

# **Using Visual Schedules to Establish Routines at Home**

# What is a visual schedule?

A visual schedule is a guide that can assist both students and parents in creating structure and routine in daily activities. A visual schedule is a series of pictures, words or symbols that are used to indicate a series of events that one would follow throughout the day. Visual schedules may be used to tackle various daily activities and can be very effective during distance learning. There are many different kinds of visual schedules and individuals in all age groups may benefit from using one.



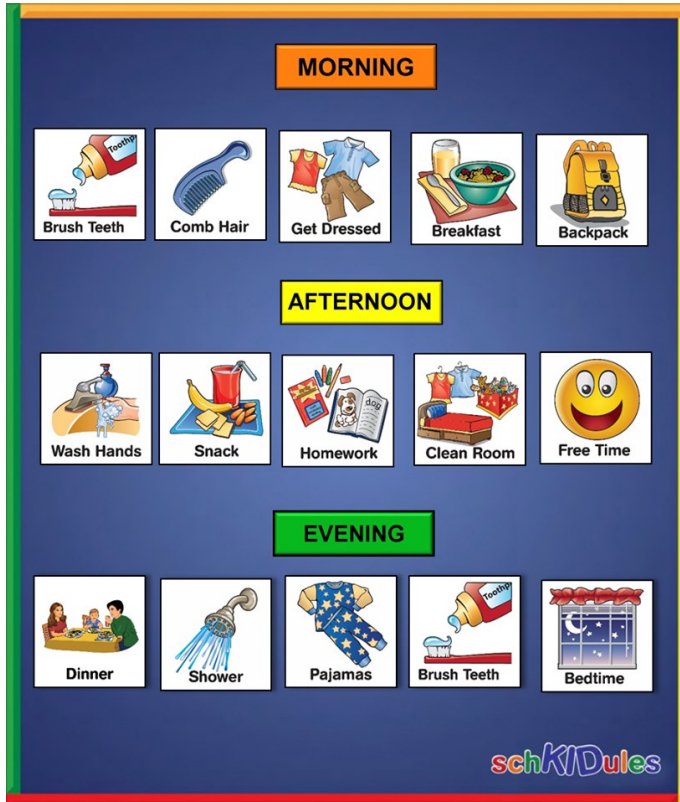
# Benefits of Visual Schedules

There are many benefits in using a visual schedule, some of which include:

- Creating structure and routine in daily activities
- Providing students with predictability, independence and consistency
- Decreasing tantrums and off task behaviors
- Increasing more on task behaviors
- Helping ease anxiety and frustration during transitions
- Remembering what to do that day
- Knowing when things are “done”!



# Evidence Based Practice



Research shows that visual schedules can be especially helpful for a variety of children. Visual cues such as a schedule or a routine is a helpful source of consistency that can help students be more successful in everyday activities and in distance learning

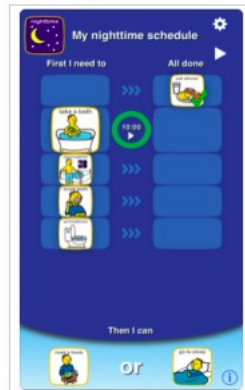
[https://ed-psych.utah.edu/school-psych/\\_documents/grants/autism-training-grant/Visual-Schedules-Practical-Guide-for-Families.pdf](https://ed-psych.utah.edu/school-psych/_documents/grants/autism-training-grant/Visual-Schedules-Practical-Guide-for-Families.pdf)

# Different Types of Visual Schedules

Here are some examples of different types of visual schedules. Some schedules can have specific time blocks for each activity and others just a sequence of events.



Written whiteboard schedule with time blocks



Choiceworks visual schedule

iTunes



# Different Types of Visual Schedules



- A schedule with images or icons may be more appealing to younger students, whereas a calendar, a written to do list or a typed schedule may suit the middle school student better.
- Depending on the student, schedules can include all parts of the day or only parts of the day that they struggle to be most productive.



# How to get started

- Establish a routine you want to target.
- Determine the length of the schedule. Some children may be okay with long schedules, whereas for some it may be overwhelming. If that is the case, try breaking the schedule into 3 different parts of the day - morning, afternoon, evening, and creating a separate schedule for each one.
- Select an appropriate visual format based on age, skill, and interest. For younger students use icons, images, or drawings. Older students may be more interested in using a planner, a written schedule or even an iTunes app.
- Introduce each step of the schedule and check for understanding. When using icons or pictures, make sure the child knows what each one represents.



# How to get started cont.

- Go over the routine of a visual schedule multiple times.
- After consistently using a visual schedule, the child should require less prompting and acquire more independence in utilizing one. When questions such as “What should I be doing right now?” or “When will I be done?” or “What’s next?” arise, refer back to the visual schedule.
- Watch this video below for a detailed explanation and an example of an effective visual schedule.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJvBqR6B0VI&frags=pl%2Cwn](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJvBqR6B0VI&frags=pl%2Cwn)



# Tips/Considerations

- A visual schedule should be easily accessible to the student.
- Schedules may be based on time or completion.
- The student will more likely follow a schedule that is easily understood by them.
- Actively involve the student when making the schedule. Providing the child with the opportunity to create their own schedule may increase the likeliness and interest of following one.
- Consider including breaks within activities that are harder for the student to complete.



# Tips/Considerations cont.

- When the item on the schedule is completed, consider putting a check mark, crossing the item out or moving a velcro item out of the way.
- Remember to alternate preferred and less-preferred activities throughout the day, including play time, snacks/meals, and breaks as part of the schedule.
- If one type of schedule doesn't seem to work for your child, try a different one. There are so many different options! But do stick with one type of schedule for a considerable amount of time, before considering a different option.
- For the visual schedule to be effective, there should be consistency in utilizing one.



# Resources

[https://ed-psych.utah.edu/school-psych/\\_documents/grants/autism-training-grant/Visual-Schedules-Practical-Guide-for-Families.pdf](https://ed-psych.utah.edu/school-psych/_documents/grants/autism-training-grant/Visual-Schedules-Practical-Guide-for-Families.pdf)

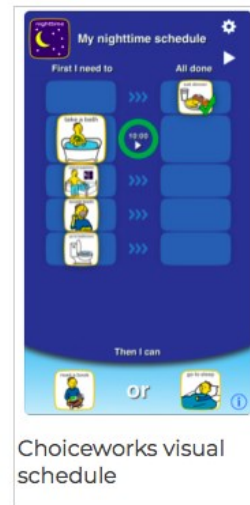
<https://www.abaresources.com/wp-content/uploads/todaysschedule.pdf>

<https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/how-to-make-a-visual-schedule/>

<https://www.understood.org/en/family/managing-everyday-challenges/daily-expectations-child/child-picture-schedules-distance-learning-agreements>

<https://www.schkidules.com/products/>

<https://adayinourshoes.com/free-printable-visual-schedules-for-home-and-daily-routines/>



Choiceworks visual schedule



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★★★★★ 1.8, 5 Ratings

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