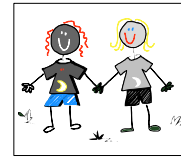


## Information and advice from:



**Early Development and  
Inclusion Team**  
Supporting Inclusion at the  
Early Years Foundation Stage

# Using a visual timetable

Children with language difficulties and/or social communication difficulties often find it hard to:

- Focus their attention throughout the day.
- Understand their daily routine at home and school.
- Move (or transition) successfully from one activity to another.
- Remain calm when they have to finish a preferred activity.
- Remain calm when cannot do a preferred activity right now.
- Cope with changes to their expected routine.

A visual timetable can help by:

- Presenting information in a way that uses visual skills – often a strength for them.
- Presenting information in concrete form, allowing a child to go back and check what is going to happen.
- Reassuring a child that something that they want to do *is* going to happen, and/or that something that they are less motivated to do *is* going to finish.

There are many different templates and formats for visual timetables. It's important to use a visual timetable that is appropriate for the child's level of understanding.

- Using real objects (objects of reference) along with a picture can help a child connect objects to events and to pictures.
- Using photographs can help a child who finds it hard to 'generalise' – connect a picture of something with a real event or toy. But remember that if, for example, a green plate is shown in the photograph, the child is likely to expect *that* particular plate.
- Using pictures or line drawings is fine at a certain stage of development but check that the child is relating them to the real toy or event. *For example*, you can teach that a picture of a cup and a real cup represent the same thing by first using the real cup with the picture, and then transitioning to just using the picture.

### Resources:

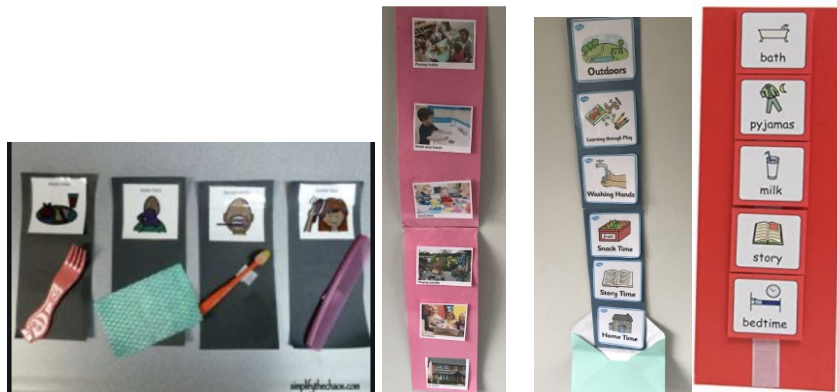
<https://do2learn.com>

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk>

<https://widgitonline.com>

<https://symbolworld.org>

Here are some examples:



- At the beginning of the day or session, attach each symbol onto the visual timetable board with Velcro/ blue tac in the order that it will be occurring throughout the day.
- Once each activity has been completed, take the visual timetable to the child or take the child to it.
- Remove the activity symbol that represents the activity that you have finished and place it in the 'finished' box/ envelope.

### Top tips

- Make a visual timetable using objects of reference, photos or picture symbols
- Additionally, consider making smaller timetables for individual toys and activities i.e. 'Now and Next' board.
- Encourage the child to pay attention to the timetable.
- Be consistent in using the timetable and referring to it at each point of transition.
- Use key words whilst pointing at the sequence of the session's activities. For example, 'coat off, outside, play, singing etc.
- Prompt the child to take off the pictures once an activity is finished and place them in a labelled finished box or envelope.
- Make sure there are activities that the child will enjoy on the visual timetable
- Make sure the child's motivating activities are at regular intervals on the visual timetable, eg a less preferred activity followed by something fun (and repeat throughout the day).

### Other visuals to consider:

- *How am I feeling?* pictures.
- Choice board.
- Now/Next board.
- Labels on boxes and drawers and areas of the learning environment.
- Task breakdowns (such as pictures showing the order to follow when using the toilet.)