THRIVE EMERGE

Back-to-School Transition Worksheet

Purpose: To help parents of neurodivergent teens (ADHD, autism, or both) prepare their child for the new school year with practical, step-by-step supports.

Step 1: Reset the Routine

- Gradually adjust bedtime and wake-up time to align with the school schedule (start 2–3 weeks before school begins).
- Practice morning routines (dressing, hygiene, breakfast, packing bag) with **visual checklists**.
- Rehearse the commute or bus ride to reduce first-day anxiety.

Step 2: Organize the Environment

- Set up a **homework zone** with clear boundaries: quiet, uncluttered, predictable.
- Create a **launch pad** near the door for backpack, shoes, and supplies.
- Use color-coding, bins, or digital tools to support organization.

Step 3: Build Emotional Readiness

- Talk openly about worries and excitement for the year ahead.
- Role-play social scenarios (meeting a teacher, joining a group, asking for help).
- Schedule stress-relief activities (walks, exercise, art, downtime).

Step 4: Strengthen Executive Function Skills

- Practice small tasks with deadlines (packing lunch, finishing a chore by a timer).
- Teach prioritization with visual aids (to-do list with “must do” vs. “can wait”).
- Introduce planners, digital reminders, or visual schedules.

Step 5: Connect with the School

- Share your child’s needs with teachers, counselors, or IEP/504 team before school starts.
- Visit the school building/classroom if possible, meet staff, and walk the schedule.
- Prepare a short “student profile” (strengths, triggers, best supports) to give teachers.

Step 6: Practice Self-Advocacy

- Encourage your teen to practice asking for help in simple ways.
- Brainstorm phrases they can use if overwhelmed (“Can I take a short break?”).
- Reinforce their strengths and celebrate independence in small steps.

Parent Action: Choose 2–3 strategies from each step that fit your child’s needs and write them down in a weekly prep plan.