

How to Create Daily Schedules to Support Home-Based Learning for Students with Autism

Heli Vires-Collins, M.A., BCBA/COBA
Behavior Analyst at Monarch Center for Autism

Amee Jones, RBT
Behavior Specialist at Monarch Center for Autism



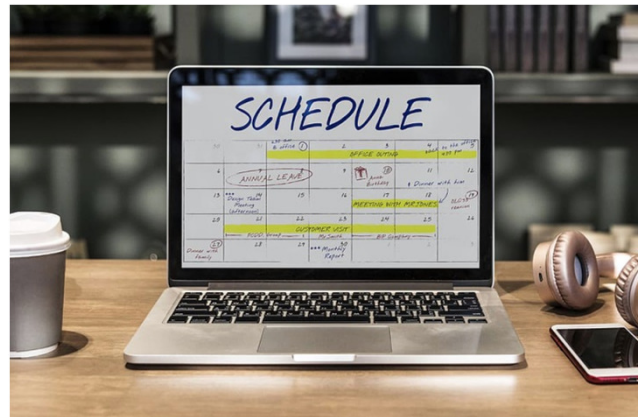
Disclaimer

The interventions in this webinar are to be used as antecedent (proactive) strategies. Research in autism shows that students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis are more likely to engage in problem behaviors including self-injurious behavior, aggression and property destruction during unstructured time.

Teaching a student with autism to follow a schedule can minimize the likelihood of the student engaging in problem behavior.

If a student you work with engages in behavior which is dangerous to him/herself and/or others, contact your school's Board Certified Behavior Analyst and request for a Functional Behavior Assessment to be conducted. A comprehensive Behavior Intervention Plan including both proactive and reactive strategies will then be written based on the results from the assessment.

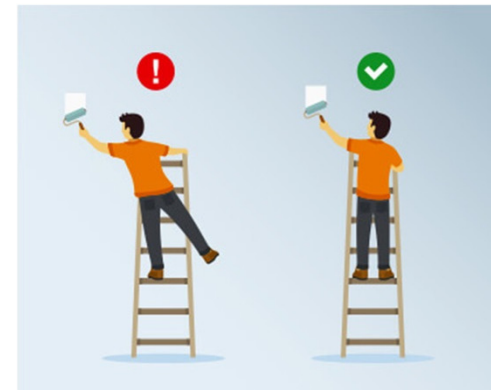
Objectives



1. Learn how to build an appropriate schedule for your student
- and
2. How to teach your student to follow the schedule.

Key Concepts/Terminology

- Behavior = everything we do!
- Reinforcement
- Effort
- Motivation
- Preferred activities/non-preferred activities
- Transitions = moving from one activity to another
- Compliance/staying on task



Why is learning to follow a schedule important?

- A schedule provides structure, predictability, and routines
- States expectations
 - What do I need to do
 - How do I get that
- Shows passage of time
 - How long until lunch
- Creates independence



Structure

We all have a need for stimulation, to “do stuff”, to stay engaged with things that are interesting to us.

- For students with autism, unstructured time creates opportunities for problem behavior
 - Self-stimulatory behavior
 - Destructive behavior
 - Self-injurious and aggressive behavior

Predictability and Routines



- We all check our calendars in the morning
- Provides environment for student to focus on current activity vs distracted by uncertainty

Building Schedules

Students with autism need items and activities that are reinforcing to move from one activity to another and to stay engaged!

- What is reinforcement?
- *Reinforcement vs. Bribery
- How do you maintain the value of the reinforcer?
- Praise – why it may not function as a reinforcer



Building Schedules

- Typically access to preferred things or activities immediately after the behavior reinforces the behavior
- Preference assessment
 - Ask your student/parent
 - Observe: what does your student like to do during choice/free time
 - Observe the students' affect while engaging in the activity, do they appear "happy"?



Building Schedules

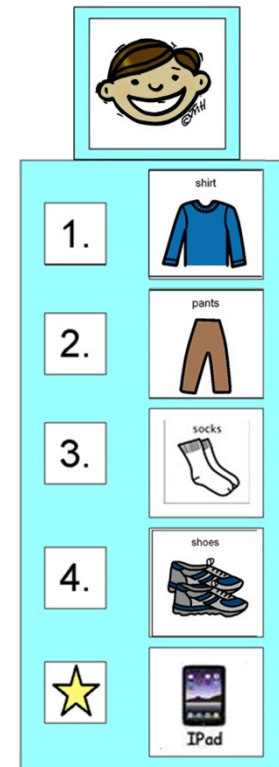
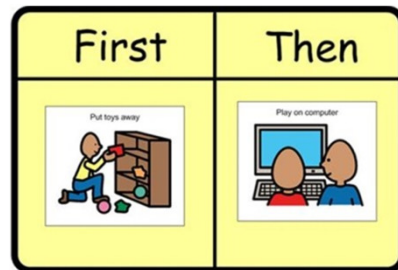
- Choosing the schedule: what schedule has worked in the past?
 - Use a schedule that your student is familiar with
- Identify activities to include in the schedule(s)
 - Daily living skills, school work, chores, meals, play, electronics
- List the preferred and non-preferred activities
 - Rank them from most to least preferred
 - May need to update list as you go as preferences change

Building Schedules

- Schedules involve moving or transitioning from one activity to another
- Sometimes have to transition from preferred to less preferred
- Consider effort!
 - Transitioning from preferred to less preferred is hard.
 - Is a task too much effort/ too hard?
 - Can you make less preferred activities more preferred?
- Consider amount of physical activity student engages in
 - Include enough physical activity into the schedule and just before student is expected to sit for session

Types of Schedules

- Written vs Visuals such as photos
- Size of schedule
 - First-Then
 - Micro
 - Macro



Micro Schedule



Macro Schedule



Macro Schedule
(Time Based)

Teaching to Follow the Schedule

- Proactively go over the schedule
 - Set boundaries and clear expectations
 - Give your child appropriate control over the order of the activities on the schedule
 - Increases buy-in from your student
- Maintain a positive working relationship with your student when teaching
 - Interact with your student frequently and positively
 - There's a formula for interacting positively - 6:1
 - Instead of “time to work” give specific directives

Teaching to Follow the Schedule

Give directive, prompt the wanted behavior when needed and reinforce!

