Back to School
Part 1: Strategies to Prepare for School Routines

Kristin Gunby, Behaviour Analyst, M.S., BCBA
Bethany Brewin, Occupational Therapist, M.Sc.O.T



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Statements

Conflict of Interest

- Disclosure of financial conflicts
- Disclosure of non-financial conflicts

Language

- Person-first (e.g., person with autism)
- Identity-first (e.g., autistic person)

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Disclaimers

General Disclaimer	• Opinions are of the presenters • Make informed decisions
Professional Disclaimer	• Specific questions • Additional Resources
Medical Disclaimer	• Medical clearance as first step • Additional factors

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Learning Objectives

- Identify **routines** you can implement at home to help students of any age make a smooth transition to school
- Learn how to use some creativity and planning to practice school-related **skills** and activities



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Agenda

1. **Outline a framework for teaching skills**
   - Deciding what to teach, how to teach it

2. **Outline routines and skills you can focus on at home**
   - Morning and bedtime routines, dressing, mealtime routines, fine motor skills, outdoor play skills, attending skills, organization and planning skills, calming skills, emotional regulation skills

3. **Provide resources for social opportunities**

How Do We Start?

1. **Decide what to teach**
   (Target Skill)
2. **Break the skill down**
   (Task Analysis)
3. **Help as needed**
   (Prompt)
4. **Acknowledge effort**
   (Positive reinforcement)
5. **Measure progress**
   (Data)



Putting on pants

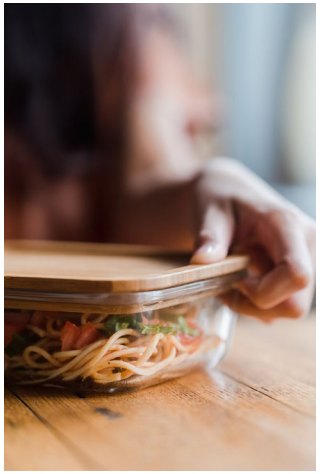
1. Pick up and hold pants by waistband
2. Sit on chair, bed, or floor
3. Insert right leg into right hole of pants
4. Slide leg through to bottom of pants
5. Insert left leg into right hole of pants
6. Slide leg through to bottom of pants
7. Pull pants up to waist
8. Straighten pants
9. Close zipper or buttons
10. Stand up



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Decide What To Teach

Target skills are what we hope to achieve when we use strategies.



Zainab will **open the container lid**, with her hands, by lifting the seal at one corner then lifting the other three corners.



Teddy will **brush his teeth** (completing all steps in task analysis).

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Break It Down

Task analysis – break skills down into smaller more manageable components





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Break It Down

Task analysis – break skills down into smaller more manageable components





Putting on track pants

1. Pick up and hold pants by waistband
2. Sit on chair, floor, or bed
3. Insert right leg into right hole of pants
4. Slide leg through to bottom of pants
5. Insert left leg into left hole of pants
6. Slide leg through to bottom of pants
7. Stand up
8. Pull pants up to waist

Brushing teeth

1. Get toothbrush
2. Open toothpaste lid
3. Squeeze toothpaste onto the toothbrush
4. Close toothpaste lid
5. Turn on tap and wet toothbrush
6. Turn off tap
7. Put toothbrush in mouth
8. Brush teeth (may be broken down further)
9. Take toothbrush out of mouth
10. Spit into sink
11. Turn on tap
12. Rinse toothbrush
13. Turn off tap
14. Put toothbrush and toothpaste away

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Help As Needed

Prompts – assistance or cues to help your child demonstrate a skill

For example,

- Gestural
- Model
- Physical (different levels)



LEAST to MOST

Or MOST to LEAST

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Acknowledging Efforts

Use positive reinforcement to acknowledge your child's effort

- Identify your child's unique preferences

- Deliver access following effort toward the target skill



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Break It Down

Chaining – Linking behaviours together to perform a skill

Putting on track pants

1. Pick up and hold pants by waistband
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Total Task

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Break It Down

Chaining – Linking behaviours together to perform a skill

Putting on track pants

1. Pick up and hold pants by waistband
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Forward

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Break It Down

Chaining – Linking behaviours together to perform a skill

Putting on track pants

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8. Pull pants up to waist

Backward

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Measuring Progress

Data show us whether something is working or not.

