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When do we use visuals in our own lives?

- Road signs
- Shopping aisles
- Toilet
- Instructions on packages
- DIY flat packs
- Food packaging
- Laundry
- Puzzle

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Why use visual supports?



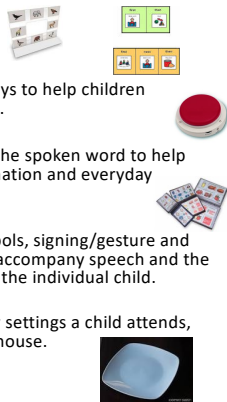
- To support understanding of spoken instructions – easier for children with autism to process visual information
- The spoken word is only heard for a brief moment whereas visual information is permanent giving the child more processing time.
- Visual supports allow children to understand their environment and follow the daily routine.
- The spoken word can only be identified by listening, whereas visual information can be seen and touched.
- The spoken word is abstract (i.e. does not have a direct link to the object) whereas visual supports are often representative of the object/concept.
- To reduce the child's frustration and anxiety.



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What are visual supports?

- There are various visually-based ways to help children understand the world around them.
- Visuals can be used to accompany the spoken word to help the child understand spoken information and everyday routines.
- Objects, photographs, picture symbols, signing/gesture and written words can all be helpful to accompany speech and the choice will depend on the needs of the individual child.
- Visual supports can be used in any settings a child attends, e.g. nursery, home, Grandparents' house.



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Different types of visual support?

- Objects of reference
- Pictures and symbols
- Emotion cards
- Verb prompt cards
- Coloured boxes
- Visual timetables
- PECS
- Choice boards
- I want prompt strip
- First and then boards
- Symbols to prompt
- Symbols to sign
- Signing and gesture
- Verb prompt cards
- Now-next / first-then
- Communication books
- AAC-low / high tech
- Emotional regulation strip



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Be clear what using the visual for

- Support the child to express themselves
OR
- Support the adult to give information to the child and for the child to understand it
OR
- Both

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What do they need to be?

- Portable
- Durable
- Easy to find
- Personalised
- Consistent

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Objects of reference?



What is it?

An object of reference is an object/item or part of an object/item e.g. blanket, cup, that can be given or used to represent a desired action e.g. Cup may be used to indicate 'drink' and a blanket to represent 'bed'.

What is it for?

The object is used to represent an item or activity e.g. an apron may be used to sign messy play or blanket may be used to indicate nap time.

Where should it be?

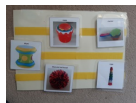
The objects should be within close proximity of the child.

How is it used?

An adult or child will give item to another person to indicate a desired action e.g. Child may give biscuit box to mummy to show they want a biscuit. An adult may give a nappy to a child to represent time to change nappy.

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Photos and Symbols



What is it?

A visual representation of an object e.g. a photograph of Peppa Pig bottle or a symbol of a drinks bottle (usually created from specialist software such as Communicating Print or Boardmaker)

What is it for?

The photograph or symbol is used to represent an item or activity e.g. A photo of an apron may be used to sign messy play or symbol of a blanket may be used to indicate nap time.

Where should it be?

The photos or symbols should be within close proximity of the child. They can be stored in a communication book, on a board and can be included as part of a visual timetable.

How is it used?

Once a child is consistently using and responding to an object of reference this should be transitioned over to a photograph or symbol of the item. These are used in the same way as the object of reference.

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Coloured or Numbered Boxes?



What is it?

Boxes which are coloured 'red' and 'green' or numbered 1,2 and 3.

What is it for?

Some children may require the use of a coloured or numbered boxes to teach the early skills of following adult lead in activities before the introduction of a visual timetable.

To help the child transfer attention from one activity to the next when this is difficult for them.

To extend listening and attention skills over time. To support understanding of spoken language.

Gives more choice to the children in terms of which order they will complete the activities

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Coloured or Numbered Boxes?



Where should it be?

Easy to access. The boxes should be with the child and adult as they progress through adult chosen activities.

How is it used?

The activities to be completed are placed in the 'green' box, once an activity has finished it is to be placed in the 'red' box.

The numbered boxes are to be used in a similar way activity number one is to be placed in the box labelling '1' activity two is to be placed in box number '2' and so on. Adult and child progress through activities beginning at box number 1.

A reminder of when the activity is finishing should be given. Once task number 1 is finished the box and resources should be removed and focus is directed to box number 2.

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Visual timetable?



What is it?

A laminated strip with hard Velcro attached so symbols can be affixed. Symbols have soft Velcro on the back.

The symbols represent the routine set by the setting which the children are to follow. Activities may vary from day to day.

It can be used for all the children or be specific to a particular child.

****Remember to draw attention to the visual timetable when activities change****

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Visual timetable?



What is it for?

It helps children to predict the daily routine and to transfer their attention from one activity to the next. It can help to reduce anxiety around change.

It provides visual back-up to verbal information so supports children's understanding of language.

Where should it be?

Usually on the wall at the children's eye level, in the area of the room where the whole group gathers for registration, story time etc.

Use a postbox, shiny bag or coloured envelope available near the timetable for the children to put each symbol in as they are removed.

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Visual timetable?



