

SNIP Inclusion Training Toolkit

Part 3: Using Visual Tools to Support Inclusion



2/15/2013

Using Visual Tools to Support Inclusion

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I See What You Are Saying: Using Visual Strategies to Promote Children's Independence, Participation and Understanding.

TRAINING DESCRIPTION:

Do you use lists to help you stay organized or a calendar to help you remember appointments? These are some examples of visual strategies that help us with our daily routines. Many people are visual learners, yet a great deal of our communication with children is done verbally. This workshop will explore various types and uses of visual strategies to help all children understand daily routines and take part in activities more independently.

Audience: OST line staff and staff supervisors

Content: This workshop is related to SF AFA Competencies #5, #18

TRAINING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- 1) Describe what visual supports are and how they can benefit all learners,
- 2) Create their own visual supports to enhance their program activities.

AGENDA:

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Gallery Walk**
3. **What are Visual Supports? How do I start?**
4. **Your turn: Practice Activity**
5. **Bridges and Barriers**
6. **Evaluation, questions, wrap up**

What are Visual Supports?

Visual supports are things that we see. They often give us information and help support communication.

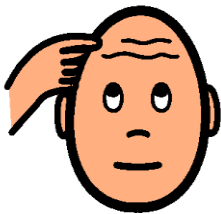
Think about these visual supports:

- Body Language - crossed arms, stamping feet
- Gestures – waving, blowing a kiss
- Facial expression – frown, smile
- Environmental Cues – thunderclouds, water boiling on the stove
- Photos – catalogues, travel brochures, car brochures
- Signs – street signs, restroom, information, first aid
- Pictures – furniture assembly instructions, road maps
- Text – recipes, reminder notes



Adults use visual supports all the time. Calendars, alarm clocks, shopping lists, to do lists, road maps and diaries are all examples of visual supports.

Who can benefit from visual supports?



During your out of school time program, have you ever thought?

"I've told her three times already!"

"He's so disorganized"

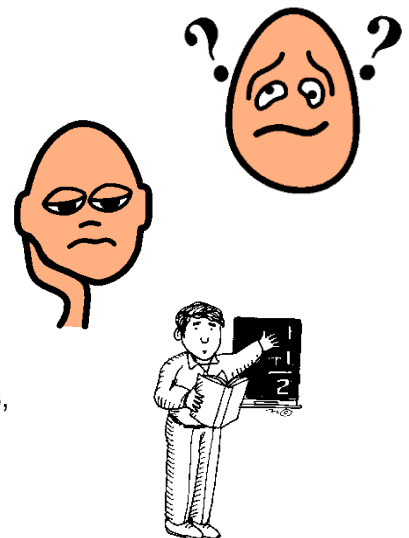
"He never pays attention"

"She doesn't cope well with changes"

All of these children might benefit from using visual supports.

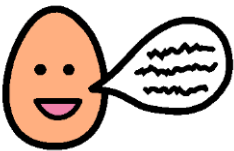
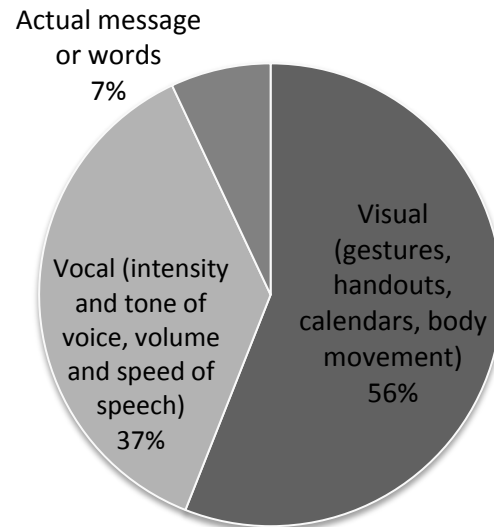
Visual supports can also be useful for children who:

- Are learning English
- Are easily distracted
- Follow the group and copy others
- Have difficulty attending to a speaker
- Have difficulty listening in busy environments
- Have difficulty remembering
- Don't like change or transitions
- Have language, hearing and other impairments
- They can also be useful for other adults in the room, such as substitutes, volunteers, aides and paraprofessionals.