Data help us know when its time to move on and when its time to add more support



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Measuring Progress

Packing a backpack – Load all contents into backpack and close backpack **Positive Reinforcement:** Play 2 mins of “tag” when completed steps 1-5 independently Verbally acknowledge attempts if prompts are required					
Prompting 1. Independent 2. Model Prompt (show how to do step) 3. Gesture (point) 4. Partial physical (gentle guide at elbow) 5. Full Physical (hand over hand)	1	2	3	4	5
1. Unzip backpack and leave open					
2. Take lunch bag from the counter and put in backpack					
3. Take water bottle from the counter and put in backpack					
4. Take Agenda/communication book from the counter and place in backpack					
5. Zip up backpack					

Measuring Progress

Packing a backpack – Load all contents into backpack and close backpack **Positive Reinforcement:** Play 2 mins of "tag" when completed steps 1-5 independently Verbally acknowledge attempts if prompts are required					
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5. Zip up backpack			✓		

Putting It All Together



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Putting It All Together

"Pack your backpack"



Break skills down

1. Unzip backpack and leave open
2. Take lunch bag from the counter and put in backpack
3. Take water bottle from the counter and put in backpack
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5. Zip up backpack

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Putting It All Together

"Pack your backpack"

Prompt as needed

-Gestural
-Model
-Physical (different levels)



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Putting It All Together

"Pack your backpack"

Prompt as needed

Acknowledge efforts with positive reinforcement



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Putting It All Together

"Pack your backpack"

Prompt as needed

Acknowledge efforts with positive reinforcement

Practice, practice, practice





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Generalization



Demonstrate a skill:

With various people

In various settings

With various materials

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Morning Routines

Create a morning schedule

- Checklist
- Visual schedule
- Photograph
- Apps



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Morning Routine Example

-Make a task analysis of your morning routine

-Display it in a way your child understands (written, pictures)

-Help your child through it (prompts)

-Acknowledge efforts with positive reinforcement

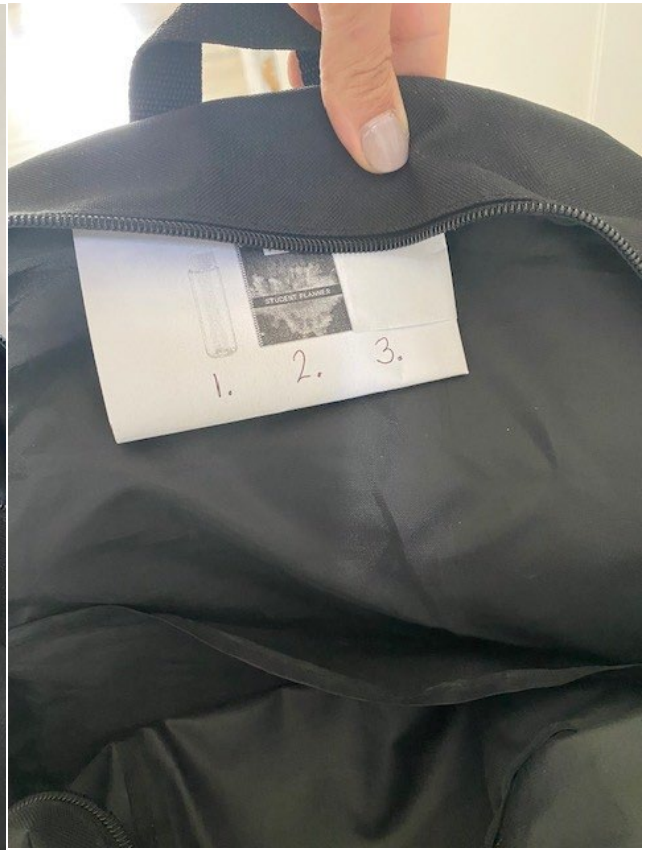
-Measure progress



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Morning Routine Example







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Attending Skills

Reinforce attending

-Responding to name

-Responding to other cues (e.g., "look", pointing)

