**Anecdote – Morning Transition for P – Prep/Year 1, C~~xxxxxx~~ State School, 2017**

When the students arrive in the morning, they often play in the classroom before the bell goes. Then after morning greetings with the teacher on the carpet, they begin class with the Soundwaves phonics chant every morning, singing along with a video played on the Starboard to start their daily literacy session.

One Prep student however, named P, with low-functioning ASD, has a separate morning transition after arrival & play. For unknown reasons, he reacts quite violently and dangerously to the Soundwaves video – he yells loudly, runs around swinging his arms wide, and physically hits out at the other students. To avoid this, P is withdrawn from the classroom by the teacher aide while the video is on, and then comes back later, usually in a calm mood, ready to start his day with his schoolmates. Until now, I have usually stayed with the main class during this time, so have never seen his transition.

Today however, the Teacher Aide was absent, and there was no-one to fill in for her until later. Guess who got asked to fill in for P’s morning transition?

The teacher was getting concerned and impatient, as she needed to start her class, and with 26 early-years students waiting as patiently as they could, she couldn’t keep them waiting long, nor let them miss out on their learning. I was asked to take P next door, and when I asked what I should do there, the reply was along the lines of “Oh, you’ll figure out something, he just can’t be here!”

So, off we went to the resource room next door, with P’s mother accompanying us. She was trying to leave to go shopping, but realising the change in his routine with no teacher aide, P was getting upset and wanting to leave with his mum. So, 2 possible dilemmas to now deal with.

I asked P’s mother what they usually did during the transition, but she had never stayed for it before, and had no idea. P likewise, with limited verbal ability, couldn’t fill me in either. So, I had to make it up as we went along.

The first obvious step was physical removal from the potential risk, so we all walked to the nearby Administration office to check for messages (& give myself a moment to think of strategies), and then back again. Next, to ease P’s attention away from his mum so she could leave, we started to focus on our day ahead, trying to find ways to engage P and create a positive diversion. I talked to P about what class activities we would be doing that day, that he would be joining in with. We also talked about what individual tasks P had lined up, and also any things P would like to do. P has a fascination with clocks, so we found some spare paper & pencils, and drew up a makeshift timetable with visual cues of clocks and class activities, creating a graphic organiser that was personally relevant to P.

By this time, P was focussed on his fun activities for the day, and his mum was able to leave without any fuss. P and I returned to his class, who had completed their chant by now, and we were able to show his teacher his timetable all drawn up. As he was settled from his individualised activity, and had a purposeful focus for his day, he was now happy to join his classmates at their desks for more literacy activities, proudly showing off his personalised timetable.

My mentor was pleased with the result, and even more so with the lack of disruption. Overall, it was an interesting opportunity to think on my feet, and having seen P’s disruptive and aggressive behaviour before, I was thankful that it had a positive ending.