
- ✔ Stick to and allow for a calming morning routine.
- ✔ Use a social story to explain what will happen during the day.

first day of  
kindergarten

# After the First Day

## Celebrate Success

- ✔ Acknowledge and celebrate small wins. Use lots of praise.
- ✔ Keep an open dialouge with the educators about what your child experienced as challenges and what were successes.
- ✔ Your child might be feeling exhausted by the day at kinder, let them unwind as well as going to bed early. An example could be having a bath.



# Taking Turns Visuals

Print and cut the below “hands” out.

Be sure to write in your child’s name, e.g. **Tom’s** Turn, or My Turm

The visuals can be laminated if you have a laminator and it can be handy to stick a popsicle stick to the back.

**Turn**



**My Turn**



# Getting to Know Me

Use this as a guide to help educators know a little more about your child:

Hi (educators name),

My name is

I prefer to be called

- My favourite colour is
- My favourite number is
- My favourite food is
- My favourite song is
- My favourite show is
- My main interests are
- I like to play with
- I don't like to play with
- My go to activity when I'm feeling overwhelmed is
- I feel triggered when
- In order for me to get back to a state of regulation I need to
- I prefer to communicate (eg: verbally, non verbally, AAC device, gestures)
- I use these words, phrases or signs to explain something.
- My stimms are
- In order to help me transition to a different activity or from inside to outside it's important for me to
- My big goals this year are

I trust this checklist was helpful and that the first day of kindergarten for your child will be a happy and harmonious one.

This is just the beginning of us working together to set you both up for success.

[Book a FREE introduction call](#)

[Go on the waitlist for my course](#)



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