-Limit distractions at first



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Dressing Skills

- Select a few favourite outfits:
  - Comfortable
  - Easy to put on/take off
- Be mindful of sensory sensitivities
- Lay out outfits the night before or create a routine or schedule if preferred.
- Practice:
  - Dolls/stuffed animals
  - Dress-up clothes/costumes



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Dressing Example

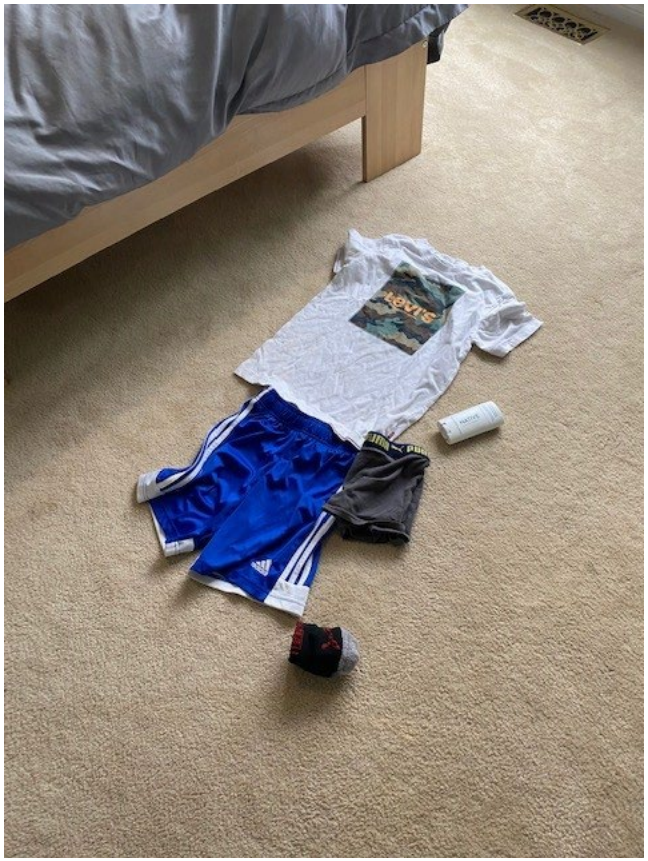




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Dressing Example





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Mealtime Skills

Type and variety of food:

Select a few favourite lunch or snack options:

- Easy/preferred
- Challenge/non-preferred

Hungry vs. full:

Time mealtime/snack to correspond to school schedule

Opening containers:

Serve lunch/snack in school lunchbox or containers



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Mealtime Examples







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Fine Motor Skills

Build hand strength and fine motor skills through play:

- Play dough/clay
- Beads/lacing
- Tongs/tweezers
- Colouring, dot-to-dot, mazes, sidewalk chalk

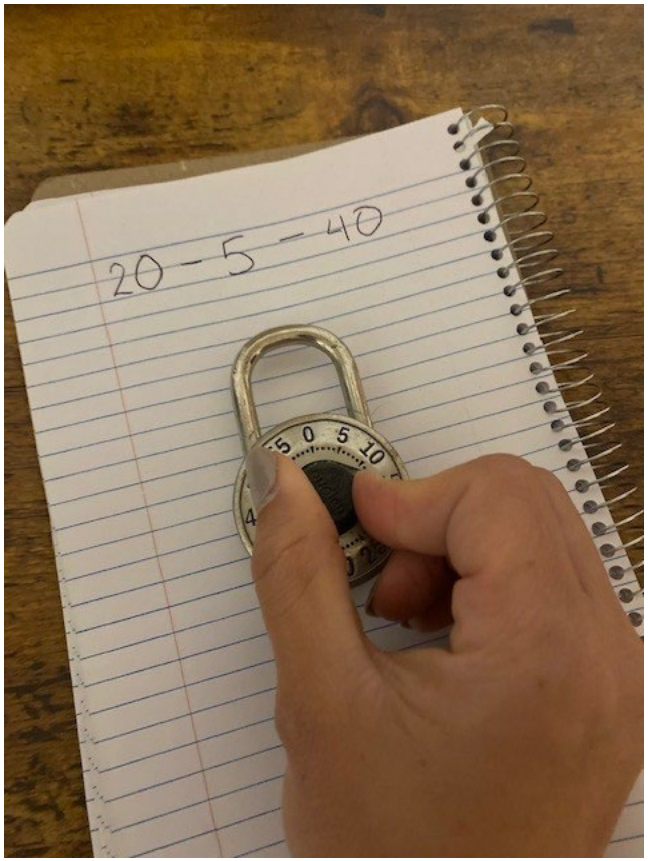


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Fine Motor Example

Other fine motor examples at school:

- Combination lock
- Food containers
- Managing school supplies: binders, paperclips, staples, pencil case/box.