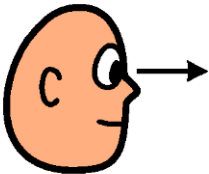


Why would I use Visual Supports?

Research about communication shows us that communication is:



Spoken word can be transient and fleeting, once it has been said, it's gone! It can also be abstract, and worded differently each time you say it. For example, "it's packing up time" gives the same message, but sounds different to "time to clean up". Spoken word relies on the listener to be attending to you, and understand what you have said, and often remember it later.



Visual supports can always be there so you can refer to them to remind yourself. Visual supports can also be easily recognizable, and are usually consistent and don't change, making it easier for you to learn and remember what they mean.

When can I use them?

Visual supports can be used if you want to:



Give Information

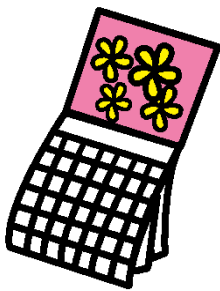


Encourage participation in daily tasks and activities



Promote independence

Visual Schedules

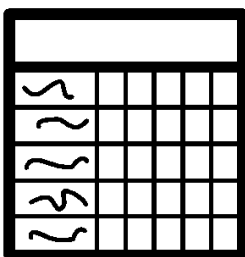


Visual schedules are commonly used visual supports that provide information about what is happening in what order. They help provide an environment that is predictable and understandable, and can prepare people for changes and surprises.

During your program, visual schedules can tell children what is happening during the day or what is happening during the week. They can guide students through the major segments and transitions of the day.

Visual Supports: How Do I Start?

1. *Decide what the visual support needs to do*

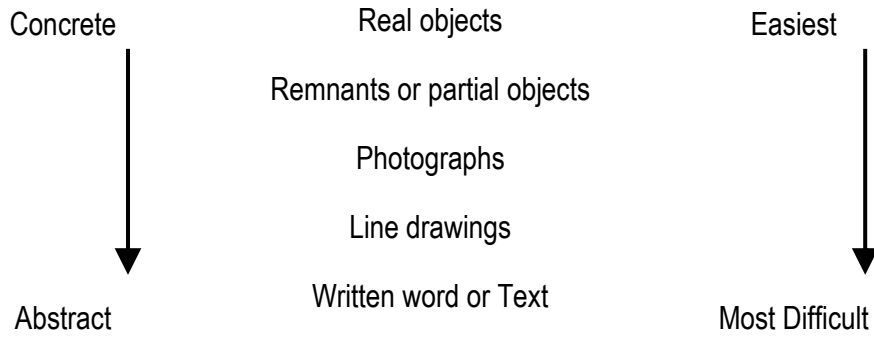
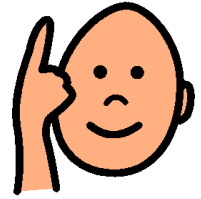


Visual supports can be used for many purposes and in many ways. Almost everything you say can be presented in a visual way. Sometimes you can give information visually in a way that's much easier than actually saying it.

