

Using Visual Timetables

A visual timetable has been recommended as beneficial to support your child's understanding of daily routines. This advice sheet gives specific information on why they are important and how to use them.

Why is a visual timetable important?

A visual timetable is to help a child understand the daily routine as well as what is coming next. Children with language and communication difficulties can find it difficult when there are sudden and quick changes to what is happening. This might be because;

1. They haven't understood the spoken instruction therefore this seems as though it is an abrupt change to them
2. They find transitioning between different activities difficult and therefore need more preparation and warning for these changes
3. They like their own routines and following their own agenda. They again need help to manage following a routine that isn't quite their own

A visual timetable helps the child to see what is going to happen for a specified length of time. This could be a morning or the entire day. The visual timetable uses pictures or what is sometimes referred to as symbols to help this understanding.

The child may not understand all of the pictures at this time. Being consistently shown the visual timetable will help them to become more familiar with the structure and routines of the day.

How should I use the visual timetable?

- Place the visual timetable somewhere obvious e.g. on a wall, on the fridge on the child's table at school.
- It has to be somewhere that your child can look and somewhere it will be noticed.
- Each day place the relevant symbols on the board so that the child has an overview of what is going to happen on that particular day.
- When the child comes in to school or wakes up in the morning direct them to the timetable
- If they need your support with this e.g. talking through the activities then talk through the day with them pointing to each symbol as you do this
- Keep going back to the timetable throughout the day. This can be as one activity is drawing to a close or when a new activity begins. This way the child is constantly being prepared for the change.

Important points to remember

- Keep using the visual timetable – don't take it away when you think the child is coping well. The child is coping because you are using the timetable. It needs to be a part of the daily routine

- You need to know what the plan for the day is so that you can place this on the timetable. Clarify this before you show the child the timetable. This way the child will not become confused
- If you are unsure about something that might happen, place a question mark symbol and say 'don't know' to the child until you do know. This way you are not altering an activity which might lead to confusion
- If you do not have a symbol available write using a white or draw using stick drawings the activity on a blank square. White board pens work well as you can scribble them out when you have finished that task

If you have any questions or do require any further guidance then please do not hesitate to contact your Speech and Language Therapist.

Speech and Language Therapy Team
Salford Royal Foundation Trust



Now

Next

Now

Next



get dressed 	breakfast 	shower 	wash 	brush hair 	brush hair 	brush teeth 
car 	school 	shops 	lunch 	dinner 	bath 	bed 
game 	computer 	laptop 	lpad 	visit 	park 	playground 
shopping center 	swimming 	TV 	story 	special activity 	don't know 	change 
home 	home 	homework 	tidy up 	toy cars 	toys 	play 
appointment 	friends 	school 	school 	outside 	choose 	undressed 