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Outdoor Play Skills

- Visit the school park/playground
- Explore together:
  - Follow the leader
  - Scavenger hunt

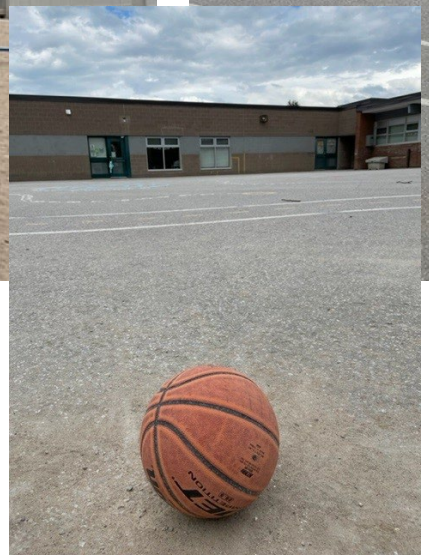


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Outdoor Play Environment Examples







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Social Opportunities

- Connecting with other families
- Offering structure and ways to connect through topics of interest
- Clubs and extra-curricular activities



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Social Opportunities

- Extra curricular activities
- School board offerings
- Autism Ontario
  - CommunityConnect



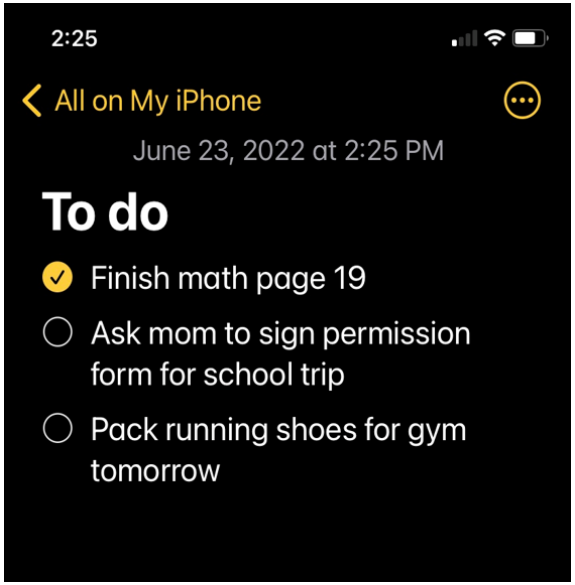
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Organization and Planning Skills

School and Home:

- Communication: promoting independence/autonomy
- Transferring information from home to school and vice versa
  - E.g. Tracking homework and assignments





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Emotional Skills and Strategies

- Talking about emotions
- Identifying feelings
  - Books
  - Pictures
  - Television/media
- Sharing feelings
  - Journaling
  - Art
  - Digital media



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Calming Skills

"Traditional" calming strategies



Child-specific/sensory strategies



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Sleep and Bedtime Routines

- Limit electronics before bed
- Encourage calming activities (reading, music, meditation)
- Consistent bedtime and wake-up time



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Let's Have Fun!

Plan for a balance of rest and "fun" as you ease into the school routine.

Can you incorporate any of these new skills or routines into a fun family outing?



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Questions?

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Thank You for Attending

> “No family or person on the spectrum in Ontario should ever feel alone, experience autism as a barrier to inclusion, or be without meaningful resources and opportunities.”

MARG SPOELSTRA
Executive Director, Autism Ontario

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Contact Us

sme@autismontario.com

Phone: 416-246-9592

Toll Free: 1-800-472-7789

www.autismontario.com

@autismontarioprovincial

linkedin.com/company/autism-ontario

@autismontario

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