

Using a Visual Schedule with a Student

WHAT is a visual schedule? A sequence of visual information (objects, photos, picture symbols and/or text) that shows what's happening now and what's next. Depending on how much information a student can handle, a visual schedule may have two or more activities:

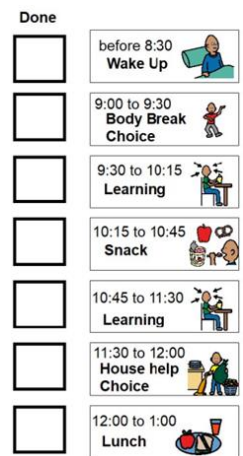
WHY use a visual schedule? Visuals help all students!

- Allows time to process instructions; students see what you mean.
- Helps students understand and prepare for planned events.
- Creates structure and predictability.
- Provides comfort and reduces behaviours related to stress.
- Supports transitions from one activity to the next.
- Portable to different environments and situations.
- Teaches concepts of 'first/then' and 'finished.'
- Increases independence as students learn to follow the schedule without adult support.



HOW? Ahead of Time:

- Decide on a schedule size and format. Gather materials and decide how they will be *organized and readily available*. Ensure the schedule is *always visible*.
- Decide what will happen when the student finishes activities (e.g. check mark, remove the picture symbol, put the picture symbol in a 'finished' pocket, etc.)
- Consider whether to use the Premack Principle (i.e. when a preferred follows a non-preferred activity) for motivation.
- Have a consistent way of letting the student know about changes to the schedule.



Steps for Using: At the beginning of the day or work period, set up the schedule with the student in order of the anticipated sequence of activities.

1. Show the student the schedule and say what is happening.
 2. Do the activity. Always follow through but shorten the activity if necessary.
 3. Get the student's attention and show the activity is finished (examples above).
 4. Continue steps 1-3 until the schedule activities are finished.
- *Look at it often* —before and after each activity
 - *Interactive* — student is actively involved in making changes to the schedule and has enough time to process the information.

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**Organized
and
Ready**

Steps

1. Show the student the schedule and say what is happening.
2. Do the activity.
3. Get the student's attention and show the activity is finished (i.e. check mark, 'finished' pocket.)
4. Continue steps 1-3 until the schedule activities are finished.



**Always
visible**



**Look at it
often**



Interactive



**Follow it
or
Change it!**