

Emotional Regulation



What is Emotional Regulation?

Emotional regulation is an awareness and understanding of one's emotions and their impact on behavior, and the ability to manage those emotions in a positive way.

Why is Emotional Regulation Important?

Our ability to regulate emotions

- Helps us calm down during times of high emotion and control negative urges during times of emotional distress.
- Helps prevent depression, aggression, and other emotional states or behaviors that could be dangerous to ourselves or others.
- Is important for mental health, academic achievement and positive social relationships, which are crucial skills for success in life.

Children with healthy emotional regulation skills

- Are able to experience, express and manage a range of emotions.
- Engage in appropriate behaviors in response to emotional situations.
- Adjust well to transitions and new situations & show a high tolerance for frustration.

Children with poor emotional regulation skills

- May exhibit a limited range of emotions.
- Have difficulties coping with stressful experiences, resulting in outbursts of negative emotions, aggression or ego-centric behavior dependent on age.
- Are less socially competent and are often less successful in school, where they have difficulty learning and are less productive.

What Causes Poor Emotional Regulation?

Poor attachment

- Requires children to fall back on crudely developed regulation strategies, since children often need the help of the adults in their lives to develop regulation skills.

Exposure to trauma

- Children learn to disconnect from their physical and emotional experiences when those experiences are too painful or overwhelming.
- Sharing feelings may not be safe or acceptable.
- Children may be unable to tell whether situations are safe, causing them to respond in order to keep themselves safe even when there is no real danger.
- Children become increasingly unable to build safe relationships or effectively manage their emotions.



What Can Be Done?

- Model healthy emotional regulation, practicing repair as needed when your emotions get out of control.
- Help children think about ways they can manage their emotions in situations where they might feel out of control.
- Practice regulation skills with children.
- Encourage healthy outlets for physical and emotional energy, such as exercise, creative activities or hobbies.
- Create consistency and use routines to help avoid meltdowns (see subsections on Rules, Routines, Rituals and Transitions in this toolkit).

Practical tools for emotional regulation

- Encourage deep breathing exercises.
- Practice Crossing the Midline activity (see explanation at right).
- Pop bubbles with only one hand.
- Play flashlight tag. In a dimmed room, have children follow your flashlight beam projected onto the wall with their own flashlight.
- Encourage babies to crawl.
- Have older children write their name in the air while rotating the opposite foot clockwise.
- Exercise...anything that gets children's hearts pumping.



Activity involves child drawing an imaginary line from head to feet, separating the right and left sides of body. Crossing midline would be moving arms, legs, or eyes from one side of the body to the other (e.g. touching left hand to right foot).

MORE INFORMATION

Creative relaxation ideas for kids



From Zemirah Jazwierska via
kidsrelaxation.com

All Relaxation Activities (kids)

Reading this in print? Go to:

<http://kidsrelaxation.com/?cat=9>

Teaching kids how to belly breathe



From fit web platform (WebMD and
Sanford Health) Belly Breathing

Reading this in print? Go to:

<http://fit.webmd.com/jr/recharge/article/belly-breathing-activity>



Belly Breathe with Elmo

From Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)
Sesame Street series via YouTube Sesame
Street: Common and Colbie Caillat- "Belly
Breathe" with Elmo

Reading this in print? Go to:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mZbzDO-pyIA



Relaxation Thermometer with Instructions

From the Center on the Social and
Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
Relaxation Thermometer



Games to Help with Emotional Regulation



Belly Breathe Lyrics by Common & Colbie Caillat

Watch it on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mZbzDOpylA

Sometimes the monster that's inside you
Is a monster that is mad
It's a monster who is angry
It's a monster who feels bad.
When your monster wants to throw things
And your monster wants to shout
There's a way to calm your monster and chill
your inner monster out.

Belly breathe gonna breathe right through it
Belly breathe this is how you do it.
Belly breathe gonna breathe right through it
Belly breathe this is how you do it.

Put your hands on your tummy now you're
ready to begin
Put your hands on your belly and you
slowly breathe in.

Ba ba breathe belly belly
Ba ba ba ba breathe belly belly breathe.

Feel your belly go out and in and in and out
And you start to calm down without a doubt
Feel your belly go in and out and out and in
Now Elmo feels like himself again.

Belly breathe gonna breathe right through it
Belly breathe this is how you do it.
Ba ba breathe belly belly
Ba ba ba ba breathe belly belly breathe.

Your mad monster may appear at any time and
any place
And that mad monster will make you make a mad
monster face.
He makes you want to push he makes you want
to shove
There's a way to calm that monster bring out
the monster love!

Belly breathe gonna breathe right through it
Belly breathe this is how you do it.
Belly breathe gonna breathe right through it
Belly breathe this is how you do it.

Feel your belly go out and in and in and out
That's what belly breathing is all about!
Feel your belly go in and out and out and in
And now I feel like myself again!
Belly breathe gonna breathe right through it
Belly breathe this is how you do it
Belly belly breathe Belly belly breathe
Everybody just breathe!



Watch it on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mZbzDOpylA



Relaxation Thermometer

Why is the Relaxation Thermometer Helpful?

Children who are experiencing strong emotions, but lack the ability to identify them (e.g. stressed, tense, calm, relaxed) may behave aggressively or in other undesirable ways to express what they are feeling. The relaxation thermometer is used to teach children how to “tune into” their emotions and then express to others, in a concrete way, how those feelings are impacting them before they act them out.



If we are able to provide a way for children to identify and share their emotions throughout the day we can help them to effectively manage themselves. Furthermore, if we can teach them the difference between “tense” (like a hard door) and “calm” (or relaxed like a sleeping puppy), then we can help them understand how to go from tense to relaxed.

How Can the Relaxation Thermometer be Used?

The relaxation thermometer can be used throughout the day as a means for children to check where they are emotionally and to help cue themselves and others as to how well they are regulating their emotions.

