

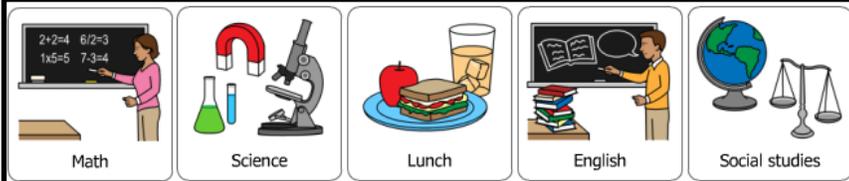
# Visual Schedules



## What are Visual Schedules?

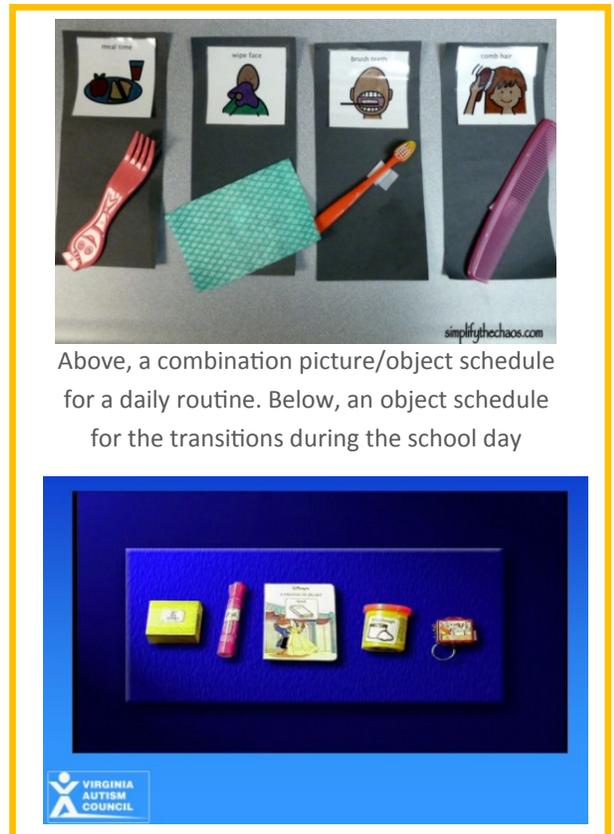
Visual schedules are a way of presenting the major transitions within the day in a structured and easy to understand fashion. They can include words, pictures, objects, or a combination of these formats. Schedules can be arranged top to bottom (generally for pre-readers) or left to right (generally for readers). As each task is completed, the student removes or checks off the task, helping him or her see progress through the day and also enabling him or her to predict what will come next.

## Sample Visual Schedules



Above, a left-to-right picture schedule for the major transitions during a school day for an emerging reader. Left, a top-to-bottom picture schedule for the major transitions during a school day for a pre-reader. Right, a top-to-bottom mini-schedule for hand-washing. Below, A word-based schedule for the major transitions during the school day for a confident reader.

- Math
- Science
- Lunch
- English
- Social Studies



Above, a combination picture/object schedule for a daily routine. Below, an object schedule for the transitions during the school day

# Why Schedules are Important

1. Individuals with autism often have difficulty predicting what will come next in their day. By using a schedule, the student can see what the day will entail, which reduces anxiety and, as a result, may reduce inappropriate behaviors.
2. Schedules increase independence because once learners understand how to use a schedule, they can see what the next activity will be and transition to it without verbal prompting.
3. Schedules rely on the visual strengths that are common in individuals with autism. By building on strengths, individuals can be more successful throughout their days.
4. Schedules are used by typically developing individuals throughout their lives; most adults have a calendar at work with meetings, tasks, appointments and any other significant transitions they will encounter. Teaching students with autism how to use a schedule allows them to incorporate a critical life skill into their daily lives.
5. Because they can be made in a range of formats (e.g., objects, pictures, words), schedules can be made in age appropriate formats for even high functioning individuals with autism.

# Teaching Schedules

Keep the following tips in mind when using schedules:

Identify a standard phrase to use consistently (e.g., "Check schedule"). Give the phrase to the child each time s/he checks the schedule.

Provide the least amount of prompting needed to have the child check the schedule. Use enough prompting to ensure s/he gets there, but try to fade the instructor out slowly so the learner checks the schedule with increasing independence.

Have the learner identify the first task and, using the least prompting necessary, have the learner complete the first task.

When the activity is over, give the standard phrase again and continue until the schedule is complete

Ensure the learner indicates task completion in some way (e.g., checking off a box, putting pictures in a "finished" box, or taking the picture/object with him/her to the location of the next task.

## How Can I Learn More?

### Articles

- Davies, C. (2008). Using Visual Schedules: A Guide for Parents. *The Reporter*, 14 (1), 18-22. Retrieved from <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/using-visual-schedules-a-guide-for-parents>
- Hands in Autism (n.d.). How to Template: Visual Schedules. Retrieved from [https://handsinautism.iupui.edu/pdf/How\\_To\\_Visual\\_Schedules.pdf](https://handsinautism.iupui.edu/pdf/How_To_Visual_Schedules.pdf)
- Hume, K. (2009). *Steps for Implementation: Visual Schedules*. Chapel Hill, NC: The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, The University of North Carolina. Retrieved from [http://csesa.fpg.unc.edu/sites/csesa.fpg.unc.edu/files/ebpbriefs/VisualSchedules\\_Steps.pdf](http://csesa.fpg.unc.edu/sites/csesa.fpg.unc.edu/files/ebpbriefs/VisualSchedules_Steps.pdf)
- Mesibov, G., Shea, V., & Schopler, E. (2005). *The TEACCH® approach to autism spectrum disorders*. New York, New York: Plenum Press.

### Resources

- <http://do2learn.com/picturecards/VisualSchedules/index.htm>
- <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/FreeDownload/Autism-Awareness-Visual-Schedule-Freebie-1189595>



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