

Research has shown that focusing on key indicators of well-being can lead to the development of positive attitudes and attributes, leading to greater resilience and improved outcomes in areas such as education, independence, confidence and life-chances. The PERMA approach (Seligman, 2012) prioritises psychological well-being and factors that contribute to this, rather than focusing on areas of difficulty. The model was developed for the general population, but it has the potential to be beneficial for autistic children and adults.

<p><b>Positive emotion</b></p>	<p>Providing activities and experiences that generate positive emotion such as joy, gratitude, hope, pride, compassion and love. Additionally, provide opportunities to reflect on these emotions, for example through a journal or photo book.</p> <p><b>In preparation for transition</b>, consider creating a memories of primary/first school journal, with drawings, photographs, or descriptions of memorable events or achievements, encouraging the pupil to label the positive emotion they were feeling, and recalling how it felt.</p>
<p><b>Engagement</b></p>	<p>Participating in ‘flow’ activities which are completely absorbing and do not allow individuals to consciously process negative thoughts. This is likely to involve pupils pursuing their areas of <b>special interest</b> and using their <b>strengths</b>. It would also include developing the practice of Mindfulness, being fully in the current moment whatever the activity.</p> <p><b>In preparation for transition</b> work with the pupil to identify and practice possible activities that generate the ‘flow’ feeling in them, and consider with them how to include this in their new routine for the next school. Including this information in the transition planning with the next school may enable them to facilitate this within the pupil’s day.</p>
<p><b>Relationships</b></p>	<p>Being intentional about spending time and developing relationships with significant others. Autistic children may not identify with their class or other group but may enjoy time spent with adults or peers, for example through a lunchtime club.</p> <p><b>In preparation for transition</b>, consider how to ‘end’ the important relationships with peers and staff in school. This may be through a celebration event, or for pupils who find this stressful, perhaps a good luck book of notes from significant people may be helpful. Beginning to develop relationships with staff and pupils at the next setting is an important aspect of transition planning, and ensuring that group and class settings are discussed with the receiving school to enable positive relationships to continue with peers where they have been established.</p>

<p><b>Meaning</b></p>	<p>Research shows that those with a purpose and a sense of value and worth, enjoy greater life satisfaction and may even live longer. How can autistic pupils use their creativity, passion and interests to make a positive contribution and be part of something bigger than themselves?</p> <p><b>In preparation for transition,</b> consider how the autistic pupil may positively contribute to whole class projects. For example, if there is a class performance / production, consider how the autistic pupil can meaningfully and comfortably participate. This may be through creating artwork to publicise the event, choreography, or creating some digital content to support it, or showcasing a particular talent.</p> <p>Help the pupil to identify opportunities at the receiving school to pursue their passions and interests, for example through lunch clubs, and extracurricular opportunities etc.</p>
<p><b>Achievement</b></p>	<p>A sense of pride that comes from working to reach goals and achieving competence and mastery. Set goals that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time related) and provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on past success and celebrate achievements appropriately and creatively.</p> <p><b>In preparation for transition,</b> reflect on achievements in this phase of education, both from in school and at home. Perhaps work collaboratively to create some personal targets for the next school. These may be short term, relating to the transition itself, or long term aspirations.</p>