



# AUTISM ACADEMY

## for Education & Development



## AUTISM NEWS

### January 2023 Edition



### New Year, New Experiences

January is often a time to try new things and make changes in your life. While making a change can seem like a simple task for some, others find it very challenging. Changes in familiar activities, places, or people can be stressful for autistic children and teenagers. Planning and preparing children for expected and unexpected changes to routines can help. Read on for some ideas on how to guide your child through life's changes.

### Get Everyone Involved

Get your child's input on where they are ready to start. Show them a list of the changes you plan to make and let them make choices. For new routines, you and your child can create their new schedule together. For new activities or foods, give them 2-3 options and pick the one they are most interested in starting with. The more involved your child can be in the planning process, the more likely it is that they will accept this change. They may even start looking forward to it!

### Preparation is Key

Any time you expect to make a change, remember that planning and preparation are the keys to success. Talk about upcoming changes frequently. It's important for your child to know what is changing and what they can expect to happen. Social stories can be a quick and easy way to discuss changes with your child and set your expectations. A good social story will let your child know what's going to happen in terms they can understand. For example, you can make a social story about going to the doctor. You could use pictures, words or both to describe leaving the house, arriving at the doctor's, having blood pressure taken and so on. Ending the story on a positive note is a good idea – for example, 'When the appointment is finished, I get to play at the park'. By letting your child know what to expect, you cut down on surprises and reassure your child that it'll be a positive experience. There are lots of pre-made social stories on the internet or you can write your own.

### Want to Learn More?

There are lots of resources out there designed to help you help your child through changes. Take a look at some of the links below:

#### Changing Routines: Autistic Children and Teens by Raising Children Australia

[https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/behaviour/understanding-behaviour/changing-routines-asd#:~:text=If%20your%20child%20finds%20it%20hard%20to%20switch%20between%20activities,know%20your%20child%20will%20enjoy\\_](https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/behaviour/understanding-behaviour/changing-routines-asd#:~:text=If%20your%20child%20finds%20it%20hard%20to%20switch%20between%20activities,know%20your%20child%20will%20enjoy_)

#### Five Tips for Introducing New Foods to Your Child With Autism by Applied Behavior Analysis Programs

<https://www.appliedbehavioranalysisprograms.com/lists/five-tips-for-introducing-new-foods-to-your-child-with-autism/>

#### Improving Interest in Toys and Games by The Marcus Autism Center

<https://www.marcus.org/autism-resources/autism-tips-and-resources/improving-interest-in-toys-and-games>

#### Helping a Child with Autism Try New Things by NY Metro Parents

[https://www.nymetroparents.com/article/child-with-autism-adhd-try-new-things\\_appliedbehavioranalysisprograms.com/lists/five-tips-for-introducing-new-foods-to-your-child-with-autism/](https://www.nymetroparents.com/article/child-with-autism-adhd-try-new-things_appliedbehavioranalysisprograms.com/lists/five-tips-for-introducing-new-foods-to-your-child-with-autism/)



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### Try Starting Small

Take the time to choose 1 or 2 changes when you are getting started. This will allow you to introduce the new while also allowing your child to take comfort in the things that are staying the same. Remember, the bigger the change, the more stressful it can be. Look over your goals for the year and start with the one you and your family think is most important.

Starting small also means introducing things a little at a time. Want your child to try a new food? Allow them to smell and touch the new foods at first. After that, start with just a single bite. Depending on how much they like it, you can build up to eating an entire serving. For new hobbies, start with a short time doing the activity before allowing your child to return to something they already know. Use a timer so that they can see how long is left.

### Make It Fun & Rewarding

Everyone wants to be recognized when they do something hard. People with autism are no different. Offer your child rewards and praise for every success. Did they actually take that bite of new food? Reward them with a familiar favorite. Did they go somewhere new? Stop off at a favorite spot on your way home. It's important that your child learns that you see their success and are just as excited about it as they might be.

### Progress Over Perfection

Everything new experiences a setback eventually. Be prepared for how you will respond to slip-ups and guide your child through them. Most people are their own worst critic, but children with autism can be especially hard on themselves. Modeling how you can bounce back and move on is a useful tool to teach your child how to do the same. Remember that lasting change always takes time!

### Transition Corner

Autism Academy and A+ Academy welcomes students to continue learning with us after they complete 12th grade. We call the program for our 12+ students the BRIDGE program. This program is designed to teach students valuable life skills and prepare them to enter the work force. Need more information? East and West Valley families are invited to join an informational session about what this program has to offer. Session 1 will be on Tuesday, January 24th at 6:00pm. Session 2 will be on Wednesday, January 25th at 12:00pm. Both sessions will be held using Zoom. A link was sent to Valley high school families via email and ParentSquare. If you are in Tucson, please reach to your campus director for more information on what their BRIDGE families can expect at the Tucson campus next school year.

### Craft Idea!

<https://www.ambitiouskitchen.com/healthy-white-chicken-chili/>



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## Parent Partnership Program

Need more information? You can email P3 for your campus. We would love to see you there!

Tucson - p3tucson@aaed.org

West Valley - p3westvalleyaaed@gmail.com

Gilbert - p3.gilbertcampus@gmail.com

Tempe - p3tempe@aaed.org

## January Trivia

Trivia Time!

A small gift will be sent to the first 10 families to send the correct answer to [autismnews@aaed.org](mailto:autismnews@aaed.org).

January Question: Re-enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year has started. When is the deadline to re-enroll your student at AAED?

Thank you to everyone who responded to the December trivia question!

December Answer: An Occupational Therapist works with students on fine motor skills and provides sensory support.



## Upcoming Events - Valley & Online

February 20th, No School

February 24th, 5:30pm-7:30pm - Tempe Campus Only Friendship Dance

## Upcoming Events - Tucson

February 23rd - 24th - No School

