

# Transitioning into Kindergarten

By

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Information is based on presentations given by Michelle Self at the National Williams Syndrome Conferences in 2006, 2008, and 2010 on “Transitioning into Kindergarten.”

## 1. Gather Information on Your Child

- a. Does your child have an alternate learning style? – musically, verbally, visually – Many of the children with WS learn better through music or verbally and not visually. Does your child look away when you are looking at picture books?
- b. Does your child have special interests?
- c. How do you work with your child at home?
- d. How does your child react to unexpected situations?
- e. Is your child able to work independently?
- f. How much prompting does your child need, if any?
- g. How does your child react to crowds and commotion?
- h. Is your child easily distracted? By what?
- i. How do you keep your child on task?
- j. Does your child display any special behaviors when he or she is agitated?
- k. What does your child enjoy and how do you have fun together?

## 2. Create a Student Profile

- a. One page of information to give to the teachers, therapists, anyone you feel needs to understand your child
- b. Complete as many of the questions above that you think help describe your child
- c. Describe your child **and** family
- d. Include activities and successes
- e. Keep it simple but complete – one page front and back at the most

## 3. Know your Rights

- a. IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
  - i. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – the regular classroom with an aide is less restrictive than a resource room
  - ii. Individual Education Plan – remember INDIVIDUAL – they shouldn’t say “we don’t do that” or “we don’t have a program for that”
  - iii. Great website and training - [www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)
- b. State laws – your state laws can’t provide less of an education than IDEA
- c. State education standards

- 4. Before the INDIVIDUAL Education Plan Meeting**
  - a. Read the evaluation – MFE, ETR (whatever it is called) – determine if the information truly represents your child
  - b. Determine what YOU want for your child
    - i. What type of placement?
    - ii. What type of services?
    - iii. Request a draft of the IEP 5 days in advance
      1. Gives you a chance to review the information
      2. Lets a friend or advocate review areas of concern
      3. Helps you understand where there may be issues
  
- 5. Kindergarten Placement – Remember – your child is on an INDIVIDUAL Education Plan – Lots of options**
  - a. Regular classroom
  - b. Regular classroom with an aide
  - c. Resource room mainstreaming with an aide
  - d. Resource room
  - e. Special education class room
  - f. ½ day regular classroom and ½ day resource room
  - g. Other possibilities???
  
- 6. Observe and Question**
  - a. How many children are in therapies or pull out with your child?
  - b. What is your child missing in the classroom if they leave for intervention services?
  - c. Is your child accessing the curriculum in the placement you choose?
  
- 7. Possible Accommodations**
  - a. Extra time to complete assignments
  - b. Assistance
  - c. Foot stool
  - d. Scribe
  - e. Slant board
  - f. Special seating
  - g. Different paper
  - h. Aide or paraprofessional
  - i. Additional ideas – [www.fape.org](http://www.fape.org)
  
- 8. Possible Modifications**
  - a. Alternative assignments
  - b. Shorter assignments

**9. How do I ask for an Aide or Paraprofessional? – DON'T**

- a. Determine WHO is going to provide the support – You never want to ask directly – to easy to say NO
- b. If you feel your child needs the support of a person, then ask whichever pertains –
  - i. Who will escort my child to the bathroom for frequent bathroom breaks?
  - ii. Who will help scribe since my child can't write or has difficulty?
  - iii. Who will make sure that my child does not go with a stranger?
  - iv. Who will help my child stay on task during the class period?
  - v. Who will watch my child during recess to make sure that they
    1. stay on the playground
    2. aren't bullied
    3. get to the restroom...

**10. Create a Win-Win Situation**

- a. Communication – work with the teachers
  - i. Email
  - ii. Informal meetings before and/or after school
  - iii. Home communication notebook
  - iv. Daily communication form
  - v. Phone calls
- b. Find an ally – a teacher, librarian, secretary, principal...
- c. 1<sup>st</sup> week of school – find something positive to tell the teacher – create positives

**11. Kindergarten should be fun!!! Make sure your child is learning but still having fun!**

**Please contact me with any specific questions or concerns.**

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**Advocate and also the Mom of a child with Williams Syndrome**