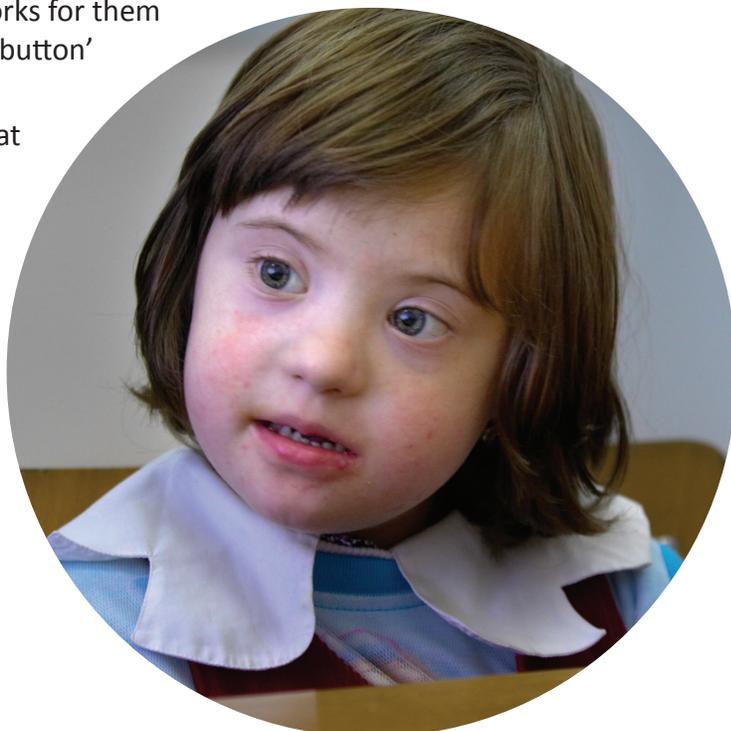
The bottom of the thermometer is the blue (or cool) section and feelings in this section could be “happy” or “relaxed.” The thermometer then goes all the way up to “angry” or “stressed out,” which is the red (or hot) section.

The relaxation thermometer should be explained to children after they have been taught how to recognize and “name” their emotions—possibly after being taught about Gingerbread Cutouts or being shown Emotion Charts, both are in the *Emotions* section of this toolkit.

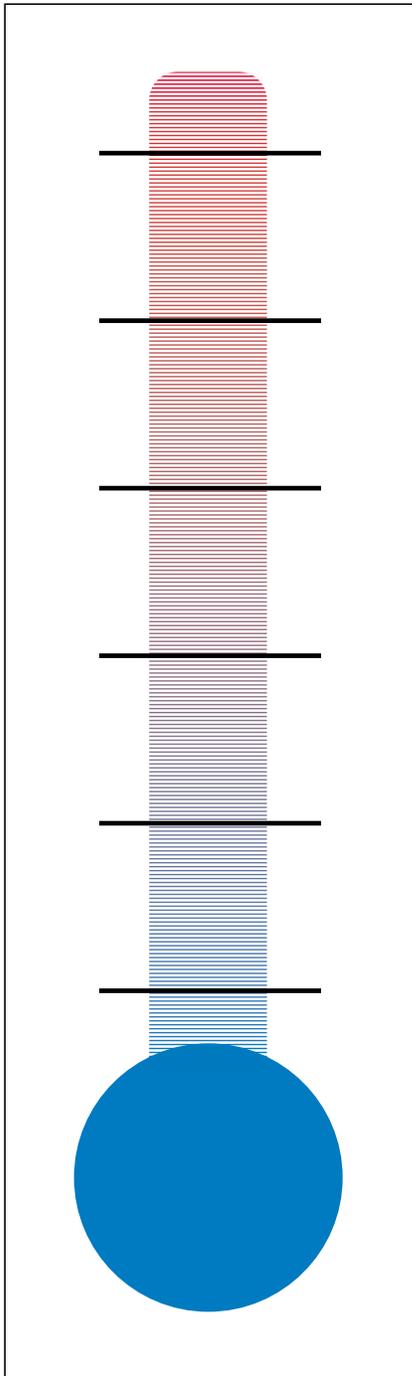
Examples of how to explain the thermometer could be: “When you feel loose like spaghetti, where are you on the thermometer?” *Answer: blue end.* “When you are so mad that you feel like you are going to blow your top, where are you on the thermometer?” *Answer: red end.* Children **should be** encouraged to identify terminology that works for them such as referring to the red end as, ‘danger zone’ ‘hot button’ ‘code red,’ etc.

You can then have a child describe a recent conflict that led to an angry outburst. As the child describes what happened, you can write down words that describe the child’s thoughts, words and actions that paint a pattern of increasing anger. You can then show the child where he/she was on the thermometer at each step along the way. The child can then be shown ways to help regulate emotions.

Work with the child to develop a calming plan and practice it together, inviting him/her to point to where he/she is on the thermometer before and after practicing calming techniques.



Relaxation Thermometer



Mad

Take 3
deep breaths
1...2...3

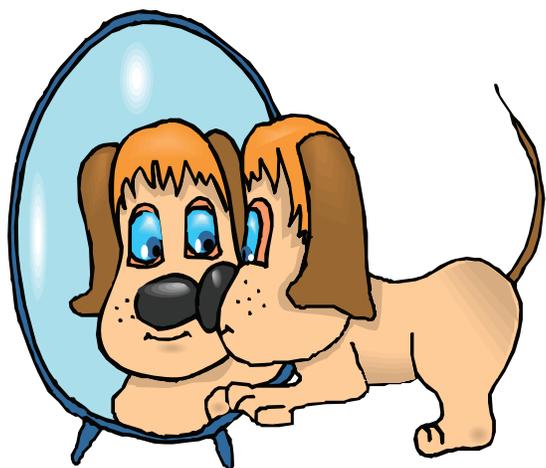


Relaxed



Games to Help with Emotional Regulation

Games that help children follow a leader can help them to practice how to calm themselves and manage their emotions. Ending the games with gentle, relaxed, and slow movements allow them to practice those self-regulation skills that permit them to transition from excitement to calm.

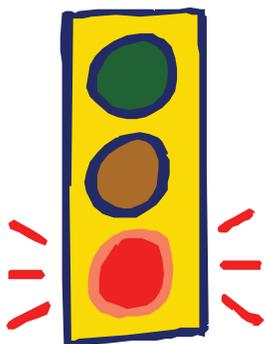


1. Mirror, Mirror On The Wall

While facing children, ask them to move the same way as the leader. Vary tempo and move body parts such as arms, face, hands, legs, etc. Each child takes turns being the leader.

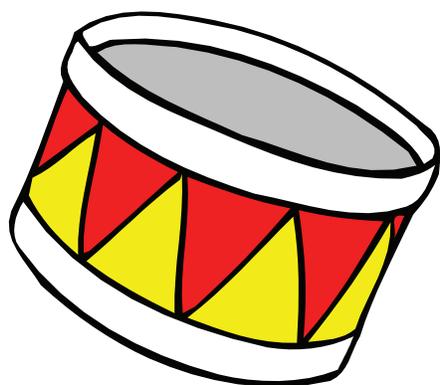
2. Red Light! Green Light!

Have children face you from across the room or yard. Ask them to do something (run, walk, jump, move arms, etc.). Yell out green light which means go and red light which means stop. When the children stop they should freeze in whatever position they were in when the direction was given.



3. Mother May I?

The leader gives an instruction to the children to do something (e.g. Take 3 steps backwards). They must say “Mother may I?” before responding to the command. If the children forget they must return to the starting line. Vary the speed and intensity of different movements.



