

How to Use a Visual Timetable

Children and young people with language difficulties and or social communication difficulties often have difficulties:

- Focusing their attention throughout the day
- Understanding their daily routine at home/school
- Moving (or transitioning) successfully and independently from one activity to another
- Remaining calm when they have to finish a preferred activity
- Remaining calm when they want to do an activity that they cannot do right now
- Coping with changes to their expected routine

Visual timetables are great to help all of these areas of difficulty. There are many difficult templates and formats for visual timetables. Use a visual timetable that is appropriate for the child's level of understanding.

Here are some examples:



How to Use a Visual Timetable

- At the beginning of the day, attach each symbol onto the visual timetable board with Velcro/ blue tac in the order that it will be occurring throughout the day.
- At home, when the child wakes up/ or comes back from school, take them over to the visual timetable to explain the activities that will be taking place.
- Once each activity has been completed, return to the visual timetable and take the finished activity symbol off the visual timetable and place it in the 'finished' box/ envelope.

Top tips for home

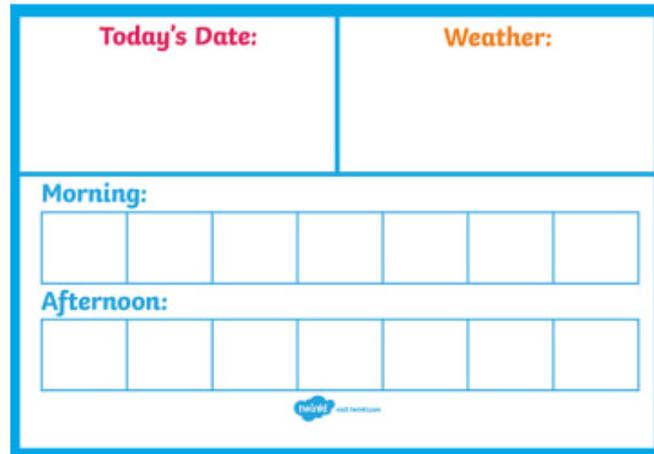
- Make a visual timetable using photos or picture symbols
- Additionally make smaller timetables for individual activities i.e. 'Now and Next' board.
- Display the visual timetable separately from visuals that can be used to promote choice making and use of language
- Encourage the child/ young person to approach and look at the time table. They will need support to use it at first.
- Be consistent in use of the timetable and refer to it at each point of transition.
- Use key words whilst pointing at the sequence of the session's activities i.e. 'coat off, outside, play, singing etc.
- Use photographs of real objects/activities to begin with (if you can)
- Prompt the child to take off the pictures once an activity is finished and place them in a labelled finished envelope.
- Provide object support at times of transition i.e. by showing dinner plate to move him into the kitchen for dinner
- Include a range of activities on the visual timetable including: activities of daily living (such as 'brushing teeth' or 'shower,') routines activities (e.g. eating breakfast) as well as trips to the communication (such as 'Nan's house,' 'Park,' or 'Tesco's.')
- Make sure there are activities and play 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, e.g. a less preferred activity followed by something fun (and repeat throughout the day).

Visual Timetables:

For students who require a more sophisticated timetable the following ideas may be more appropriate:

- Provide a typed timetable of the activities taking place throughout the day. This can be on an A4 sheet or written in their books. As the student completes activities they can tick off each activity (with support if necessary).
For example

Today's Date:		Weather:	
Morning:			
Afternoon:			



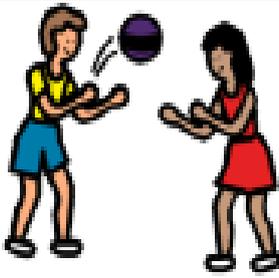
- Some students may worry about activities that are planned for later in their week/ at the weekend. For these students it is often helpful to provide them with a whole week timetable.

How to support children who find changes to their day difficult?

- For children or young people who know their daily routine well and generally cope well with transitions throughout the day. You may want to use a **'today is different because'** board instead of a visual timetable. This will help to pre-warn the student of changes to their typical routine at the start of the day.
- Provide them with time at the beginning of the day to discuss the change in their routine and to ask questions they have. Add any important information discussed to the visual.

Today is different because...

