Hands-on Visual Supports

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Today’s Goals

• **What** is a visual support?
• **How can it help a child with ASD?**
• **How can I make one?**

**Note:**
visual supports = visual strategies = visual cues = visuals
Do you have a **calendar** that you write things on to help organize your life? Do you have a **list** of things to do on your desk or refrigerator? Did you ever make a **checklist** of errands that you need to run and cross them off as you completed them? Have you ever pointed to a **picture** in an advertisement or a menu to show someone what you want? Do you make up a **shopping list** before you go to the store? Do you ever **read a sign** to tell you what line to stand in or what door to exit from? Have you ever followed a **recipe** in a cookbook to create some delicious dinner or entrée? Did you go back to that recipe each time you wanted to cook that item? Do you ever **write notes** to your family members reminding them to do things? Do you scan the **menu** to evaluate your choices before ordering in a restaurant? Have you ever made a **checklist** for your children to help them remember to brush their teeth? Did you ever **attach a note** to your bathroom mirror to remind you to do something? Have you had the experience of assembling a new bicycle by following the "**easy to follow-step by step**" instructions?
Types of Visual Supports

- Pictures
- Written words
- Gestures
- Objects within the environment
- Visual boundaries
- Schedules
- Labels
- Timelines
- Scripts

Visual Support = ANY tool or symbol presented visually

Used across settings to support individuals with ASD.
Why does a visual support help?

When we present information verbally, the words are available for a brief moment but when we present information visually it can be there for as long as the individual needs it.

Research has shown:
- a STRENGTH in visual learning
- Tasks are completed more independently
- Routines happen more rapidly
- Levels of frustration, anxiety, and aggression are decreased
- Better adjustments to change
Visual Support = ANY tool or symbol presented visually

- Let's get dressed
  - underwear
  - shorts
  - T-shirt
  - socks
  - shoes

- Morning tasks
  - Put backpack away
  - Put lunchbox in basket
  - Write my planner on the desk
  - Put math homework on desk
  - Begin Warm-up

- Work
  - First
  - computer

- Then
**Activity Schedules: What are they?**

- Series of images, pictures, photographs, line drawings
- Depict sequence of events
  - Daily activities
  - Series of steps in task analysis
Activity Schedules: Variations

- Objects
- Pictures
- Lists
- Embedding Videos
- Stationary vs. Mobile
- Static vs. Video
Creating Schedules

- Age appropriateness
- Knowing where/when/how they will be used
- Setting up the environment
- Object/Picture
  - Choice
- Written List
  - Clear
  - Concise
Creating A Visual Schedule

- What materials should I use?
- How many activities should I display?
- How can I show movement through the schedule?
  - Crossing pictures/words off
  - Taking pictures and transitioning
    - Designating place for pictures
  - Moveable parts
• A visual support cannot include words.

• Visual supports are only for individuals with disabilities.

• Visuals are only used when working with young children.

• Once an individual uses a visual support independently, it should be faded.

• A visual support is hard to make.

• A visual support must be made professionally.
Can I make one?

- Velcro
- Laminator
- Small whiteboard
- Cardstock
- Pictures
  - Clipart
  - Real photographs
- PECS = Picture Exchange Communication System
- Objects
Activity Schedule Applications

- Visual Schedule Planner
- iPrompts
- My Pictures Talk
- First Then Visual Schedule
Q&A

- Please ask questions!