4. Drummer

Sitting in a circle have the leader start a hand clap rhythm or beat a pattern on the floor or table. Vary the speed, volume and clapping surface (e.g.: clap hands 3 slow loud beats followed by 2 fast quieter beats and then bang hands on table for 3 tapping sounds). The children copy the leader.

Rules

What are Rules?

A rule is a prescribed guide for conduct or action.¹

Why are Rules Important?

- When used appropriately, rules provide a sense of predictability and consistency for children, thereby promoting physical and emotional safety.
- Rules help guide actions toward desired results.



¹ Merriam-Webster. "Dictionary Definition of Rule." Accessed Sept. 4, 2015. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resilience>

What Can Be Done?

- Prioritize and establish a few rules that are the most important. It is best to have only three or four rules. More than that can overwhelm children, setting them up for failure.
- Involve family members in setting rules. This helps obtain buy-in, increasing the likelihood of success.
- Make sure the rules are clear, and that they address what they are intended to address. If they do not, brainstorm together how they can be clarified or changed.
- Make sure children understand exceptions to the rules (such as if safety needs to come first).
- Make the rules positive and action-oriented. Save “don’t” for specific safety situations. For example, “Treat each other with respect,” rather than, “Don’t fight, don’t hit, don’t push”.
- Rules should grow with the child. Change them as needed to meet the needs of the child and the current situation.
- Be consistent.
- Focus on success...create rules to help children succeed.



Routines

What are Routines?

A routine is a pattern for an activity that is followed the same way each time the activity is done.

Why are Routines Important?

Routines:

- Are helpful for emotional regulation during times of transition between activities or when things are different.
- Provide predictability about what will happen next, helping build safety and security.
- Help children feel safe to explore their world and express themselves.
- Reduce power struggles while teaching positive, responsible behavior.
- Support social skills.
- Help teach self-control.
- Encourage memory and the development of early organizational skills.
- Strengthen the connections between brain cells.



What Can Be Done?

- Maintain routines as much as possible in all situations. For example, keep bedtime routines when spending the night away from home.
- Offer positive words when children follow routines or get through a change calmly.
- Have only two or three consistent caregivers for children.
- Use routines for bedtime, nap time and meal times.
- Spend some quiet time with children each day. Consider reading, crafts, quiet play, or baking together.
- Create predictability by being consistent. Explain to children what the rules and consequences are, and then follow through.

Routines work well for discipline too.

- Correction works best when it is:
 - Predictable.
 - Consistent.
 - Developmentally appropriate (considering the child's age, stage of development and individual needs).
 - Solution focused.
- **Never discipline children in anger.**



MORE INFORMATION



Teaching Your Child To Become Independent with Daily Routines
From the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning.



Creating Routines



Teaching Your Child to: Become Independent with Daily Routines

Does this Sound Familiar?

Nadine is a single mom with two young children ages 3 and 5. Her children attend preschool while she is working. When they all get home at the end of the day, Nadine is exhausted but still has household chores to complete (i.e., making dinner, doing laundry, straightening the house, etc.). In addition, she has to help the children with bathing, getting ready for bed, and brushing their teeth. She wishes that her children would start doing some of their daily self-help routines independently. The preschool teacher has said that the 5-year-old is very helpful and independent. But at home, neither of the children will get dressed and undressed independently, and they complain and whine when asked to wash their hands, brush their teeth, or help with the

bathtime routine. When Nadine asks the children to do one of these self-help tasks, they run around the house or whine and drop to the ground. It takes every ounce of energy Nadine has to get through the evening. Often she finds herself yelling at the children and physically helping them through the entire routine, just to get it done.

The Focus

Young children can learn how to do simple daily self-help activities—they just need to be taught what to do. When teaching a child to do self-care skills, you first need to know what you can typically expect of a young child, your child’s skill level, and how to provide clear and simple instructions about how to do a task. In addition, providing children with ample encouragement that is both positive and specific will help promote their success. Children can learn, at a very young age, how to independently wash their hands, brush their teeth, and get undressed and dressed. The information below will help you understand what you can expect from your preschooler and tips for helping your child learn how to become more independent with daily routines.



What to Expect

Children who are 8 to 18 months old often can:

- Drink from a cup, pick up finger food, and begin to use a spoon
- Help undress and dress, put foot in shoe and arm in sleeve
- Point to body parts
- Have strong feelings and begin saying “no”
- Reach for/point to choices
- Feel a sense of security with routines and expectations (e.g., at bedtime)
- Imitate sounds and movement
- Understand more than they can say

Children who are 18 to 36 months old often can do all of the above and:

- Wash hands with help
- Drink from a straw
- Put clothes in the hamper when asked
- Feed self with spoon
- Push and pull toys; fill and dump containers
- Learn to use the toilet
- Bend over without falling
- Imitate simple actions
- Become easily frustrated
- Enjoy trying to do tasks on their own (note that this is why tasks may now take more time to complete)

- Pouring, washing, dressing
- Enjoy playing dress-up
- Become fascinated with water and sand play
- Begin learning simple clear rules

Children who are 3 often can:

- Help with brushing teeth
- Understand “now,” “soon,” and “later”
- Put dirty clothes in the hamper independently
- Get shoes from the closet
- Put on shoes without ties
- Enjoy singing easy songs
- Listen more attentively
- At times, prefer one parent over the other
- Enjoy playing house
- Imitate
- Match like objects
- Put non-breakable dishes in the sink
- Put trash in the trash can
- Wash body with help
- Wash and dry hands, though they may need some help reaching

Children who are 4 often can:

- Use a spoon, fork, and dinner knife
- Dress without help, except with fasteners/buttons
- Learn new words quickly
- Recognize stop signs and their own name in print
- Follow two-step directions that are unrelated



- Understand simple clear rules
- Share and begin taking turns
- Wash self in the bathtub
- Brush teeth independently
- Wash and dry hands

Children who are 5 often can:

- Follow established rules and routines (e.g., wash hands before eating, put dirty clothes in the hamper, brush teeth before going to bed)
- Independently initiate a simple routine (e.g., dress and undress, brush teeth, wash hands, eat dinner sitting at the table, take bath with adult watching)
- Understand beginning, middle, and end
- Begin to understand others' feelings
- Be independent with most self-care skills

Sometimes, children with disabilities may need special assistance to become more independent in doing daily routines. You might want to do the following:

- Expect your child to do only part of the routine, while you assist with the part that is difficult
- Provide help to your child so that he/she can complete the task
- Provide instructions in a different format, by modeling and/or using a picture or gesture so that your child understands what to do
- Allow extra time to complete the task

Teaching Your Child to Independently Complete Daily Routines

Young children like to feel independent, but sometimes they need a parent's encouragement to feel that they are capable and that adults believe that they "can" do it. Teaching independence with self-help skills like hand washing, brushing teeth, and dressing/undressing is an important step in development that can be achieved when children are taught how to do each step in each routine. Initially, it takes an adult's focused attention to teach children how to do these skills. Once the child learns how to do a skill independently, the adult can fade out of the routine completely.