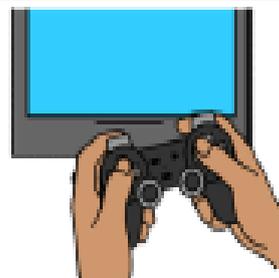
For example:



ball game



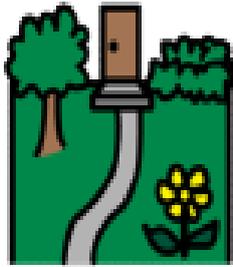
card game



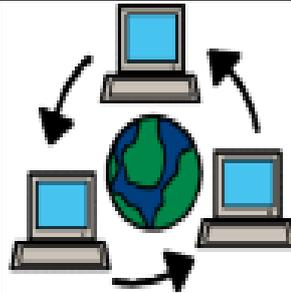
device time



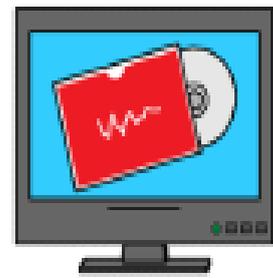
film



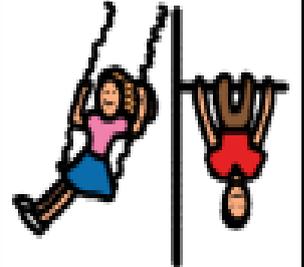
garden



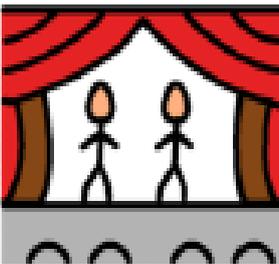
internet



Netflix



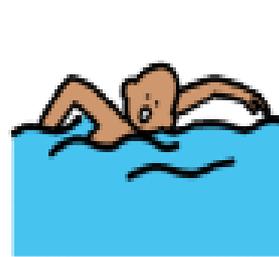
park



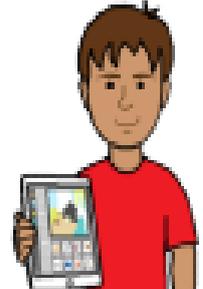
put on a show



social media



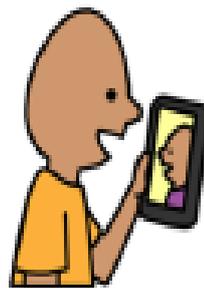
swim



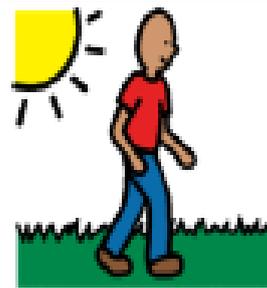
tablet time



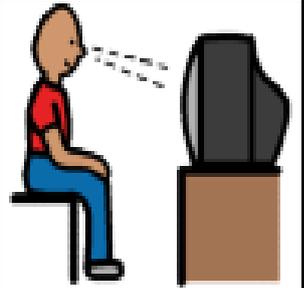
trampoline



video chat



walk

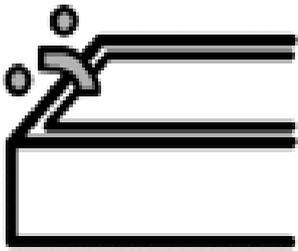


watch TV

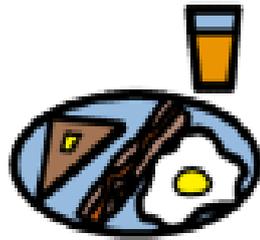


Youtube





bath



breakfast



brush hair



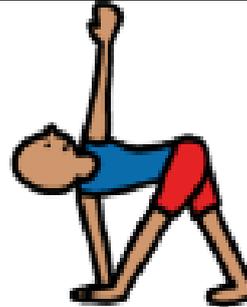
care for my pet



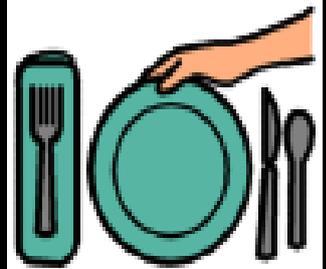
chores



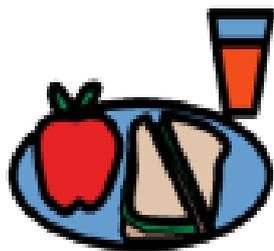
dinner



exercise



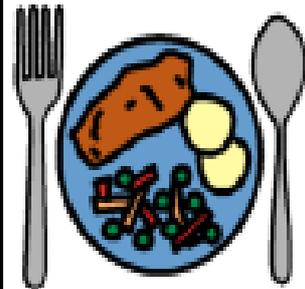
lay table



lunch



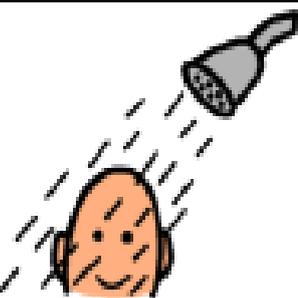
