

Visual Aids

What Are Visual Aids?

Visual aids are tools such as; items, pictures, symbols, or words, and/or a combination of these that can assist students in a number of ways. Visual aids can support with following routines, increasing predictability, enhancing comprehension, teaching new skills/replacement behaviours etc.

Why Are Visual Aids An Effective Tool?

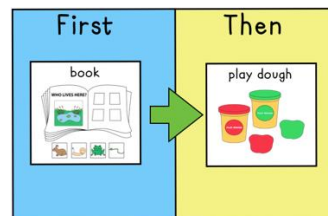
Children/youth with ASD are often strong visual learners and may have more difficulties processing auditory information. A child/youth with ASD may not attend to the entirety of auditory information and instead focus on a specific part of what was said and/or misinterpret intent. Visual aids may help them process the message delivered orally, provide them with more time to review choices before making decisions, and help with organization and recall of information (Vicker, 1999).

Practical Uses Of Visual Aids

*Below are some examples of how you can use visual aids in a practical way

Increase predictability and support with transitions

First / Then: put the current or less preferred activity in the 'first' column and the preferred activity or reinforcement in the 'then' column. You can verbally say the statement of "first/then" in addition to showing them the visual.



Visual Schedule: putting each activity of the day in sequential order (e.g. Arrival, table top activity, carpet time, play time etc.)

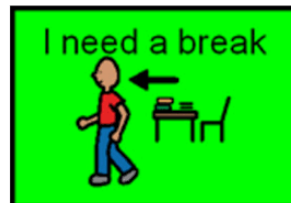


Visual Routine: putting each step of the routine in sequential order (e.g. cubby routine- hang your coat, hang your back pack, take outside shoes off, put inside shoes on etc.)

Arrival at school		
1		Take off coat <small>(coat, mittens, socks and hat)</small>
2		Open Backpack
3		Take out work
4		Take out lunch
5		Hang up coat
6		Hang up backpack

To support replacement behaviour and decrease challenging behaviour

Picture exchange: use pictures paired with words to increase communication (e.g. break card, help card, choice board, etc.)



Self-Monitoring/ Emotion Regulation: visuals can be used to support students in identifying emotions and determining an action plan to cope and calm according to their identified emotion (e.g. 5-point scale, circle 8 breathing, and other calming strategies).

Feelings Chart	
How I feel	What I can do
5  I need some help!	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask to go visit Mrs. Holland <input type="checkbox"/> Ask to take a break/use therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Hold on to Luke Skywalker (if he is here) <input type="checkbox"/> Take 4 or 5 deep breaths
4  I'm really upset.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask to go visit Mrs. Holland <input type="checkbox"/> Ask to take a break/use therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Hold on to Luke Skywalker (if he is here) <input type="checkbox"/> Take 4 or 5 deep breaths
3  I've got a problem.	<input type="checkbox"/> Let a teacher know that you have a problem and need some help <input type="checkbox"/> Play with your squishy thing <input type="checkbox"/> Hold on to Luke Skywalker (if he is here) <input type="checkbox"/> Take 4 or 5 deep breaths
2  Things are pretty good.	<input type="checkbox"/> Play with my squishy thing <input type="checkbox"/> Think of my favorite things <input type="checkbox"/> Say "I'm going to be O.K." to yourself <input type="checkbox"/> Take 3 or 4 deep breaths
1  Feeling Great!	<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy the feeling! <input type="checkbox"/> Have fun

Visual Prompt: a visual prompt is part of the prompt hierarchy; visual prompts are a less instructive way of providing assistance when teaching new skills or communicating expectations (e.g. placing a stop sign on the door to teach the child to remain in the classroom, visual representation of carpet expectations)



References

Vicker, B. (1999). Visual schedules and choice boards: Avoid misinterpretation of their primary functions. The Reporter, 4(2), 4-5, 18.