

Terrific Transitions

First Steps for Supporting New Students in Infant Classrooms!

If your student is finding it difficult to settle in, to a new school environment they might be displaying behaviours of concern. There are many reasons why this may be happening, and usually your student will be communicating many different things to you. So, the first thing we need to do is to ensure that your student has a fully functioning communication system; (FCT) that they can communicate their needs and wants in a pro-social way. For more information on FCT, [check out our article here](#) !! It is also helpful to consider your student's behaviours of concern within four distinct contexts.

What are they trying telling us ?

| What am I trying to tell you!! | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Attention | <i>I want you to talk to me, look at me, help me, chase me, have fun with me.</i> |
| Relief/Escape | <i>I am overwhelmed, I don't understand, you are talking too much to me, I don't know what's going on</i> |
| Something/Tangible | <i>I want something, but I don't know the words, or I have no way of letting you know what that is.</i> |
| Sensory | <i>I need a way to regulate. I need some thing that helps me to calm down</i> |

The best place to start is to develop strategies across all four contexts that will proactively support your student in the learning environment. See below for more information !

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Mostly, students will be trying to communicate messages in all four contexts.

The following proactive strategies/interventions should support students.

[Click here to check out our article on *Simple Classroom Strategies* for further descriptions of the strategies below](#)

Avoidance/Escape from non-preferred activities

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Reduce Verbal Demands | When talking to your student, keep your verbal instruction to 2/3 words. |
| Start with high interest activities | Identify a wide range of high interest/low demand activities that your student likes to do, introduce more difficult activities as time goes on. |
| Offer Choice | Use a choice board to give students the opportunity to request preferred activities and the ability to decide what order they complete the activities in |
| Use a First-Then Board | If you do this thing first, then you will receive the thing that you want |
| Regular Sensory Breaks | Regular sensory breaks help students regulate to a level where they can better engage and participate in their learning. (Check out our sensory article here) |
| Behaviour Momentum | Present easier requests before introducing a more difficult request |

Attention (From Adults or Peers)

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|---------------------------------|--|
| Lots of Praise | Give lots of praise (descriptive) and attention to your student throughout the day |
| Teach "how to access attention" | Teach and reinforce an appropriate behaviour to request adult attention. Also teach play skills if required, to support students to seek peer attention. |
| Reward | Introduce a visual reward system (using lots of praise when delivering tokens) |
| Use a First-Then Board | Use as a visual cue if adult attention is going to be occupied. Use a preferred activity to keep student busy while attention is otherwise engaged |

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Accessing preferred items

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Reward | Introduce a visual reward system to ensure student has opportunities to engage with preferred items |
| Communication | Ensure your student has an effective way to communicate wants & needs |
| Use a Choice Board | Use a choice board to give students the opportunity to request preferred activities |
| Use a First-Then Board | If you do this thing first, then you will receive the thing that you want |

Sensory

[Click here to check out our blog on School Based Sensory Strategies for more information on strategies below.](#)

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Regular Sensory Breaks | Helps students regulate to a level where they can better engage and participate in their learning |
| Enriched Environment | Fill the environment with interesting and stimulating activities for your student |

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Toddler-Talk has developed an assessment and monitoring tool ; the my Toddler-Talk passport for early learners measuring milestone acquisition across seven important building blocks in the early milestone stages. There is also a corresponding Activity Box with over 245 activities, with corresponding activities to support milestone acquisition across milestone stages and building blocks.

A First Steps Learning Plan

Step 1. Make sure that your student has an effective way/system to communicate their wants and needs?

Step 2. You can use the [myToddler-Talk passport](#) to generate SMART goals for the building blocks below. (Stages 6-7 may be relevant in certain areas)

- Attention
- Imitation
- Social Skills
- Play Skills
- Receptive Language
- Expressive Language
- Joint Attention

Step 3.

- [Go to the Toddler Talk Activity Box for fun and engaging activities to support learning.](#)

Please do not enter your student's details to access the Toddler Talk passport content. You can develop a persona to access passport content.

The Tantrum Toolkit :

Toddler Talk has also developed a Tantrum Toolkit with tips, strategies and downloadable resources to help you to promote positive behaviour in the early learning environment.

Check out on the links below:

[Relevant Articles](#)

[Top Ten Tips](#)

[Downloadable Resources](#)