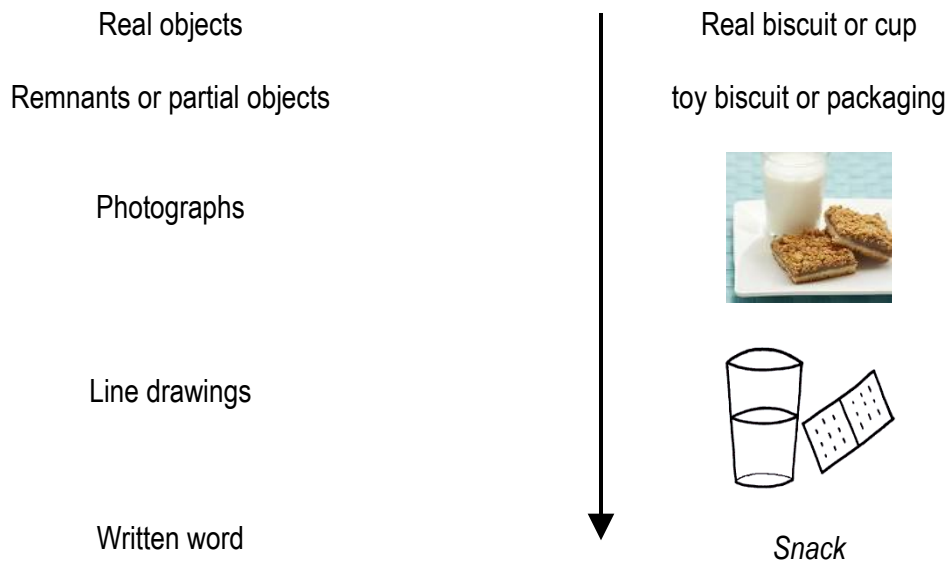
Think about what you want your visual support to do. Is it going to provide information? (about transitions, about where people are, about what's happening next), is it going to give choices? Is it going to help organize? Is it going to help teach a new skill?

2. What does the child understand?

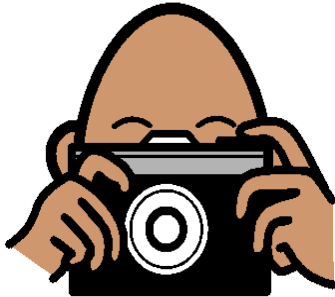
There are lots of types of visual supports you can use, including actual objects, pictures, photographs & text. Some are easier than others to recognize and understand.



For example:



3. Gather the visual supports

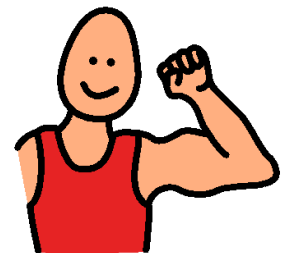


- Choose visuals that are appropriate to the children's level of understanding.
- When you choose a picture, try to make sure the image is clear and specific, so it is just the item you're talking about, not background information (e.g.: is it the computer, or the desk which has a computer on it, or the classroom?)
- Try to reduce the distraction in the background of the photo.
- If you have children in your group who are very literal, be careful about using photographs. Some children might only drink out of a red cup if that is what is in the photograph.
- It's a good idea to pair text with the picture to help develop children's literacy skills.

4. Make them durable

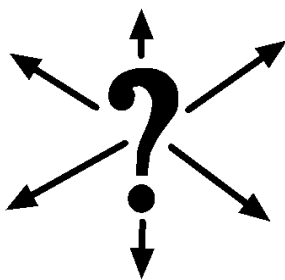
There are lots of ways you can make the visuals durable. Think about using laminate, clear contact paper, tag board, kitchen magnets, magnet paper, index cards, packing tape, plastic sleeves, cardboard, poster boards or carpet squares.

When thinking about how you will attach your pictures, try Velcro, Blu-tak or adhesive putty, magnets or pocket squares



5. Decide on the location and framework

Planning out your visual support at the start will make using it a lot easier later.

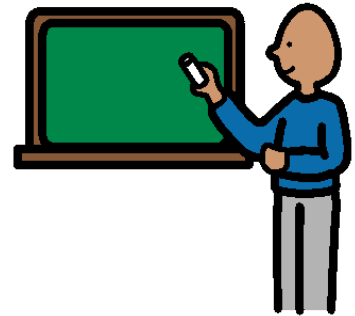


- Think about who will be using the visual support. Will it be the whole group or an individual? Often, more than one child in the group will benefit from using it, and children will often use the pictures to communicate with each other.
- Does the visual schedule need to co-ordinate with times? How will you show this? Using times can be great for some children so they know exactly when things will happen. However, you will need to be prepared for when things don't happen on time, how will you explain this?
- Where will the visual support be placed? It's generally best to keep the visual supports somewhere consistent so the children always know where to find it. If you need to have a visual support that is portable, how will you move it around? Where will it be displayed? Can you wear it on a lanyard? Or put it on a clipboard, in a binder, on the side of your program trolley?