When teaching your child independence in self help routines (brushing teeth, hand washing, getting dressed/undressed), try these simple, yet effective, tips:

1. Begin by getting down on your child's eye level and gaining his attention. (i.e., touch your child gently, make eye contact, physically guide, or jointly look at the same object).

2. Break down the routine into simple steps and state each step one at a time with positive and clearly stated directions. Sometimes we make the mistake of telling children what not to do or what they did wrong, such as, "Stop splashing in the water." However, it's more effective and clear to say, "All done washing, now it's time to turn off the water."

3. To clarify steps even further, you could take a photo of each step in the routine and post it where the routine takes place. For instance, with hand washing, you could post photos above the sink. As you state one step at a time, show your child the photograph to illustrate what needs to be done.

4. When teaching your child to do each step, model (i.e., demonstrate) how to do each step. After your child begins to learn the steps, you can take turns showing each other "how" to do the routine. Be prepared to provide your child with reminders about what to do. As a child first learns a skill, it's common to forget a step and need assistance. You can simply model and say, "Look, do this," and show how to do the step that is causing difficulty. If needed, you can gently physically guide your child in how to do the step so that he/she can feel successful.



5. For activities that might be difficult or not preferred, state the direction in a “first/then” phrase. For instance, “First wash hands, and then we can eat snack”; or “First brush your teeth, and then I can give you a minty fresh kiss”; or “First get dressed, and then you can choose milk or juice with breakfast.”
6. Offering children a “choice” during routines increases the likelihood that they will do the activity. With brushing teeth, you could say, “Do you want to use the mint toothpaste or the bubble gum toothpaste?”
7. It is very important that you encourage all attempts when your child is first learning how to do a routine. If you discourage or reprimand your child because it was not done quite right, his/her attempts at trying might stop. It’s important to let your child know you understand his/her feelings and then assist your child so that he/she feels successful. For example, “I know it’s hard to brush your teeth. Let me help. (Singing while you help brush) Brush, brush, brush your teeth; brush the front and back . . .

brush, brush, brush your teeth, attack the germs right back.” Remember that young children need a lot of practice—and your support—before they are able to do new skills independently.

8. Encourage your child as each routine is completed and celebrate when the task is done.

Why Do Children Sometimes Become Challenging When Learning to Do Self-Help Skills on Their Own?

As children grow, they are learning all kinds of new skills that will help them become more and more independent. A child might be using challenging behavior to communicate a variety of messages. For example, your child might need help with a task, and crying results in your providing that help. Or a child might have a tantrum to

communicate that the task is too difficult. Other children might have challenging behavior because they don’t want to leave a preferred activity (e.g., playing with toys) to do something that is less interesting (e.g., taking a bath). If you think you know the “message” of your child’s challenging behavior, a good strategy is to validate what the behavior seems to be saying. For example, you might say, “You are telling me that you don’t want to stop playing for your bath. But it’s time to be all done and get in the tub.”

What Can You Do When Children Refuse to Independently Do Daily Routines?

Remember, preschoolers are moving from the toddler stage, where much was done for them, to a new stage where they are becoming independent little people. Your child might need a bit of help or extra cueing when learning new skills that will build his/her ability to be more independent around everyday routines. Think about what your child needs and help him/her be successful...success builds independence! For instance, your child:

- Might want your attention because inappropriate behavior got attention in the past. Your child might refuse to listen or cooperate to gain your attention because this has worked before.
 - Remember to ignore the challenging behavior and teach calmly and clearly while guiding him/her through the task.



- Praise every little attempt to do any step. Attention to your child’s use of a new skill will strengthen that skill.
- Might not understand what you are trying to get him/her to do.
 - Restate your expectation in positive terms and show him/her how, with either photo cues and/or modeling.
- Could need a warning a few minutes prior to the routine.
 - Let him/her know there are only a few more minutes of “play time” and then it’s time to ____ (i.e., wash hands, eat dinner, undress/dress, brush teeth, etc.).
- Might not have heard what you asked him/her to do.
 - Gain attention and calmly and clearly restate the direction.
 - Try pairing the verbal direction with a gesture or model.
- Might feel rushed and confused.
 - As children learn new tasks, we need to slow down the routine and expect that it might take extra time to complete.
 - If you are feeling frustrated with your child and think your child is reacting to your

frustration, you might take a few deep breaths to feel calmer. First, take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth several times, and then proceed with clearly stating your expectation to your child.

- Might find the routine too difficult and need some modeling or partial help.
 - First, model how to do the first step and then say, “Now you show me.” Show one step at a time, allowing time for your child to process the information and imitate what you did before moving to the next step.
 - If needed, assist your child by gently guiding him/her through the steps.
 - Praise every attempt.

- Might need encouragement and to be validated.
 - You could say, “I see you are sad. This is hard. You can do it. Let me show you how.”

It is important to try to understand your child’s point of view and feelings. This will help you respond with the most appropriate cue. Encouragement and supporting your child’s attempts will build confidence.



The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning



Child Care Bureau



Office of Head Start



Creating Routines

Use of routines to guide daily activities (bed or nap times, meal times, getting ready for the day, what children should do when they arrive home from school, etc.) helps promote a sense of safety and security. Routine charts can be a helpful way to do this. Making these charts into a visual guide for children to follow helps them be more independent in following routines. By involving children in the process of creating routine charts, caregivers help them feel capable and important. For example, ask them to brainstorm everything they need to do to get ready in the morning, and then ask them to put the list in the order in which it should be done. Add to the list anything they may have forgotten, and help them arrange it in the right order if necessary.

Adding photos of children doing each step can be a fun activity to do together, and helps cue children who can't read. Allowing the routine charts to be the boss can also cut down on the need for nagging. Instead a caregiver can ask, "What's next on your routine chart?"

Thinking for themselves about what comes next helps strengthen children's belief in how capable they are and promotes problem solving skills. More ideas for creating routine charts can be found in "Tips and Ideas for Making Visuals" in this toolkit's *Transitions* section.



Rituals

What are Rituals?

Rituals are a series of acts done in a particular situation and in the same way each time.

The difference between rituals and routines is the attitude behind the ritual. Routines are not necessarily meaningful parts of our days, and so we tend to view them as chores. Rituals, on the other hand, are viewed as more meaningful activities. Often there is a sense of purpose and/or symbolism involved in rituals. Any routine can be turned into a ritual when we are fully engaged and aware of what we are doing and why.

