



Visual Supports

Visual supports are anything that we see that help us to understand what is happening around us, they can be real objects, photos, symbols, line drawings or even written words. Visual supports provide a means of supporting both receptive and expressive communication for all children but in particular, children who have difficulty processing verbal information or using verbal language to communicate.

Visual supports help children to cope with everyday functioning at home, education and care settings, school and the wider community and enhance communication, augment language, facilitate learning, support behaviour, aid memory and promote independence.

Why use visual strategies?

Adults use visual strategies throughout each day, without even realising they rely on them for day to day support, for example, road signs, entry and exit signs, to do lists, shopping lists etc.

Many children with developmental delays have highly developed visual skills in comparison to other information processing skills. For example, they are better visually than they are as listeners. It is well known that people with autism spectrum disorder experience significant difficulties processing information quickly and accurately, particularly verbal information.

Spoken words are transient, available for a moment then gone. A visual support is available for as long as is needed for the child to process the information required.

- Many children with developmental delays who have language comprehension difficulties have been shown to rely heavily on visual supports to help them to understand what other people are saying and doing.
- Visual supports are effective in augmenting communication without hindering the development of natural speech and even perhaps enhancing it. Visual supports are not used to replace speech but to support communication and understanding.
- Visual supports help to clarify communication and help children understand what is expected of them.
- Visual supports provide structure to the day.
- Visual supports are useful when teaching new skills.
- Visual supports assist children to cope with change and transition from activity to activity, and from place to place.
- Visual supports help children organise their thoughts.
- Visual supports reduce frustration by providing children with a means of communicating simple wants and needs.

Important reminders:

Children with a diagnosis of autism can access visual supports through their therapist (speech therapist, occupational therapist), for use within education and care services. If your service is supporting a child who has a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, chat to individual families, as many families use visual supports within their home environment and may be willing to provide your service with a copy of relevant visuals.

KEEP THEM HANDY! - Visuals must be accessible to all educators throughout each day.

WAIT! - Like all communication you need to allow child time to process the information.

STICK AT IT! - Some children may need many trials before they make the connection.



Wash Hands



Please do not hesitate to contact us should your service require further support implementing visual supports within your daily program.

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