



## Workshops:

September  
New Zealand  
Canberra, ACT  
Brunei

October  
Canberra, ACT

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Welcome back to term 4.  
Hope everyone's holiday was peaceful  
and restful. You'll notice a slightly  
different look to the newsletter this time.  
I wanted to write a short article for the

newsletter on transition. For those of you  
who know me you know I can't make  
anything short! To make it all fit I had to  
change the layout.  
Enjoy your read and have fun this term.

## Book Review

Can I Tell You About Asperger Syndrome?  
*A guide for family and friends*  
Jude Welton  
JKP Publishing



I love this book. It's written to try and explain what Asperger is to classmates and people on the spectrum. It is only 40 - A5 pages long, so it is brief enough for a young audience.

I found this book so useful. I would give it to anyone to read who is involved in Autism Spectrum Disorder. It is in an easy to read format that grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends, teachers, and teacher aides can read in just one sitting.

The language used is simple and uncomplicated and can be understood from as early as Grade 1. Each page covers only one area of difficulty, such as body language, being literal in understanding, sensory problems and being pedantic about rules when playing a game etc. For example: "I might only want to play if I decide on the game, and choose the rules. This isn't just me being bossy. It's because I feel safer and less confused if I make the rules."

The book is illustrated with appropriate pictures and speech bubbles on each page which directly shows what the text is saying. This book could be used in conjunction with a project on disabilities as it can be an effective tool in establishing understanding and a buddy system (or circle of friends) for our person with Asperger.

## Thoughts from an Asperger adolescent – Part 1

"I sometimes found that in school, my teacher wouldn't explain a task fully – they might have left something unexplained in the assumption that we would all understand. This is something I always found extremely frustrating. I would sit in my seat for the longest time, wondering exactly what it was that I was supposed to be doing. It would be especially frustrating when I'd glance to the side and see others knowing exactly what to do, being halfway or further through the work while I sat around looking like an idiot. The fact that I didn't know what to do was extremely frustrating – I'd beat myself up over it for the rest of the day – but it rarely ended there."

# Transition from Primary to High School

Making the transition from Primary to High School can be very easy if we take into consideration some simple points.

Transition planning is a pro active strategy even though it can be time consuming, however it can help prevent negative consequences and behaviours. Having a transition programme in place will not only help provide a foundation for high school but also ownership for the person with ASD. Good preparation will also help alleviate some transition difficulties.

## *Prepare both child and school*

We need to prepare both the child and the school for this transition. The child may not have visited a high school before (no older siblings) and it may be a foreign atmosphere for him. The school may not have had an Asperger person before so we need to inform all people who will be in contact with the student.

## *School*

Begin with a transition meeting. During this meeting:

- Identify a team of teachers who can act as ‘safe persons’ for the Asperger person.
- Plan an individual orientation schedule for the student as they may find too many new people at the one too daunting and will display inappropriate behaviours. This will already begin to ostracise them from other students.
- Schedule training dates for teachers to learn more about the learning styles of ASD students. The training should include:
  - An overview of characteristics
  - Information on specific behavioural, academic and emotional concerns of the student
  - How to implement strategies that have been determined during meetings with Primary school and parents
- Include all relevant teachers, counselors, admin staff, principals, tuckshop staff, groundsmen etc. Everyone needs to know how to manage the behaviours of this student to prevent any “meltdowns” etc.
- Plan relief teacher communication. How can we inform a substitute teacher regarding the needs of this student?
- Set up a communication system between home and school. Identify which form of communication works best between home and school.(ie email, notes, phone call, communication book)
- Identify a contact teacher between home and school

I would encourage staff rooms to have a photo of the student with a short description of important strategies teachers can use. For example, “when student is stressed don’t ask questions. Encourage him to see Mr.....” (ie safe person)

I would also encourage primary staff to fill out the transition form which you will find in my book “The Essential Guide to Successful Secondary School”. It is a short profile of the student. It covers academic, communication, behavioural, general and social skills. It does not require long winded sentences to fill, just short to the point information which can be invaluable to a teacher seeing this student for the first time.

## *Student*

The student will need a few months of preparation and familiarity with the new setting to feel comfortable. Following are some suggestions for teachers and parents to help the student make a good transition.

Need to begin preparing the student at the very least one term before entering high school. (ie fourth term.) We can begin by:

- Attending/visiting the school one day per week.

- Making a collage of photos of people and names of the people will meet at the school;
  - Secretary (always the most visible person at school, and first port of call for an ASD person who wants to talk to someone)
  - Principal
  - Librarian
  - Special needs/inclusion teacher
  - Tuckshop convenor
  - Groundsman
- Begin discussing
  - Games, rules of games and etiquette of expected behaviour. (Rules change in high school for many games)
  - Explain what to expect regarding
    - Behaviour of other students
    - Their own behaviour
    - Punctuality
    - Respect and cooperation
  - Expected noise in hallways and change rooms
- Encourage a buddy system with not only others in his grade but the next grade up
- Make a map of the school and mark:
  - Out of bounds areas
  - Toilets
  - Library
  - His classrooms
  - Other areas student needs to access
  - Any other relevant information for that particular student
- Prepare his bus or train route
  - Practice the route
  - Discuss the etiquette and behaviour expected and not to intrude on others behaviour (remember classroom policeman)
  - What to do if bus or train is late either going to school or coming home
  - What to do if he misses the train/bus either going or coming home from school
- Provide a list of people the student can contact when feeling overwhelmed (ie identified safe people from transition meeting.)

### ***Parent***

There are many things that parents can do to help their child make a good transition to high school. Here are just a few:

- Encourage them to participate in all activities presented to them.
- Encourage your child to ask for help when he feels he needs it.
- Teach your child how to recognise that he needs to ask for help
- Teach your child how to ask for help in the classroom

I would also encourage parents to provide a short profile of your child to the school. Include things such as:

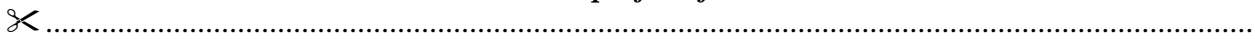
- Strengths
- Challenges
- Things that may trigger a meltdown
- Behaviours exhibited for a meltdown
- Best way to approach child when having a meltdown
- Sensory issues that are a major problem
- Preferred management strategies

You'll find a proforma for this in my book "The Essential Guide to Successful Secondary School" – *Anna Tullemans and Sue Larkey*

These have been just a few suggestions for making transition to high school a little easier for all involved. If you would like more information please contact me and we can discuss it further.



*Transition profiles for students*



To order books please fill out this form and send with your cheque:

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If you would like to receive the newsletter via email:                      Post Code .....

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**ABN: 44 458 927 927**

- \$50.00 The Essential Guide to Successful Secondary School
- \$29.00 How To stop Your Words From Bumping
- \$25.00 Talking to Family and Friends
- \$12.00 Working with Teachers
- \$ 6.00 Fun Side of Asperger
- \$18.00 Which School

Prices include postage and handling

**\$.....Total**

Please make cheques payable to:  
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