Why Are Rituals Important?

- Use of rituals for times of transition between activities can be a helpful way to encourage children to stay calm.
- Rituals help cue children when change will happen, thus encouraging cooperation and smooth movement between activities.
- They give children something to do during times when they have to wait, and can help the time pass more quickly.



What Can Be Done?

- Sing songs, recite rhymes or do finger plays to cue children to transitions.
- Use the same ritual to signal a new activity each time that activity is done. For example, sing the same silly hand washing song each time children wash their hands.



MORE INFORMATION



Reassuring Routines and Rituals

Reading this in print? Go to:
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/professional/childdev/routine.htm>



Songs and Chants Instructions



Songs and Chants with Words



Songs and Chants

How Do I Use This Tool?

Singing songs, reciting rhymes, or doing finger plays during times of transition helps time pass more quickly and gives children something to do while waiting for new activities to start. Playing the same music or singing the same song when it is time to start something new helps children move more easily from one activity to another. This is especially important for children who have been exposed to trauma. This section's Songs and Chants with Words printable offers some ideas for songs and rhymes to use for this purpose.





Wiggle Your Fingers, Stomp Your Feet!

(Chant)



Wiggle your fingers in the air.

Wiggle them, wiggle them everywhere!

Stomp your feet upon the ground.

Stomp them, stomp them all around.





Now sit down and cross your feet.

Hands in lap and nice and neat.

Now we are ready to start our day,

We'll listen first, and then we'll play.



Do You Know What Time it Is?

(Tune—Muffin Man)

Do you know what time it is, what time it is, what time it is?

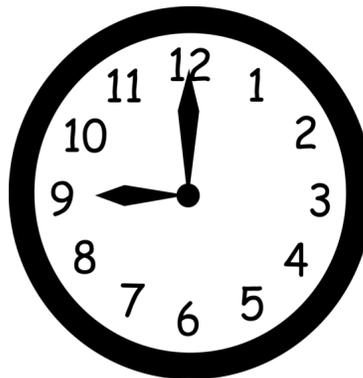
Do you know what time it is?

It's _____ o'clock in the (morning, afternoon, evening).

Variation:

Do you know what shape I have, what shape I have, what shape I have?

Do you know what shape I have, hiding in my can?



If You're Happy and You Know It

(different variations to the song)

If you're happy and you know it, skip with a smile,
If you're happy and you know it, skip with a smile,
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it,
If you're happy and you know it, skip with a smile!

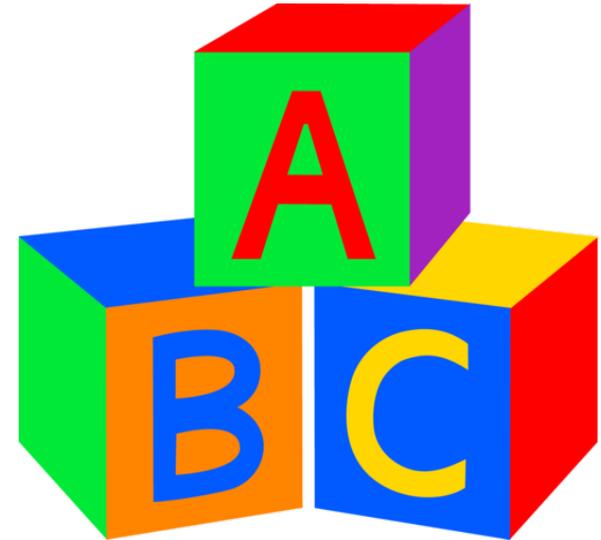
If you're sad and you know it, walk with a frown
If you're mad and you know it, stomp your feet!
If you're silly and you know it, shake all over.
If you're scared and you know it, hide your eyes.
If you're quiet and you know it, sit right down....Shhhhh!



We're Putting Our Toys Away

(Tune: The Farmer in the Dell)

We're putting our toys away,
We hope it won't take all day,
To have more fun,
We'll get it all done,
We're putting our toys away,



Tidy up

(Tune: Jingle Bells)

Tidy up, tidy up, put the toys away,
Tidy up, tidy up we're finished for today.
Tidy up, tidy up, put the toys away.
For we'll get them out again the next time that we play.

Color Song

(Tune: If You're Happy and You Know It)

If your clothes have any red, any red
If your clothes have any red, any red
If your clothes have any red, any red, put your finger on your head,
If your clothes have any red, any red.

Additional Verses:

Blue—finger on your shoe

Yellow—smile like a happy fellow

Brown—turn your smile into a frown

Black—put your hands behind your back

White—stomp your feet with all your might



This is the Way I Move!

(Tune: Mulberry Bush)

This is the way I touch my nose, touch my nose, touch my nose,
This is the way I touch my nose, when I'm at Preschool!

This is the way I jump up and down...

This is the way I balance on one foot...

This is the way I spin in a circle...

This is the way I hop like this...

This is the way I touch my toes...

This is the way I stretch up high...

This is the way I sit on my spot...



Little Wiggle

(Chant)

I had a little wiggle, deep inside of me.
I tried to make it stop,
But it wouldn't let me be.
I pulled out that wiggle and threw it like a ball.
Now my wiggle's gone
And it's bouncing down the hall!



Finger on Your Lips

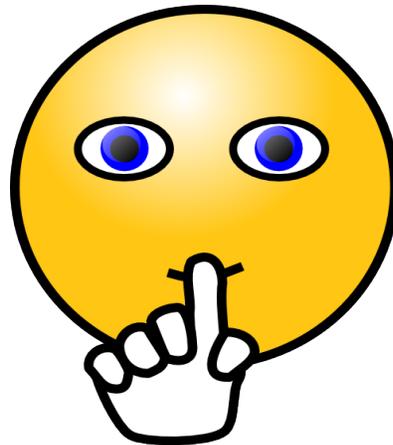
(Tune: If You're Happy and You Know It)

Put your finger on your lips, on your lips, shhh, shh.

Put your finger on your lips, on your lips, shhh, shh.

Put your finger on your lips and don't let it slip.

Put your finger on your lips, on your lips, shhh, shh.



