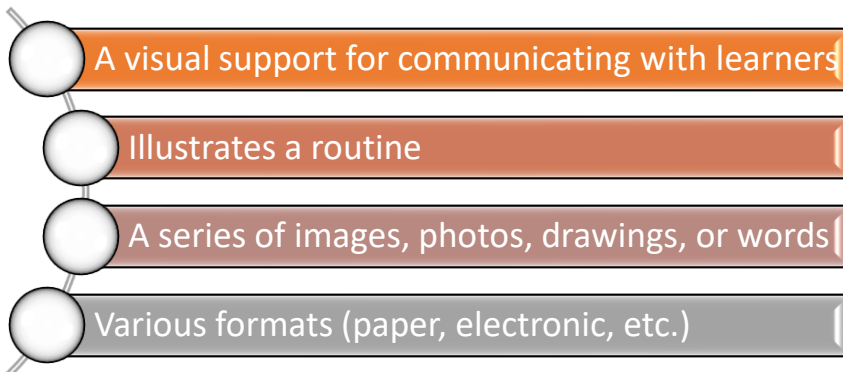


Visual Schedule

For a Predictable and Reassuring Learning Environment

What is a visual schedule?

Usually, a visual schedule consists of a **series of images** that display elements of a **routine or tasks** that should be carried out during the day. There are different ways to create a visual schedule depending on the learner's strengths and challenges.



Visual schedules have been proven effective for learners with ASD or an intellectual disability, especially with:

- maintenance and generalization of mastered skills
- independence
- transitions
- starting a task and staying on task
- reducing challenging behaviours

Research shows that visual schedules are also effective for learners with no specific diagnosis.

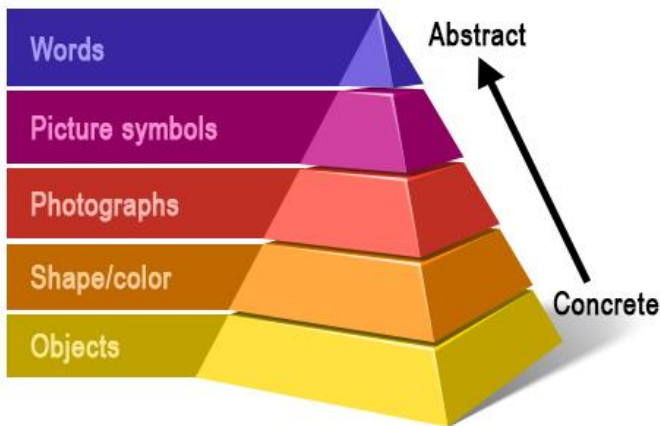
A **visual schedule is different from an Independent Activity Schedule (IAS)**. Visual schedules are used to indicate in advance the day's various tasks, activities and events.

Independent Activity Schedules are used to teach a learner to stay on task for a period of time without help from an adult (e.g., for five minutes) and include only mastered tasks. The Independent Activity Schedule is arranged differently than the visual schedule, usually in a binder with one pictogram per page, in the order in which tasks are to be performed.

My notes

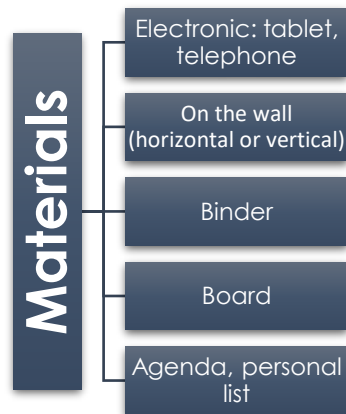
Preparing a Visual Schedule

- 1) Determine which type of images is best for the user. This decision will depend on the person's level of understanding as well as strengths and challenges.

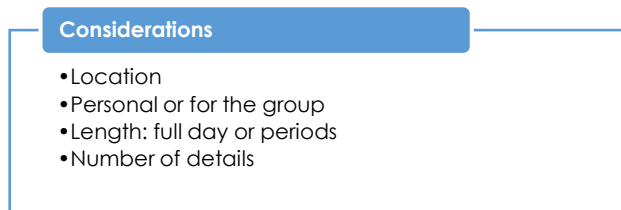


Level of Abstraction of Visual Supports

- 2) Think about **materials** that will be used. This will again depend on the user's strengths and challenges and also personal preferences and context.