make bed



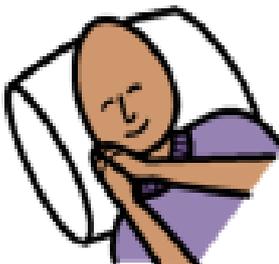
prepare a meal



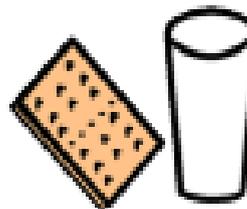
puzzles



shower



sleep



snack



take medication



tidy



toilet



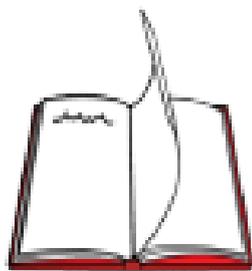
wash dishes



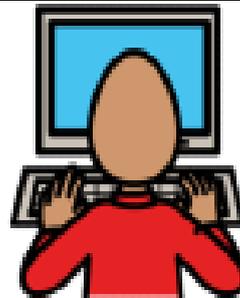
wash hands



art and craft



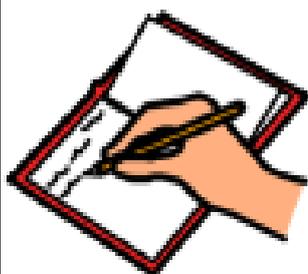
book



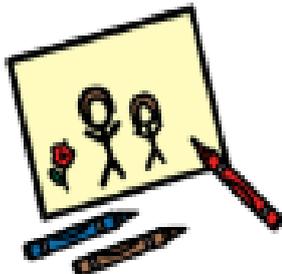
computer time



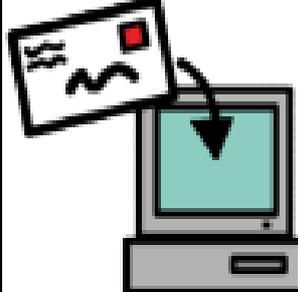
cooking



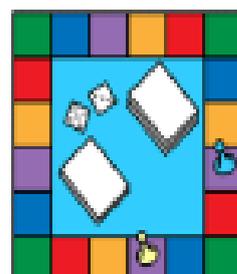
diary



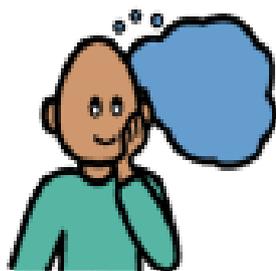
drawing



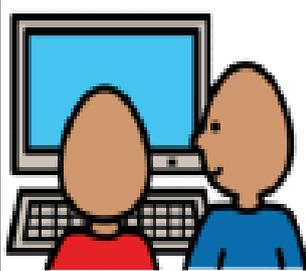
email



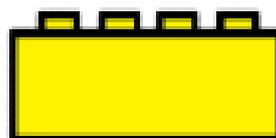
game



imaginative play



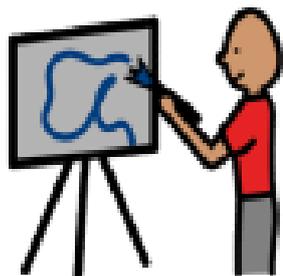
learning website



Lego



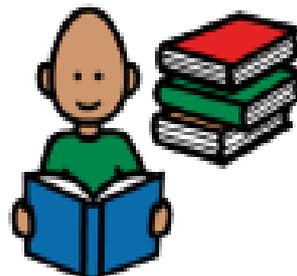
maths



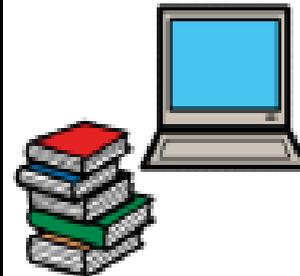
painting



puzzle



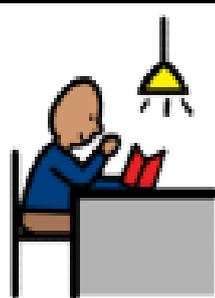
read



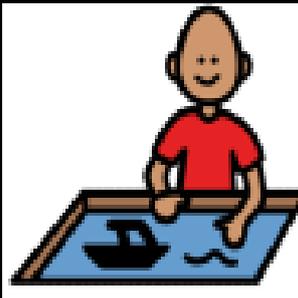
research



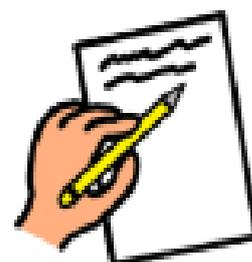
sensory play



study



water play



write

