



SPRING TRANSITION GUIDE

2026



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Spring Transition Resources

The transition from spring into summer brings significant changes to daily routines, school schedules, and access to services. For children and youth with disabilities and special health care needs (CYSHCN), this period can be particularly complex. As the school year ends, many students age out of programs or shift to new services based on age or grade level, which can disrupt established supports, therapies, and relationships.

At the same time, families may experience additional transitions such as moving between neighborhoods or wards within Washington, DC, often influenced by housing and economic factors. These changes can impact access to schools, providers, and community-based resources, creating gaps in care or continuity.

Together, these overlapping transitions (academic, developmental, and environmental) can increase stress for both children and caregivers. This guide is designed to help families navigate these challenges by providing practical strategies, resources, and planning tools to support a smoother transition into the summer months. If you need additional support, reach out to us at AJE:

Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc.

 (202) 678-8060

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 www.aje-dc.org



THIS GUIDE PROVIDES:

- Simple routine strategies
- Free and accessible DC-based activities
- Summer Readiness Planning Tools
- Age-Specific Supports



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End of School Year and Summer Readiness

Early Childhood Resources

(Birth–5 yrs) 

Tips for Routines:

- Maintain consistent sleep and meal routines despite longer daylight
- Use visual schedules for changing daily activities (mirrors early learning guidance)
- Build outdoor play into daily routines
- Prepare children for new environments (parks, camps, travel)

Activities (Free + DC-Based):

- Library storytime www.dclibrary.org/attend-event
- Playground exploration at DPR www.dpr.dc.gov/playgrounds
- Sensory outdoor play (water tables, sand, nature walks)
- Smithsonian toddler-friendly exhibits www.si.edu/visit/museums

Accessibility Considerations:

- Visit parks during low-sensory hours (mornings)
- Use noise-reducing headphones for busy public spaces
- Choose structured, predictable activities

Key DC Resources:

- **Strong Start Early Intervention: (202) 727-3665**
- **Early Stages (DCPS): (202) 698-8037**
- **DC Public Library programs**



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End of School Year and Summer Readiness

Elementary School Resources

(6-10 yrs) 

Tips for Routines:

- Maintain morning and bedtime consistency
- Introduce weekly activity schedules
- Begin summer camp conversations early
- Build independence with small responsibilities

Activities (Free + DC-Based):

- Reading challenges at libraries www.dclibrary.org/discover-summer
- DPR sports & arts programs www.dpr.dc.gov/page/about-programs
- Spring journaling/drawing
- Museum scavenger hunts www.si.edu/mobile/adventurelab
- Nature observation at the Arboretum www.usna.usda.gov
- National Zoo visits www.nationalzoo.si.edu/visit

Accessibility Considerations:

- Break activities into short, manageable blocks
- Use visual timers and schedules
- Provide quiet reset breaks

Key DC Resources:

- DCPS Summer Programs: www.dcpsstrong.com/summer
- Children's National Pediatric Services: (202) 476-5000
- Mary's Center Pediatric Services: (844) 796-2797
- Community of Hope Pediatric Services: (202) 540-9857



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End of School Year and Summer Readiness

Middle School Resources

(11–13 yrs)



Tips for Routines:

- Maintain daily emotional check-ins
- Balance screen time with physical activity
- Introduce time management tools
- Begin summer planning (camps, programs, travel)

Activities (Free + DC-Based):

- Teen Library Programs www.dclibrary.org/discover-summer-teens
- DPR Teen Programming www.dpr.dc.gov/page/teens-programs
- Outdoor Movie Night www.wharfdc.com/sunsetcinema
- Kid Friendly Community Events www.kidfriendlydc.com
- Volunteer opportunities (community clean-ups, events)
- Smithsonian Kid and Teen Activities www.si.edu/kids

Accessibility Considerations:

- Encourage peer buddy systems
- Use structured but flexible schedules
- Provide clear expectations for transitions

Key DC Resources:

- DCPS Summer Programs: www.dcpsstrong.com/summer
- DCPS Special Education: (202) 442-5400
- DC Access HelpLine: 1-888-793-4357



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End of School Year and Summer Readiness

High School Resources

(14–18 yrs) 

Tips for Routines:

- Establish weekly mental health check-ins
- Encourage self-management of schedules and responsibilities
- Plan structured summer goals (jobs, internships, enrichment)

Activities (Free + DC-Based):

- Teen Library Programs www.dclibrary.org/discover-summer-teens
- DPR Teen Programming www.dpr.dc.gov/page/teens-programs
- Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program
www.summerjobs.dc.gov/page/mbsyep
- Volunteer opportunities (community clean-ups, events)
- College Readiness Program www.mindsmatterdc.org

Accessibility Considerations:

- Connect to inclusive workforce programs
- Support self-advocacy development
- Provide transition coaching support

Key DC Resources:

- **DCPS Youth Transition Support:** www.dcps.dc.gov/fytp
- **Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)**
Youth in Transition Program: (202) 730-1700
- **DC Access HelpLine: 1-888-793-4357**



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End of School Year and Summer Readiness

Post-Secondary Transition (18-26 yrs)

Tips for Routines:

- Maintain independent scheduling systems
- Plan for healthcare transitions and medication refills
- Review insurance and eligibility changes
- Strengthen independent living skills

Activities (Free + DC-Based):

- Teen Library Programs www.dclibrary.org/discover-summer-teens
- DPR Teen Programming www.dpr.dc.gov/page/teens-programs
- Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program
www.summerjobs.dc.gov/page/mbsyep
- Volunteer opportunities (community clean-ups, events)
- College Readiness www.si.edu/kids

Accessibility Considerations:

- Connect to inclusive workforce programs
- Support self-advocacy development
- Provide transition coaching support

Key DC Resources:

- **Unity Health Care Adult Services: (202) 469-4699**
- **Whitman Walker Health: (202) 745.7000**
- **Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)
Youth in Transition Program: (202) 730-1700**
- **DC Access HelpLine: 1-888-793-4357**



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Spring-to-Summer Transition Checklist

Plan Ahead:

- Register for summer camps as early as possible
- Confirm childcare plans
- Create a weekly summer schedule

Be Prepared:

- Gather supplies (camp gear, sunscreen, water bottles)
- Practice new routines before school ends
- Visit new locations in advance

Wellness Support:

- Talk through schedule changes
- Set expectations and goals
- Normalize transition-related stress

Emergency and General Resources:

- **DC Access HelpLine (24/7 Mental Health):**
1-888-793-4357
- **Mobile Crisis Team: (202) 673-6300**
- **Children's National ER: (202) 476-5000**
- **Domestic Violence Hotline: (202) 737-2255**
- **Child & Family Services (CFSA): (202) 671-7233**
- **Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222**