- 3) Think about the format.



Teaching Students to Use a Visual Schedule



Before you start teaching a learner how to use a visual schedule, it's important for them to be able to **match**:

- identical and non-identical objects
- objects to pictures
- picture of an activity to words

Method 1

Behavioural Skills Training (BST)

This five-step teaching method:

- is evidence-based;
- is easy to use and effective because it leads to positive results in a short amount of time;
- promotes mastery of a new skill, such as learning to use a visual schedule for the first time, through modelling and role-playing;
- allows the learner to get immediate feedback and to practice the skill in a real-world context.



Method 2

Video Modelling

Video modelling is an effective method for learners who may have **fewer language skills** but are **good at imitating**. Given how easy it is to access technology, this method is quick to organize and often produces good results. The main features of video modelling are as follows:

- it consists of recording a short video;
- the video can include a peer, an adult or the learner themselves
- different perspectives are possible, either that of another person demonstrating how to use a visual schedule or the one the learner would have if they used it themselves (e.g., you would see hands manipulating the schedule).

Show the video to the learner immediately before they have to use the visual schedule, and until the skill is mastered.



Option

Film someone modelling certain parts of the routine that are challenging for the learner to help them be more independent.

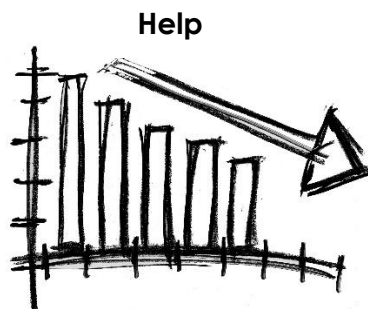
Method 3

Most-to-Least Prompting

Prompting is a temporary help given to the learner when they are working on a new skill (e.g., physical guidance, pointing, verbal prompts).

Prompting should occur **immediately** after an instruction (i.e. "Follow your schedule."). The type of prompt chosen must be suited to the learner's developmental level and age.

When the learner starts to use their visual schedule with prompting, we need to slowly **reduce the level of assistance** until the learner can follow their routine **independently** while referring to their visual schedule.



Reinforcement

Reinforcement is a **strategy** that helps encourage desirable behaviours and promotes learning. During a behavioural intervention, reinforcement is defined as a consequence that occurs immediately after a behaviour and increases the likelihood that the learner will exhibit this behaviour again in the future.

When to use it?

- Often, especially when you first start teaching a new skill.
- When the learner is starting to use their schedule with less help.
- To maintain the skill over time.

How to reinforce?

- Determine the learner's preferences (e.g., praise, access to toys or activities).
- Even if the learner prefers tangible reinforcement, offer social and verbal reinforcement (e.g., "Good job, you put away the 'recess' picture!")

Application in Daily Life

- The schedule is always available to the learner.
- Show the learner the schedule in the morning (or more often if needed).
- The learner is responsible for transporting the schedule.
- The learner indicates where they are on the schedule.

Strategies to Promote Success...

- ✓ Offer a mix of preferred and non-preferred activities.
- ✓ Encourage active learner participation.
- ✓ Work on flexibility.

Additional Resources

For more information on the topics discussed during this presentation, we invite you to sign up for a free online training from the Department of

Education and Early Childhood Development, *ASD and Behavioural Interventions*.

Here are some interesting resources on the topic:

Presentation on Video modelling, available on the YouTube channel of Autism Learning Partnership:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5ZwhYsv1-kxRE1vU5CaKTA/videos>

Infographic on the use of visual schedules: <https://alp-paa.com/en/resources/download/61/180/16?method=view>

Free printable pictograms:
<http://www.monctonarc.com/PrintableResources/PrintableResources.html>

Webinar on Principles of Reinforcement
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHij6an66oA>

References:

Breitenbach, M. Presentation titled: Visual Supports: Daily Schedules

Knight, V., Sartini, E. et Spriggs, A. (2015). *Evaluating Visual Activity Schedules as Evidence-Based Practice for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders*. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 45:157-178.

ASD and Behavioural Interventions Training (New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development).

Zimmerman, K., Ledford, J. et Barton, E. (2017). *Using Visual Activity Schedules for Young Children with Challenging Behavior*. *Journal of Early Intervention*. Vol. 39 (4) 339-358.