Washing Hands Song

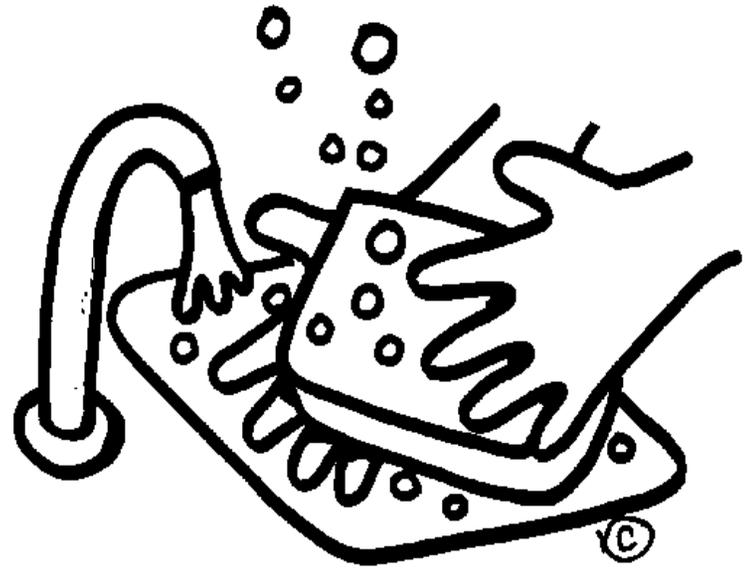
(Tune: Row Your Boat)

Wash, wash, wash, your hands,

Soap will make them clean,

Scrub the germs til they fall off,

Germs go down the drain.



Criss Cross Applesauce

(Chant)

Criss Cross applesauce,

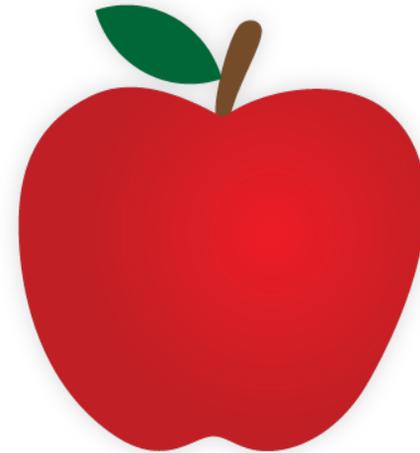
Hands on lap, gingersnap.

Back straight, chocolate shake

On my rear, root beer.

Lips zipped, cool whip

Shhhhhhh!!



Transitions¹

What are Transitions?

For our purpose, transitions are defined as the times when children move from one activity to another. Common transition times are when children arrive at school or day care, meal or snack times, nap or bed times, and anytime there is movement from one activity to another.

Why Are Transitions Important?

- Transition times often invite misbehavior from children.
- Misbehavior with transitions is more likely to occur when:
 - Clear instructions are not given so children do not know what is expected of them.
 - There are too many children transitioning at the same time and in the same way.
 - There are too many transitions.
 - Transitions are too long and children have to wait with nothing to do.
 - There is no consistency on how transitions are implemented.
 - Children are expected to transition without warning.
- Some children have more difficulty staying emotionally regulated with transitions because of a disability or history of trauma, which can result in difficulties with problem solving, communication, or social-emotional skills.



¹ Adapted from Hemmeter, M. & Ostosky, M. & Artman, K. & Kinder, K. "Moving Right Along...Planning Transitions to Prevent Challenging Behavior," Young Child Journal (May 2008) National Association for the Education of Young Children. Retrieved Sept. 14, 2015 from http://journal.naeyc.org/btj/200805/pdf/BTJ_Hemmeter_Transitions.pdf

What Can Be Done?

- Plan ahead
 - Design a daily schedule that allows for a limited number of transitions. Look to combine transitions.
 - Plan activities such as singing to keep children occupied during transitions and let children start the new activity as soon as they are ready rather than waiting. For example, sing songs or play waiting games during this time. If possible, allow children to start the new activity as soon as they are ready, instead of waiting for everyone to be ready before getting started.
- Fold snack times into other activities so children can eat when they're ready.
- Give a verbal warning five to 10 minutes before transitions happen. This helps children be ready.
- Pay attention to what is happening during transition times and make changes as needed.
 - At child care centers and schools, ask someone to watch during transition times, taking note of what adults and children are doing, and any misbehavior that occurs, including what triggered it.
 - At home, pay attention to what you and your child do during transitions. Giving some thought to what might have triggered any misbehavior will provide clues for finding solutions.
 - Design a transition plan using what you have learned. For example, it might be helpful to post an adult at the door to engage children in an activity when they line up. It may also be helpful to identify children who need additional support for transitions such as individualized reminders or visual schedule reminders.
- Use of interactive games and songs can help make transitions interesting and minimize the likelihood of misbehavior.
 - For example, while children take turns washing their hands, have another activity going on such as singing songs or reading books. When children finish washing, ask them to gently tap another child to signal that it is his/her turn.
- Teach children what to do during transitions so the expectations are clear.
 - Break each activity down into small steps that you will need to explain and model several times in different ways.
 - Post a visual schedule for different activities to help children learn the order and role-play each step.
 - After children have some practice, mix up the pictures and ask them to put them in order.
 - Children enjoy being the models for their peers. A child can demonstrate while you narrate the procedure.
- Post a visual schedule for different activities. This helps children learn the order in which activities happen, what comes next and prepare for transitions.
- Be prepared to problem solve individual solutions for children who continue to have difficulty despite your best efforts to follow these guidelines.



MORE INFORMATION



Moving Right Along...Planning Transitions to Prevent Challenging Behavior

From National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Reading this in print? Go to:
http://journal.naeyc.org/btj/200805/pdf/BTJ_Hemmeter_Transitions.pdf



Tips and Ideas for Making Visuals

From the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children

**TIPS AND IDEAS FOR
MAKING VISUALS**

**To Support Young Children with Problem
Behavior**

**Rochelle Lentini and Lise Fox
University of South Florida**

WHY USE VISUAL STRATEGIES

1. Visual strategies can be used to prevent problem behavior.
2. Visual strategies are helpful in supporting and increasing both receptive and expressive communication.
3. Just as adults use calendars, grocery lists, and “to-do” lists to enhance memory, children benefit from visual reminders.
4. Visuals are static, meaning that they remain present after words are spoken. Children can refer to them once the spoken words are no longer present. Visuals serve as a reminder of the verbal direction.
5. Visuals assist children in knowing exactly what is expected of them. (e.g., washing hands independently, cleaning up toys)
6. Regular routines, when represented visually, can be taught to children at a very young age. Once taught, the adult can fade out of the routine and allow the child to self-monitor the routine to completion.
7. For many children, visual supports are most beneficial when used in conjunction with spoken language and/or sign language.
8. Visuals can act as a cue to teach appropriate behavior or new skills for children who are having challenging behavior.