- How will you store extra pieces? Visual supports are much easier to use when you can find the picture you need, when you need them. Some good ideas for storage are envelopes, zip lock bags, binders with Velcro strips inside, recipe card boxes, takeout containers
- Will you use a 'finish' envelope, pouch or box? These can help children understand when something is completed, and assist in transitions
- How big does it need to be? It will need to be big enough that you can put everything you need on it; in a way that everyone can see it. However, it also needs to be small enough to manage, move and store.

6. Decide how you will use it

Think about what your routine will be when using the visual support. Try to keep it as consistent as possible so that children can learn it. When you are using the visual support, make sure you have the children's attention first. Show them the image and pair it with the verbal information, telling them clearly what it is or what is happening.



7. Use it!



For a visual support to be beneficial, you actually need to use it! You need to follow it, and show the children that you are following it. Refer back to it regularly during the day or the activity. If you're not following it – change it!

Visual Supports: How do I start?

1. **Decide what** the visual supports needs to do
 - Provide choices?
 - Give information about transitions?
 - Give information about people's whereabouts?
 - Give information about what's happening next?
 - Help organize things?
 - Encourage participation?
 - Encourage independence?

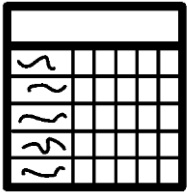
2. **What does the child understand?**
 - Pictures, photos, text, objects etc (see the hierarchy of visual supports)
 - **Gather the visual supports**
 - Take the photo, find picture symbols, cut out packaging
 - Try to make them clear & specific (i.e. just the item you're talking about, not background information)
 - Be wary of being too literal (e.g.: if you have a red cup, will the child only drink from a red cup?)

3. **Make them durable**
 - Use laminate, contact paper, cardboard, tag board, magnets, magnet paper
 - Use Velcro, blu tak, tag board, cardboard, poster board, carpet squares
 - **Decide on location and framework**
 - Is it for individuals, a group or both?
 - Does it need to coordinate with times? (eg: school bell)
 - Will it be in a consistent place or moveable?
 - Will the children need to access it?
 - Is it in a central place where everyone can see it?
 - Does it need a finish envelope?
 - How will extra pieces be stored?
 - How big does it need to be?
 - If it needs to be portable, can it go on a lanyard, in a binder, on a clipboard?

4. **Decide how it will be used?**
 - What will your routine be?
 - Will you take off pictures? Use a finish envelope? Place a check? Turn them over? Point to the next item?

5. **Use it!**
 - Follow the schedule
 - If you're not following it, change it
 - Refer back to it regularly during the activity

Your Turn:



Decide what the visual support needs to be



What does the child understand?



Gather the visual supports



How will it be durable?



Decide on the location & framework



How will it be used?



Use it!

25 Reasons to Use Visual Supports

From <http://www.usevisualstrategies.com/AutismArticles/25ReasonstouseVisualStrategies.aspx>