How is it used?

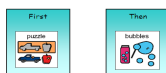
Show the child what is due to happen, pointing to the picture as you name the activity, e.g. 'First circle time, then playing, then snack'.

When an activity is over, take the child to the timetable and point to the relevant symbols saying e.g. 'Playing is finished, it's time for snack'. The child then removes the symbol for 'playing' and puts it in the box/bag/envelope provided.

The symbols can be changed to reflect the changes to daily routine and therefore reduce any related anxieties. If something unusual is happening, such as a visit from the dental nurse or a trip to the woods, a symbol for this should be incorporated.

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First and Then board?



What is it?

Usually a laminated A4 sheet with two pieces of hard Velcro attached, and 'First' and 'Then' (or 'Now' and 'Next') clearly written at the top. Symbols should be the same as those used for visual timetables and have soft Velcro on the back.

What is it for?

To help the child transfer attention from one activity to the next when this is difficult for them.

To encourage the child to participate (initially briefly) in an adult-directed activity.

To extend listening and attention skills over time.

To support understanding of spoken language.

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First and Then board?



Where should it be?

Easy to access. Key workers usually carry the symbols with them in a belt or attached to a keyring on a belt.

How is it used?

Affix the symbols - the 'first' symbol represents the activity the adult would like the child to join in with. The 'then' symbol represents something highly motivating to the child. NB to begin with use two items that are both desired so that it does not become associated with a negative experience.

Point to the symbols telling the child e.g. 'First story, then cars'.

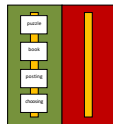
Take the child to the 'first' activity. If they struggle to sit, point to the 'first' symbol and remind them e.g. 'It's time for story'.

Prime the child when a change in activity is imminent, e.g. 'two more pages, then story is finished - it's time for cars'.

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Within Task Schedule

- Place each activity you want the child to carry out down the left hand side (green). When each activity is completed tell the child, e.g. "**Puzzle is finished, take the symbol off and move it over. Now it's time for reading.**"
- This can be used for specific tasks with more than one step in them, such as:
- "Play" time - you could choose four activities you want them to complete with you, e.g. puzzle, reading, posting, choosing
- Going out if you are visiting several places, e.g. park, a friend's house, Tesco, home.
- Start by teaching in a structured session but then use to support child to settle to activities within a busier environment by showing what they will do and then moving to different areas of the room to complete it.



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Symbols to prompt?



What is it?

A picture or symbol depicting a routine or behaviour e.g. Picture of shoes on the rack or a symbols for good sitting, looking and listening.

What is it for?

The picture or symbol is used as a visual representation to demonstrate part of a routine or a desired behaviour.

Where should it be?

The picture or symbols should be at the child's eye level and within close proximity to the activity.

Adults may wish to have symbols or pictures on a key fob and can show child visual representation of desired behaviour.

How is it used?

Pictures or prompts demonstrating a desired action e.g. Lunch box on trolley or wash hands should be placed at child's eye level where the action is occurring e.g. For wash hands picture should be near to the sink.

Symbols or pictures can be put on a key fob and used within an activity to visually demonstrate a desired behaviour e.g. Good sitting.

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Symbols to sign/inform?



What is it?

A visual representation to demonstrate the contents of a box or the location of an item.

What is it for?

To develop a child's independence in locating and tidying away items in their setting.

Where should it be?

Visual representation to be close to object location e.g. box, draw or cupboard

How is it used?

Visual representation e.g. photo of box/draw contents to be placed on the outside of the box/draw. Demonstrating what is contained within the box etc.

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Signing and gesture



What is it?

A body movement, sign using hands/body or facial expression.

What is it for?

To aid a child's understanding of spoken language e.g. Instructions.

Where should it be?

When using signing or gesture adult should ensure they are on the child's physical level (where possible) and that they have the child's attention and that the child is watching the sign or gesture.

How is it used?

Sign or gesture is presented alongside spoken word to aid understanding and to provide a visual which can be stored and aid processing of information.

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Reward Charts



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Visual Countdown

Egg Timer

- Use an egg timer to help a child move from one activity to the next. You may want him to carry out an activity for only 5 minutes or you can introduce the timer 5 minutes before you want the child to finish an activity. E.g., when the child is using the iPad give them a 5 minute warning and show them the timer. When the timer is finished show them the timer and say "iPad is finished, it's time for snack."

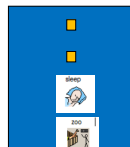
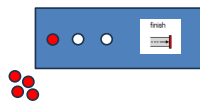


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Visual Countdown

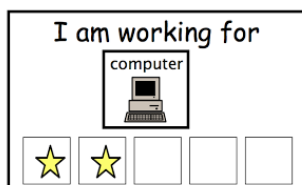
Countdown board

- When you want to help a child prepare for changes to their usual schedule use the countdown board. Place the activity symbol on the bottom Velcro strip and the three "sleep" symbols above it. This visual support can be used for events such as visiting grandparents or day trips e.g. The zoo.
- Use for counting down to the end of an activity.



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I am working for.....



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Different types of visual support?

Which are to help the child express themselves and which support their understanding? Which are both?

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