

USING A VISUAL SCHEDULE AS PART OF THE TRANSITION ROUTINE

Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other developmental disabilities often have difficulties with sequential processing (i.e., learning the order of events). These difficulties may result in individuals becoming anxious or overwhelmed in certain situations, which in turn may lead to problem behaviors. In contrast, these individuals often have strengths in visual processing. As a result of this strength, the use of visual schedules is a natural way to help these individuals to better understand expectations, thus reducing the likelihood of negative behaviors.



What is a visual schedule?

A visual schedule is simply a line of pictures, objects, or words that represent each major transition during the day for each individual student. The format of the schedule will depend on an individual student's skills (motor, vision, reading, etc.), developmental level and distractibility.



What materials do I need?

- A list of every activity that occurs during the day
- Laminated pictures/symbols of each activity with velcro on the back
- Laminated vertical strip of tag board with velcro from top to bottom
- A pocket, can, or basket for tagging

How to I use a visual schedule?

Before beginning:

- The daily visual schedules should stay in a consistent place on the wall, counter, desk, etc. and be clearly marked with the students' names and photographs.
- Place a "tag" in each area of the classroom and school to correspond to the picture/symbols for each activity.

How to:

1. At the beginning of each day, arrange the pictures/symbols for each activity as they occur throughout the day.
2. Cue the student by saying "check schedule" and handing him a consistent transition picture/symbol (such as the check schedule symbol) or object (such as a domino).
3. The student should go to his visual schedule, deposit the transition picture/symbol or object, remove the first picture/symbol and take it to the corresponding area. Prompt from behind as needed.
4. The student should "tag" or deposit the picture/symbol at a designated spot (can, basket, or envelope) in the area. Again, prompt from behind as needed.
5. When the student completes the activity, have him "check schedule" again, go back to the schedule strip, deposit the transition picture/symbol or object, pull the next picture on the schedule, then go to the corresponding area of the classroom/school and "tag."
6. Continue this process throughout the day, making sure that in each area there is a developmentally appropriate activity to keep the student engaged.