PICTURE TIPS

1. Remember that children communicate and understand at **different levels**.
2. Determine your child’s “**visual stage**” (or combination of):
 - Object Stage*: use of actual objects and items for communication needs
 - Photo Stage*: use of real photographs (photo, digital, scanned, magazines, catalogs, coupon adds, Izone Camera which prints out mini-Poloroid pictures with adhesive on the back side of the picture, ...) for communication needs
 - Picture Symbolic Stage*: use of colored line drawings (hand-drawn or commercially produced) for communication needs
 - Line Drawing Stage*: use of black and white line drawings (hand-drawn or commercially produced) for communication needs
 - Text Stage*: use of written words and/or numbers for communication needs
3. Use **written text along with** photographs, pictures, and line drawings to promote reading. Written text also assures that everyone interacting with the child uses the same language for a particular item.
4. Present visuals **from left to right** if your child can scan horizontally. Horizontal orientation will also prepare the child for reading. (Note: Some children are vertical scanners. In this case, present visuals from top to bottom.)
5. Photographing tips:
 - Place item or object on a **solid/high contrasting background** when taking photo.

Note: If you are trying to communicate “go potty” and you take a photo of the toilet, try to avoid including the bathtub in the picture. The child may focus on the tub instead of the intended picture of the toilet.

Try to take the photograph from the **child’s perspective**.

6. Preparing the picture visuals:

Remember to make the “picture” sturdy, **easy to handle**, and durable.

Either print on cardstock or glue to a file folder, then cover with contact paper or laminate.

7. **Pictures can be obtained from a variety of places:**

Photographs: camera, digital, computer scanning, magazines, catalogs, coupons, advertisements, Izone Camera, internet sites, commercial computer programs...

Picture Symbols & Line Drawings: computer scanning, magazines, catalogs, coupon ads, internet sites, commercial computer programs, coloring books and dittoes, hand-drawn pictures, etc.

CHOICE CHARTS

1. Allowing for choice making gives children **opportunities for socially appropriate power and control**.
2. **Give choices** at every opportunity possible. (“Do you want the blue cup or the red cup?”)
3. If you don’t have a visual that represents a particular choice, **use the actual item** or a representation of the choices. (e.g., food choice, art materials, toy pieces, video choices,...)
4. When first introducing choices, **start with 2 or 3 choices**; then, gradually with communication progress, increase the amount of choices offered at one time.
5. Examples of **Choice Boards** commonly used: (Start with one category at a time.)
 - Foods & Drinks
 - Toy Choices
 - Activity Choices (tickle game, chase, computer, swim...)
 - Places (restaurants, library, stores, park, beach ...)
 - Material Choices (Such as for art: colors, utensils, medians)
 - Clothing & Shoes
 - Actions (stop, do, sit, eat, drink, sleep, do it again, my turn, take a break, ...)
 - People
 - Songs
6. Choice Boards or Charts need to be placed in a location that is **accessible to the child** (on their eye level and within their reach) for quick and easy use.
7. **Incorporate a child’s preference**, when possible, in choice charts and choice making. For instance, if the child likes “Blue’s Clues”, place “Blue’s Clues” stickers along the border to increase attention (unless it is distracting).



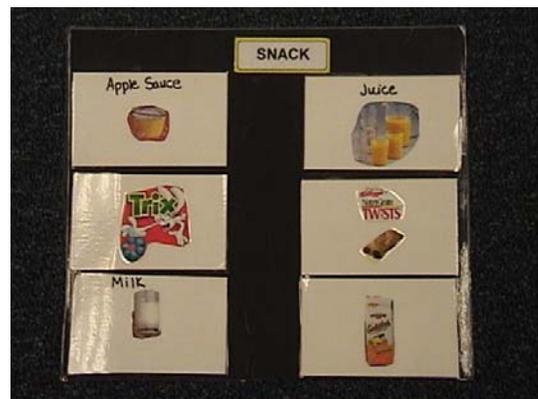
Boardmaker© activity picture choices on file folder



Digital camera



Combination of downloaded Boardmaker© and Internet pictures on a center choice poster board



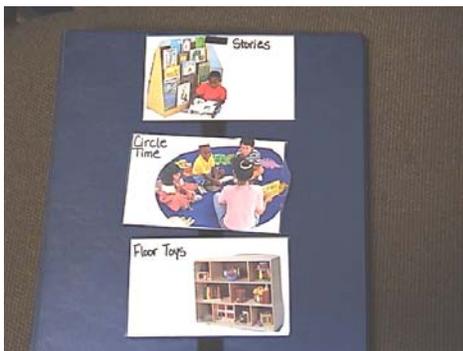
Snack choices with pictures from food containers and coupon advertisement.

HOW TO MAKE A VISUAL SCHEDULE

1. **Gather Materials:** Scissors, glue stick, poster board, clear contact paper (Wal-Mart, Office Depot), Velcro (Wal-Mart, fabric store, Sams Club), pictures (photographs, pictures from magazines, computer programs, cereal boxes, household supplies, restaurant napkins, placemats, wrappers, etc.). *TIP: Every picture should have a label so your child can associate the written text with the picture.*
2. **Choose pictures** for the schedule you wish to create. Keep in mind that a visual schedule is used to assist children with transitions and anticipating activities throughout the day. It can be as specific or as generalized as the children may need and can be for

various amounts of time. For example, a visual schedule may outline parts of a day, half-day, or an entire day.

3. **Cut your pictures** and poster board squares the same size. Keep in mind your child's developmental level (see handout "Picture Tips" to determine your child's visual picture stage).
4. **Glue** the pictures on poster board squares for durability.
5. **Laminate or cover the pictures** with clear contact paper.
6. **Velcro** a small piece of Velcro on the back center of each picture. *TIP: Always use the same type of Velcro for pictures and the opposite kind for the schedule board.*
7. **Create a strip** to hold the schedule. Cut out poster board long enough to hold all the pictures for the block on time you are creating a schedule. You may create a pocket at the bottom/end that represents "finished" or "all done." *TIP: If your child visually tracks up and down, you will want the schedule to be vertical. If your child visually tracks from side to side you will want to make a horizontal schedule (horizontal schedules promote reading skills).* Laminate the strip and place a long piece of Velcro down the center.
8. **Velcro the pictures** to the schedule in the order they will occur. Teach the child how to use the schedule by explaining and modeling how to use the pictures. Remember to always include changes in the schedule and to review them with the child. *When setting up the schedule you can either turn the pictures over as you move through the schedule to indicate that the activity is finished or you can remove the picture entirely from the schedule and place it in a pocket with the word "finished" on it. If you are going to turn over the picture as you complete each schedule item, make sure to put Velcro on the front without covering the picture/text. This will enable the picture to adhere to the Velcro strip and then once the day is complete you can easily set-up the schedule for the next day by turning all the cards back over to show the pictures.*
9. **Use the schedule!** Keep the schedule located in a convenient place at the children's eye level to promote consistent use. Use the schedule as part of your routine.
10. **Celebrate!** Be sure to celebrate your success and the children's success. Praise children for following the schedule appropriately! Good luck!



