

## Helping you set goals for your child

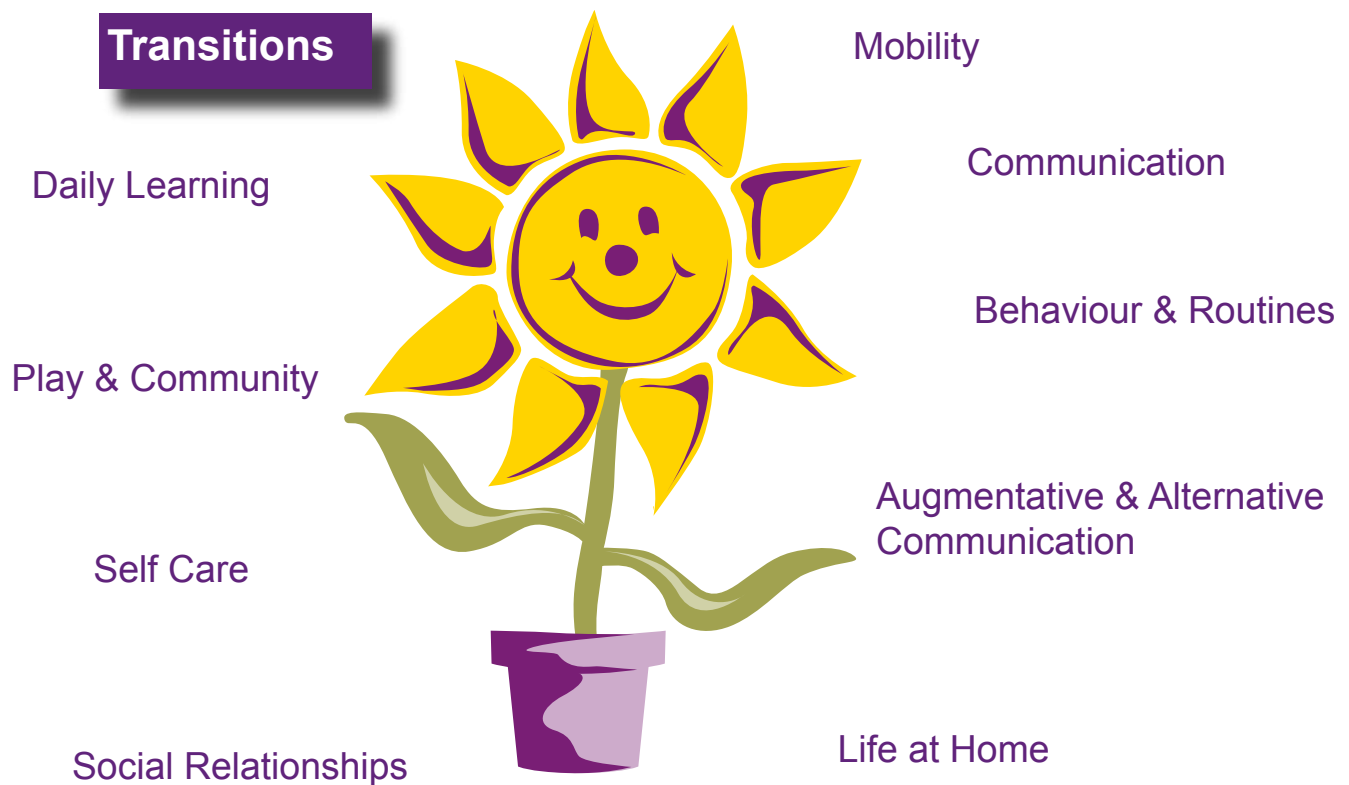
At Therapy Focus, we recognise and value your role as parents being the experts on your child and family.

Our Services are a support to help your child reach their potential and enhance their participation in the community. Educating and empowering you to help your child is

an important part of our holistic therapy services.

This brochure is a starting point for discussion about your child and your family. It offers ideas to create new activities your child is able to do with encouragement and support.

### Transitions



### The way we work

- We recognise that family is central to therapy. Families bring knowledge and expertise about their child to help identify the child's needs, develop goals and practice strategies.
- The family, therapy team and teaching staff work together to identify problems and share ideas. Each has a role to play in developing the child's skills.
- We use every opportunity in the family's and child's routine and environment to develop skills.
- Therapists work as a multidisciplinary collaborative team, sharing skills to meet the needs of the child.
- We recognise the child's strengths and how they can be developed to increase participation in the activities of life.

# TRANSITIONS

Throughout childhood and adolescence there are many transitions including:

- Starting school for the first time
- Moving from primary school to high school
- Leaving high school to pursue post school training or work placement
- Developing independence to apply skills in the community, such as joining a sporting club or community group
- Moving from the family home to respite or shared accommodation

Each transition requires the development of new skills and the adjustment to new routines. For example, when starting school your child needs to adapt to a structured routine and be able to follow instructions cooperatively with other students. When moving to high school your child needs to independently follow a timetable and move between classes whilst being responsible for their own study.