Begin with teaching to check the schedule:

1. "check your schedule"

-Provide prompt if needed, reinforce

2. Point to first activity

-Prompt engagement in first activity if needed, reinforce when complete

-Begin with a preferred activity

Teaching to Follow the Schedule

Transitioning: how to move from one activity to the next

- When transitioning from more preferred to less preferred:
 - Present the reinforcer for the transition before giving direction so that student see's it is available
 - Use timers (pros and cons)
 - Build the schedule so that transitions do **not** occur from most preferred to least preferred when you can
 - Reinforce all appropriate transitions



Teaching to Follow the Schedule

Staying on-task

- Begin with decreased effort, easy mastered task
- Give choices
- May need multiple micro schedules to keep your student on-task
- Small reinforcement throughout session
 - Small snack that won't interrupt the session
- Tokens throughout session which can be exchanged for preferred items at the end
 - If student is familiar with token economy

Trouble Shooting

Student isn't moving between activities.

- Motivation – are reinforcers not valuable
- Effort – is task too much effort, too hard, too long – has it become aversive

Student won't give up iPad/toy.

- have you set boundaries, clear expectations, identified strong reinforcers, is reinforcer in clear view (signal that it's available)
- Have reinforcers lost their value

Student won't stay on task.

- Is the task interesting to the student? Too much effort?

Trouble Shooting

Recommendations:

- Avoid taking items from student unless there is risk from injury
 - Instead, motivate student to move to another activity
- Avoid “tricking” student into giving up items
 - Instead, have student give up item voluntarily
- Avoid physically move the student to comply
 - Instead, motivate and reinforce compliance

Conclusion/Take-away

- Schedules provide structure, predictability, and routines
- Regularly list the preferred and non-preferred activities
- Set boundaries and limit access to reinforcing activities
- Give clear instructions for clear expectations
- Give your child appropriate control over the order of the activities on the schedule
- Now is not the time to teach new behaviors, we need to stay safe and healthy – maintain mastered skills
- Use schedules to engage your student as much as possible to limit unstructured time

Resources

How to:

<https://howtoaba.com/teach-visual-schedules/>

<https://www.iloveaba.com/2018/04/the-value-of-activity-schedules.html>

<https://theautismhelper.com/behavior/schedules/>

<https://www.merakilane.com/visual-schedules-for-children-with-autism-how-and-why-they-work/>

Free visual schedules for printing out:

<https://www.milestones.org/resources/tool-kits/visual-supports-tool-kit>

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Morning-and-End-of-Day-Routine-Display-Schedule-Visuals-autism-special-needs-758269>

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Mini-Schedule-with-visuals-of-rules-3382100>

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Daily-Speech-Schedule-Visual-3351388>

Question & Answer



Monarch Center for Autism

- ❖ Preschool
- ❖ Day School
- ❖ Transition Education Program
- ❖ Extended School Year Program
- ❖ Boarding Academy
- ❖ Adult Autism Program
- ❖ Adult Supported Living Residences
- ❖ Free Webinar & e-newsletter Series
- ❖ Online Resource Center
- ❖ Welcoming Spaces Program

- ✦ Web: www.monarchcenterforautism.org
- ✦ Telephone: 216.320.8945 or 1-800-879-2522
- ✦ Address: 22001 Fairmount Boulevard,
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44118
- ✦ Join our e-newsletter mailing list:
[http://www.monarchcenterforautism.org/
Newsletters/NewsletterSignUp](http://www.monarchcenterforautism.org/Newsletters/NewsletterSignUp)
- ✦ Facebook:
www.facebook.com/monarchcenterforautism
- ✦ Twitter: www.twitter.com/monarchohio



References

- Barbera, Mary, 2020. Marybarbera.com/blog/
- Broadhead, 2018. Using activity schedules to promote varied application use in children with autism, *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 51, 80-86.
- Cooper, Heron & Heward, 2007. *Applied Behavior Analysis, Second Edition*.
- Dunlap & Koegel, 1980. Motivating Autistic Children through stimulus variation, *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 13, 619-627.
- Jessel, Invarsson, Whipple & Kirk, 2017. Increasing on-task behavior of an adolescent with autism using momentary differential reinforcement, *Behavior Interventions*, 32, 248-254.
- Latham, Glenn, 1994; *The Power of Positive Parenting: A Wonderful Way to Raise Children*.
- Long, Sasha, 2020. *The Autism Helper Podcast*.
- McCord & Thomson, 2001. Functional analysis and treatment of self-injury associated with transitions, *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 34, 195-210.
- MacDuff, Krantz & McClannahan, 1993. Teaching children with autism to use photographic schedules: maintenance and generalization of complex response chains, *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 26, 89-97.
- Schramm, 2014. *The Seven Steps to Earning Instructional Control*.
- Wilder, Chen, Atwell, Pritchard & Weinstein, 2006. Brief functional analysis and treatment of tantrums associated with transitions in preschool children, *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 39, 103-107.