

## Visual Schedules

Visual Schedules are powerful tools in helping individuals and their families in a variety of ways-Use of visual schedules can help individuals adjust to changes in their day to day life, encourages interaction and participation in routines for family members, reinforces vocabulary and helps individuals who struggle with transitions to more easily get through the day.

According to the National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders Evidence Briefs- the research tells us that visual schedules are effective for the individual diagnosed with Autism by helping to reduce the time needed for transitions, increasing on task behaviors and supporting play skills/interaction.

Visual schedules can provide families with a tool to help parents handle challenging behaviors and follow their daily routines. They also support the family in engaging their individual with autism in skills such as household chores, mealtime preparation, etc. Also, they are easy to make and are beneficial to all children and adults to keep on track!

### **Helpful Tips:**

- Be careful with scissors, and if using a laminator, be careful as they can get hot!
- Note, if you are not going to use pictures, you can also use a small write erase board to write out the schedule in small phrases or draw simple pictures and have your individual with autism check them off.

### **Items Needed:**

- *Familiar photographs from around your house*
- *Magazine pictures, comics*
- *Cereal box pictures*
- *Scissors*
- *Glue*
- *White and Black Construction Paper*
- *Velcro if you would like to have pictures you can take on/off*
- *Clear contact paper or laminating paper*

### **Directions:**

- *Step 1: Talk about the schedule you will be creating. Organize what you say by talking about what will happen FIRST, NEXT and LAST. Talk about the vocabulary related to the activity.*
- *Step 2: Go through comic books, magazines, the internet and newspapers to find pictures that represent each part of your visual schedule and you and your child can cut them out. If you do not have access to pictures, you can easily draw or write simple words and put an open box next to the picture for them to check off as they go through the schedule.*
- *Step 3: Take an 8 x 11 piece of paper and either laminate it (if you have one) or cover with clear contact paper (you can get at your local hardware store) to keep your schedule from getting messy so you can use it often.*
- *Step 4: Decide together with your child what the schedule will look like. For example, if you are creating a schedule to get out the door in the morning, be sure to include pictures of things and activities your child finds important to do in the morning (i.e. say good bye to their dog).*
- *Step 5: If you choose not to laminate or use clear contact paper, you can glue the pictures you have cut out onto an 8 x 11 sheet of paper. If your paper is laminated or covered, you can do a few things-- either*

*write spaces next to a simple phrase or put Velcro pieces to place pictures on in the order you want.*

- *Step 6: Review the schedule with your child before you start the activity, and either have them place the pictures on using Velcro, touch each picture OR just check them off as you go through the activity.*
- *Step 7: Praise your child for following the steps of the schedule and enjoy spending quality time with them.*