Being able to attend school and community activities are important life skills to allow your child to learn new things, relate to their peers and develop friendships.

## Strategies to assist in your child's transition times

- **Use Every Opportunity** by allowing your child to participate whenever possible throughout their normal routine. This allows them to improve their skills through participation in everyday activities.
- **Practice** doing a small piece of an activity each day. Children find it

easier to learn new skills in smaller sections.

- **Be Consistent** with the words and signs used to instruct your child, and try to keep instructions short and simple.
- Ensure that there is enough **Time** available for your child to participate in transition activities without feeling rushed.
- Allow your child to **Observe** other family members experiencing transitions. Modelling appropriate behaviours is a fantastic way to develop skills.
- **Use Encouragement** to let your child know they are doing a great job. This will help them to keep motivated and boost their self-esteem.



- **Being Patient and Calm** is important when teaching your child new skills and during transitions.
- **Use Small Steps** by breaking the activity down into small, manageable steps, which can be learnt one at a time.

### Example

Aaron is a 12 year old boy who loves watching AFL. Aaron has spina bifida, uses his wheelchair for mobility and is transitioning to his local high school next year.

**Goal:** For Aaron to have an enjoyable and successful transition to high school

**Strategies:** Aaron's parents enrolled Aaron at their chosen high school. They began organising meetings with relevant people through help from the school's Learning Support Coordinator and therapists in order to discuss Aaron's needs and supports within the high school. Aaron's OT explored the new school to ensure that Aaron had wheelchair access in all areas of the school. Closer to commencement of the school year, the transition team discussed and demonstrated practical skills that Aaron will require. This included how Aaron's books and resources will be moved from class to class, and how Aaron will participate in sports and other activities at school. Aaron visited his high school several times to ensure he was comfortable with the layout of his new environment, and completed a photo book and map of the high school to assist him in remembering his teachers, what the high school looks like and how to navigate the grounds.

**Outcome:** With proper organisation and communication with relevant parties, all of the modifications that John required were completed on time for him to start school

with his peers. He was a little nervous about the start of school, though he eased his nerves with help from his photo books and maps.



### Strategies to help your child cope with transitions

- Look at the skills that your child requires for that transition and work on these skills prior to the time. For example, when starting school, children need to be able to recognize their name, say their name and be able to follow routines and work/play with others. Ask the school or workplace what skills your child may need if you are unsure.
- Visit the new school or workplace before your child commences. Take photos of the new environment focusing on key areas such as the classroom and playground, and make a book for you and your child to review over the couple of weeks or months before the transition. This will help to ease any anxiety the child may be experiencing.

- Discuss the transition with key parties such as the school principal, learning support coordinator, teacher or workplace management.
- Arrange as many visits to the new environment as you feel your child is going to need (at least 2-4 visits are recommended) prior to the move.
- Provide people within the new environment with as much information about your child as possible, such as modes of communication, physical capabilities and include your child's strengths and likes as well as areas to work on and dislikes.



## Therapy Focus Resources

### ***Ready Steady School: Transition into Year 1***

A booklet designed for children who are making the big step into year 1.

### ***Joining In***

This resource fosters confidence in children to increase participation in community life by developing essential life skills such as conversational skills, emotional, social and problem solving skills and management of behaviour in public.

### ***Moving on up: Transition to High School***

This resource goes through all the points that need to be considered when your child is moving to high school. This checklist has been designed to be used together with parents, teachers and therapists.

## ***Street Smart: Transition to Community Independence Program***

This program is designed to guide students with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities through daily activities and situations to facilitate independence in their community.

## Helpful/Useful Services

### ***Disability Services Commission***

An organisation which provides advocacy support and referral services. People with severe disabilities may also receive additional services including:

#### *Local Area Co-ordination*

Alternatives to employment and assistance with respite care.

[www.disability.wa.gov.au](http://www.disability.wa.gov.au)

#### *Post school options*

Ph: 9426 9273

Fax: 9226 2315

Email: [psop@dsc.wa.gov.au](mailto:psop@dsc.wa.gov.au)

[www.dsc.wa.gov.au](http://www.dsc.wa.gov.au)

### ***TAFE***

Provide Disability Services Officers offering assistance to people with disabilities or medical conditions who are working towards their qualification.

[www.tafe.wa.edu.au](http://www.tafe.wa.edu.au)

### ***Job Access***

Assistance and workplace solutions for the employment of people with disability.

[www.jobaccess.gov.au](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au)

Ph: 1800 464 800

### ***Workability***

A specialist employment agency to assist people with intellectual, physical, sensory, neurological and/or psychiatric disabilities to get and keep jobs.

[www.workability.org.au](http://www.workability.org.au)