

Using Now and Next Boards

A Now and Next Board has been recommended as beneficial to support your child's understanding of a given situation. Please read this advice sheet to understand how to use the now and next board.

Why is a Now & Next board important?

Some children can find change difficult. This can include something that we might consider to be an insignificant or small change. It is important that we support children that find change difficult effectively through transitions.

Now & Next boards are one way that we can help with this. They support the child by;

1. Helping to explain what will be happening next. This visual information is key when a child has language difficulties and may not understand the spoken words
2. They help the child to understand the situation by reinforcing what has been said
3. They can act as a reminder to us so that we keep repeating what is going to happen, preparing the child for a change

A Now & Next board has two parts a) what is currently happening and b) what is going to happen. They therefore can be more flexible and portable as they can be adapted depending on the situation.

How should I use a Now & Next board?

- Place two symbols on the board i.e. one symbol that shows what the child is currently doing. This goes in the now column. The other symbol is what is going to happen next. This goes in the next column.
- Show the child the symbols, telling them 'now it's _____ next it will be _____'
- Draw the child's attention to the pictures as you do this
- As the child is engaged in the activity keep reminding them at certain intervals that now it's ____ next it will be _____
- Once the time has finished and it is time to transition say to the child '_____ has finished'. Encourage the child to then take that symbol off the 'now' column.
- Take the 'next' symbol from this column and move it to the 'now' column. Repeat 'now it's time for _____ and next it's _____' (whatever the next activity is place this in the next column)
- For example, now = play, next = lunch; when play has finished now becomes lunch and next becomes outside



Important points to consider

- It is a good idea to encourage the child to move the symbols on. This way they are learning that activities come to an end and helping them to feel in control of a situation that they may be very anxious about
- Keep reminding the child of what is going on, drawing their attention to the now and next board
- Consider the order of things e.g. if a child needs to complete something they do not like then it is often a good idea to put something very motivating in the next column to encourage their engagement
- As soon as you know a change is coming prepare the child for this change

Using timers with Now & Next boards

Timers can work very well alongside a Now & Next board. A timer such as a sand timer or a countdown clock provides that additional information to the child that a change is coming. Follow this procedure to help the child;

- Show the child the 'now' column and explain that they have 5 minutes, 10 minutes etc with that activity
- Begin the timer
- As the time passes by continue to draw the child's attention to the timer indicating to the child how long that they have left
- When the timer beeps or finishes say to the child the activity has finished and now it's time for the 'next' activity
- Begin the process again for the new 'now' activity

If you do have any questions on using a Now & Next board then please do not hesitate to contact your Speech and Language Therapist.

Now

Next

