

# Healthy Transitions: Transitioning from Elementary to Middle School

## *Healthy Transitions Pilot Sites*

The North Dakota Integrated Services (NDIS) project recruited six families of children and youth with special health care needs to be Healthy Transitions (HT) pilot families. NDIS staff consulted with HT families as they maneuvered through transition phases with their child and/or youth. These phases included transitioning from a pediatric care to adult care, elementary school to middle school, high school to postsecondary education, and adolescence to adulthood. Because these transitions can be stressful and difficult, the HT families generated a set of best practices, based on their experiences, for each phase to ensure successful transitions. The set of best practices for transitioning from elementary to middle school is shown below.



## ***Best Practices: Elementary to Middle School***

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**BEGIN BEFORE THE ACADEMIC YEAR:** Communicate with youth about their new schedules and daily activities to help them feel more comfortable with the transition. Meet with teachers and administrators to discuss individual needs, which will benefit everyone involved.

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- Introduce youth to new middle school environment
- Discuss routes to school and transportation options
- Practice locker combinations
- Review class schedule
- Speak with teachers and administrators about:
  - Supports
  - Accommodations
  - Other relevant matters

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**DISCUSS APPROPRIATE USE OF TECHNOLOGY:** Make sure youth understand school policy and technology etiquette for both inside and outside of the classroom.

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- Cell phones
- Social media
- Other devices

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**DISCUSS GOOD DECISION-MAKING:** Talk with youth about sensitive and uncomfortable situations to open the lines of communication, strengthen relationships, and equip youth with practical and essential knowledge.

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- Have an open line of communication
    - Peer pressure
    - Bullying
    - True friendships
    - Sexual relationships
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