

## How to make and use a visual timetable

Place the timetable in the same location, at a child friendly level and easily accessible. Make it portable.

Adopt a consistent symbol system (for example hand drawn pictures, photos, cut out pictures\*. Write word under the picture) that is appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child. For more information refer to the EYFS.

Laminate your symbols. The symbols can be fastened to the symbol board using Velcro. Make two or three spare sets (they get a lot of use).

Display symbols either top to bottom or left to right on symbol board (it is better to use a left-to-right system as it teaches the child to track pictures in the same direction he will be learning to read later on).

Decide how you are going to indicate that the activity has finished. This may be by turning the card over, using a teddy bear marker with an arrow to move along the timetable or having a finished box that the card is placed into.

To make best use of your visual timetable you need to demonstrate its use in practice with children, by referring to it throughout the session.

For some children you may want to provide them with their own set of symbols so they can use them to indicate their needs. Start with a basic set – for further advice on creating sets for specific children contact your Early Years Consultant or the child's Speech and Language Therapist.

**Visual timetables are beneficial for all children**, however they are particularly helpful when working with children with the following needs:

- Attention control difficulties
- Autistic spectrum disorders
- Language difficulties.
- Memory difficulties
- Difficulty with sequencing and the organisation of language
- Anxious children or those who are dependent on routines or sameness for emotional security.
- Difficulty with transitions from one activity to another.
- Difficulty following a routine
- Need advance warning of changes to routines
- Children who are unable to organise or put limits on their behaviour.
- Children who continually ask "what's next?"
- Children who are visual learners.
- **AND** children with English as an additional language

\* Use Makaton symbols, other symbols from the Widget programme.