Binder with schedule pictures from catalogs and glued to index cards



Class photo schedule in clear pockets for easy removal



Boardmaker© schedule pictures with removable miniatures to carry while transitioning from one location to another



Mini photo album used for carrying visuals when traveling

HOW TO MAKE A FIRST/THEN BOARD

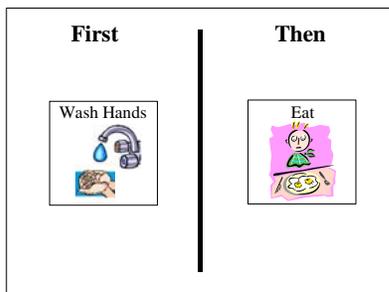
A first/then board can be used to communicate a sequence of events or to reinforce completion of a non-preferred activity. A first/then board can be used in a variety of ways:

- *Assist with transition from one activity to another*
- *Assist in completing non-preferred tasks by reinforcing with a preferred activity*
- *Breaking a large schedule or sequence of events into smaller steps*
 - *First/Then boards can be broken down into two-step activities. For example, “FIRST clean up, THEN go outside.”*
 - *First/Then boards can be broken down into a sequence of steps followed by a reinforcer or the next transition. For example, “FIRST color-cut-glue, THEN computer.”*

Making the First/Then Board

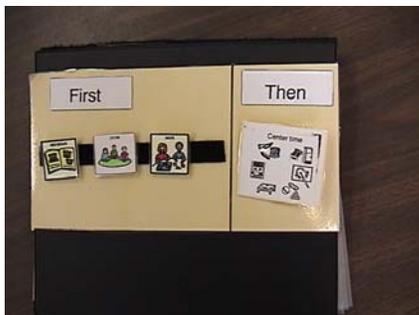
1. **Gather the materials:** Scissors, glue stick, poster board or file folder, clear contact paper (purchase at Wal-Mart, Office Depot...), Velcro (Wal-Mart, fabric store, Sam’s Club...), pictures (photographs, pictures from magazines, computer programs, cereal boxes, household supplies, restaurant menus or placemats, wrappers, etc.). *TIP: Every picture should have a label so your child can associate the written text with the picture.*
2. **Collect pictures** to represent activities (refer to section on “Picture Tips” to determine your child’s visual stage).
3. **Cut the pictures** out and paste on poster board for durability or print on cardstock.
4. **Laminate or cover** in contact paper.
5. **Use a file folder or cut the poster board** large enough to hold several of the pictures. Divide the sections by making a vertical line to separate the first/then sides. Laminate or cover in contact paper.

6. **Velcro** small pieces of Velcro on the back of the pictures. *TIP: Make sure you use the same side of Velcro on all pictures. Next, place a strip of opposite Velcro on both sides of the first/then board.*
7. As you **use the “First/Then” board** with your child, try to place a reinforcing activity or item on the “then” side of the board. This will increase the likelihood that child will complete the activities on the “first” side of the board (see samples below). As each activity is completed, turn the picture over to indicate that the activity is “finished”.
8. Once your child successfully follows the first/then board activities, **change the pictures** according to the activity. When using a first/then schedule, remember to model the behavior. It shouldn't take long before your child understands the first/then concept! If your child is not following the first/then board, consider the visual stage you have selected by referring to the “Picture Tips” section. It is also possible that activity on the “then” side is not reinforcing for your child.
9. **Celebrate your success!**



Microsoft Clipart© pictures on a simple 2 step transition “First/Then” board.

Activities pictured on the left side represent 2 activities within circle time, then the bold line represents the transition to the next place



Activities pictured on the left side represent a mini-schedule of activities prior to the transition to the activity pictured on the right



The schedule pictured on the left side represented activities within circle time. The bold line represents the transition to the next place.

OTHER CREATIVE IDEAS FOR USE OF VISUAL STRATEGIES

Routine Activity Sequences



This is an example of the toothbrushing routine in Brendan's home. The pictures are of his brother to increase the likelihood that Brendan would attend to the visual and also to give his brother a sense of involvement.

Activity Analysis Using Clip Art



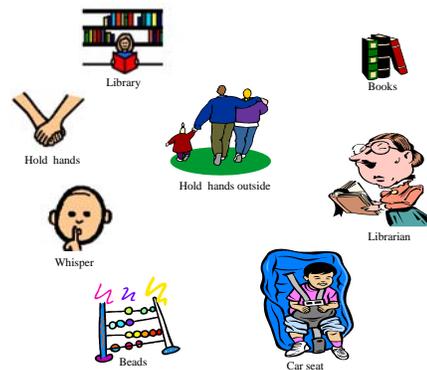
This is an example of the steps to follow when washing hands.

Turn-Taking Charts

Cue Cards



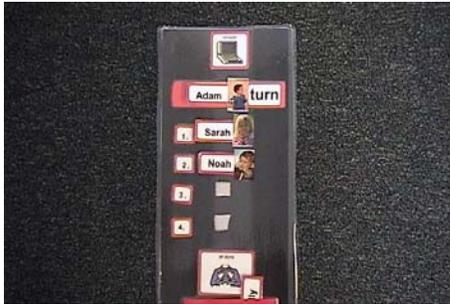
Cue cards are placed on a ring with "stop" on one side and the cue (shown above) on the other side. The ring of cues could easily be attached to a key ring, necklace, or beltloop for easy access for cueing.



These pictures were placed on small cue cards on a ring to cue Brendan in the library.



These cues were hand-drawn and placed on a ring to use to cue Brendan at swim lessons.



Children place their names with pictures on the turn chart to indicate order at the computer. As a turn is completed at the sound of a timer, the child places his/her name/picture in the “all done” pocket, and the next child takes a turn.



Because of Brendan’s preference of traffic signals, a reminder chart was created to cue him to “stop computer”, “go pee-pee”, then “go back to the computer”.

Stop Signs

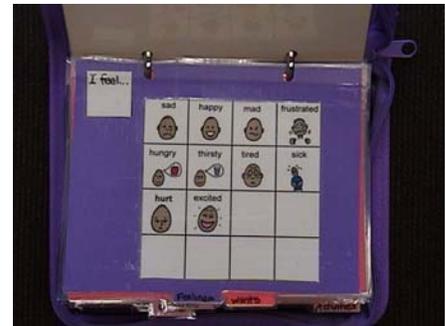


Stop signs can be used on items and doors to help cue children when items or activities are “not a choice”.



A stop sign is placed on the door remind children to “stop and stay inside.”

Feeling Charts



Feeling pictures in an easy-to-carry book acts as a visual reminder when children are trying to express feelings. The child can either point to the appropriate “feeling picture” or say what is being felt.

**Job Charts, Toy/Activity Self Labels, People Locators are other possible ideas.*

