Connections for Students Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is Connections for Students?

A: The Ministry of Education (EDU), and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) have developed Connections for Students (CFS) as a collaborative approach to improving transitions for school-aged children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) who are in the former Autism Intervention Program (AIP). This service is offered to support a child’s individualized needs across publicly funded school settings as their school situation changes (e.g., school attendance increases). The CFS model is centered on interdisciplinary, student-specific, school-based transition teams that are established before the child’s school situation changes. CFS support is time-limited and based on a 12-month transition timeframe that best meets the needs of students and their families. Transition teams will develop transition plans tailored to the specific support needs of individual students and provide support to the school team after the child’s transition.

Q: What is a transition team?

A: A transition team is a collaborative mechanism to facilitate a student’s transition as their school situation changes. The teams support the student to achieve a seamless transition to school according to their needs. To facilitate this goal, there will be a transfer of information about the student’s strengths and needs between the OAP service provider and the school, enabling both the teams and the transition plans to be tailored to the specific support needs of individual students.

Q: Who may be a member of a transition team?

A: The transition team will be interdisciplinary and include members who have an understanding of the individual student; as well as those professionals with complementary skills and expertise related to ASD and/or supporting students with ASD in a school environment.

Members may include:

- Parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Principal or designate to chair the team meetings
- Classroom Teacher(s), Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) and/or Educational Assistant (EA)
- School Support Program (SSP) ASD Consultant from Kinark Child and Family Services
- School board staff with applied behavioural analysis (ABA) expertise as required (Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, psychology services staff, Speech and Language Pathologists, intervention team members, autism team members, regional behaviour team members, Special Education Consultants, Student Services Coordinators)
- The OAP service provider
- The OAP Family Support Worker
- Other professionals providing services to the child
Q: **What is the role of the school-based transition team?**

A: The transition team is responsible for the following:

- The transition team will identify target behaviours that will be the focus of support to the child/youth as s/he prepares to begin or continue in school.
- The transition team will develop a transition plan; goals and expectations are embedded into the student’s individual education plan (IEP) where applicable.
- The transition team will address any specific needs to ensure school readiness (e.g., professional development opportunities, school consultation and/or resource development) and student readiness for entry to school.
- The transition team will ensure a monitoring mechanism is put in place, and measures of success are identified.
- The transition team will collect information through the monitoring mechanism. Specific measures will be used to inform effective transition plan implementation.

Q: **Why collect data and who is responsible for it?**

A: Data is collected through the transition period to monitor progress and to inform transition goals. At the transition team meetings it will be determined who will be responsible for collecting data. It may include a combination of school teams, parents/guardians and the ASD Consultant.

Q: **How often does the transition team meet?**

A: The transition team meets monthly (or as needed) to address any issues related to the transition.

Q: **Where is the Ministry document on CFS?**

## Overview of the Connections for Students (CFS) Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior to change in school situation</th>
<th>After change in school situation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• ASD Consultant contacts school board contact to indicate that a student will be transitioning into school.</td>
<td>• Monthly meetings (or as needed) of the transition team to review progress on the transition plan and goals.</td>
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<td>• Student Services Coordinator facilitates initial meeting to begin CFS process.</td>
<td>• Principal or designate to chair meetings including inviting parent(s) and other transition team members.</td>
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<td>• ASD Consultant arranges additional meetings (as required) and observations of student within the OAP behavioural services and/or school setting.</td>
<td>• School-based transition team members to implement transition plan with support of the ASD Consultant.</td>
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<td>• ASD Consultant gathers information regarding student’s strengths and needs to share with transition team.</td>
<td>• ASD Consultant to continue observations to monitor progress and assist with modifying transition goals as needed.</td>
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<td>• Transition team, with the support of the ASD Consultant, develops transition plan including transition goals.</td>
<td>• ASD Consultant may assist with any on-going professional development for school staff.</td>
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<td>• ASD Consultant may assist with any professional development needs for school staff prior to student’s increase in school hours.</td>
<td>• Once the CFS program nears completion, ASD Consultant fades support while the remaining members of the transition team continue to support as needed.</td>
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<td>• Parents/guardians may share any relevant documents related to transition (e.g., OAP Behaviour Plan, OAP Family Service Plan, psychological assessments).</td>
<td>• The OAP Family Support Worker updates the Family Service Plan to reflect post CFS needs and supports</td>
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