1. **Establish Attention:** Looking helps students establish attention better than just listening. Once they have focused their attention, the rest of the communication message can get in.
2. **Give Information:** How do students get information to answer the who, what, why, where, when questions?
3. **Explain Social Situations:** The social world can be confusing. People are moving, changing and often unpredictable. Sharing social information both verbally and through writing helps students understand.
4. **Give Choices:** How do students know what the options are? What is available? What is not available?
5. **Give Structure To The Day:** Telling what is happening or what is not happening. Sharing the big picture tends to reduce anxiety.
6. **Teach Routines:** Following multiple steps in a routine will be easier when the student can see what they are. They will learn a routine faster when they don't make a lot of mistakes.
7. **Organize Materials In The Environment:** Where are the things we need? Is it clear where to put supplies away when it is clean up time?
8. **Organize The Space In The Environment:** Can the student identify his own space to work or play or sit? Which parts of the environment can he use and which parts are "off limits."
9. **Teach New Skills:** Learning to operate a new toy or piece of equipment. Learning a new task or academic skill.
10. **Support Transitions:** Stopping one activity to start another. Moving from one environment to another. Anything that involves a shift or change.
11. **Stay On Task:** Remembering what the current activity is and staying involved with it until it is completed. What does it mean to be "finished?"
12. **Ignore Distractions:** Help students consciously focus their attention on desired activities or interactions.
13. **Manage Time:** How long is 5 minutes or one hour? How much time is there before a transition in the schedule? Time is invisible. Timers and clocks turn time into something students can see . . . something concrete and visual.
14. **Communicate Rules:** People presume students know the rules. That is often not true. Perhaps they don't remember. Or they don't understand. Or they get too impulsive. Etc., etc.

15. Assist Students In Handling Change: Prepare for something that is going to change. Preparing students when something will be different from what they normally expect can prevent many problems from occurring.
16. Guide Self-Management: Students need to learn how to manage themselves when they get anxious or encounter a problem.
17. Aid Memory: Remembering what to do or when to do it. Remembering the name of an object or a person. (Think about how many ways you provide cues for yourself for this one!)
18. Speed-up Slow Thinking: Some students have lots of information in their brains, but it takes them a very long time to access it. Visual cues can speed that process.
19. Support Language Retrieval: Did you ever have an experience where you know someone's name but you just can't remember it? Or you know what something is but can't recall the word? Once you hear it or see it you instantly remember. (The older we are, the worse it becomes!) Students can experience the same challenges in remembering and word retrieval.
20. Provide Structure: Structure means organized and predictable. Many students function better in environments where things don't change much. Strive for an environment that provides visual organization and information.
21. Learn Vocabulary: Create a personal dictionary with pictures and words of important vocabulary: peoples' names, favorite toys or videos or activities or places. Students will learn that information when they can access it over and over.
22. Communicate Emotions: Students demonstrate a variety of emotions with their actions. Translating those responses into pictures or written language gives an opportunity to explain, clarify or validate their experience.
23. Clarify Verbal Information: What I understood might not be what you meant. Making it visual helps clarify our conversation. It eliminates the confusion.
24. Organize Life Information: Think of phone numbers, calendars, cooking instructions, shopping lists, social security numbers, appointments, etc.
25. Review & Remember: One of the greatest benefits of making something visual is that you can keep it. Verbal language flies away. It disappears. Keeping the visual information to review over and over helps students remember and understand.

Other Resources

Visual Strategies information

- www.usevisualstrategies.com
- <http://connectability.ca/2010/07/24/supported-inclusion/> (go to the communication : visual supports section)
- <http://www.cheri.com.au/documents/Visualsupportsforpeoplewithdevelopdisorders.pdf>
- <http://www.disabilitysolutions.org/newsletters/files/five/5-5.pdf>
- <http://www.disabilitysolutions.org/newsletters/files/five/5-4.pdf>

Free On-line pictures

- www.do2learn.com
- <http://connectability.ca/visuals-engine/>
- www.usevisualstrategies.com/AutismVisualPrintablePictures.aspx
- www.sparklebox.co.uk
- <http://www.setbc.org/pictureSET/Default.aspx>
- www.pdictionary.com
- www.freeclipartnow.com
- Google image search
- ClipArt
- Google 'free stock photos' for lots of sites that offer free photographs (eg: morguefile)

Nursery Rhymes to sing & see

- <http://www.scopevic.org.au/index.php/site/resources/nurseryrhymes>

For more information or resources please contact SNIP on **282 7494 ext. 105**

SNIP can also provide free technical assistance and assistance in developing Visual Supports for San Francisco OST programs that are funded by DCYF.

