Creating, Customizing, and Using
Visual Schedules
with children on the Autism Spectrum

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Monarch Center for Autism

Who am I?

Mandi Rickelman, MA:

- Mandi Rickelman, MA, is the Director of Early Childhood Services and Co-Director of Welcoming Spaces Program at Monarch Center for Autism, a division of Bellefaire JCB. Welcoming Spaces helps community-based organizations prepare their environments and staff to successfully welcome and engage individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

- Mandi has served individuals with autism for more than 16 years in numerous capacities including as an administrator, classroom teacher, trainer of teachers/parents/professionals, and a public speaker. She oversees a team of staff and students at Monarch's Preschool and Day School. In addition, she presents to diverse audiences and provides consultation on numerous subjects related to autism including: greater accessibility for individuals with autism in the community, inclusive environmental design for community centers, and how visual supports enhance communication and help to organize, teach and prepare for daily routines and community outings

Today's Agenda

- ❑ Why are visuals so important?

- ❑ What is a visual schedule?

- ❑ What do visual schedules accomplish?

- ❑ How do I know when visual schedules are necessary?

- ❑ How do I create and customize visual schedules for my child?

- ❑ How do I implement visual schedules?

Why are Visuals so Important?

Research indicates that individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders*:

- Typically use visual processing as their dominant information processing mode.

- Demonstrate a specific attraction to visually oriented materials including computer programs, tablets, object categorizations and other activities that rely on visual-spatial and constructional capacities.

- Benefit from the use of visual content to enhance communication, help organize daily experiences and improve school performance.

* Shane, H.C., Weiss-Kapp S. (2007); Cafiero, J.M. (2001); Grandin T. (1995); Althaus, M., de Sonneville, L.M., Minderaa, R.B., Hensen, L.G., and Til, R.B. (1996)

What is a Visual Schedule?

There are Three Modes of Visual Supports:

1. Visual Instructional Mode (VIM):

Visual cues used for the purpose of comprehension, which are imposed as an alternative to, or in conjunction with, speech.

2. Visual Expressive Mode (VEM):

Visual cues used for the purpose of expressive communication.
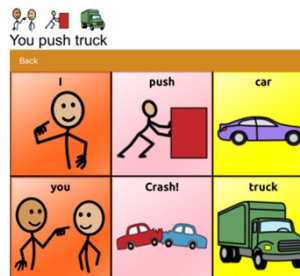
Three Modes of Visual Supports (cont.):

3. Visual Organization Mode (VOM)

** Visual Schedules are VOMs **

- Visual cues used to represent the organization of an activity, routine, script, or schedule.
- Function is organization and transitions
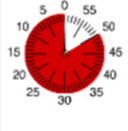
Visual Schedules:

- A visual schedule is a tool used to organize a sequence of events

- Especially important for students who have difficulty understanding, processing and remembering verbal language and directions

- A visual schedule gives the student information such as:

  – What is happening today (regular activities)

  – What is happening today (something new or different)

  – What is the sequence of events
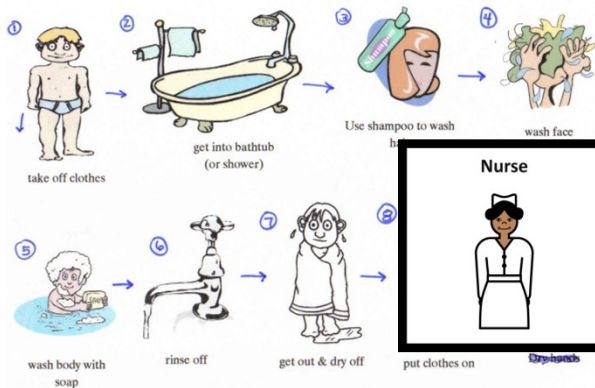
  – When is it time to stop one activity and move to the next

Ex. #1: Example of a standard First/Then Display

Ex. #2: A First/Then Display with durations charted via a trials counter and a countdown timer

Ex. #3: A First/Next/Then Display

Ex. #1: A visual school schedule showing extended information about each event
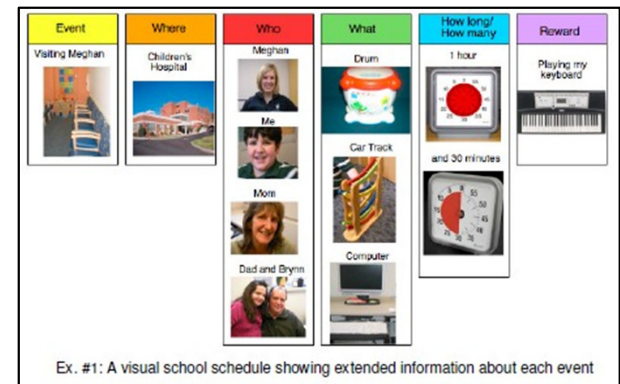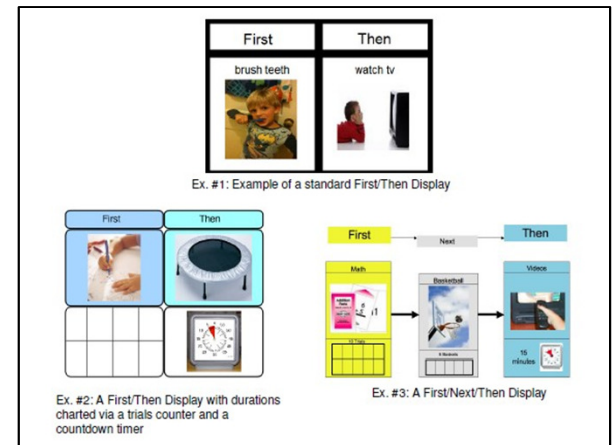
Daily Schedule Expanded

- **Event:** The theme of the event

- **Where:** The location where the task will be performed

- **Who:** The participants in the task

- **What:** Activities that will be performed

- **How Long/Many:** Number of repetitions required or duration of task

- **Reward:** Reinforcement for participating in the activity, if applicable

For Example…

A Visual Schedule can look like any of these!

Macro Schedules

- Organize the larger events or activities of a complete time frame (e.g. daily schedule)

Micro Schedules

- Organize the smaller steps or activities of a shorter routine (e.g. morning routine, schedule for brushing teeth, etc.)

Examples: Visual Schedules to Support Daily Routines

- Macro Schedule
- Micro Schedule
- Electronic Visual Schedule

Benefits of Using Visual Schedules: What do they Accomplish?

Daily Routines:

- Reduce anxiety of child

- Provides a structure that allows a child to anticipate what will happen next

- Improve child's understanding and cooperation

- Increase participation and promote greater independence in school and life opportunities

- Reduce need for repetitive verbal prompting (which can be stressful for parent as well!)

- Support transitions between activities or locations

- Prepare for unexpected events because structure is already in place

Deviations from the Usual Routine:

- Reduce anxiety of child

- Help anticipate and prepare for change

- Improve understanding and cooperation

- Communicate what to expect during the activity (micro schedules)

- Help child understand sequence and duration of the change

- Communicate to the child what will follow the change (e.g. something motivating) – thereby increasing cooperation
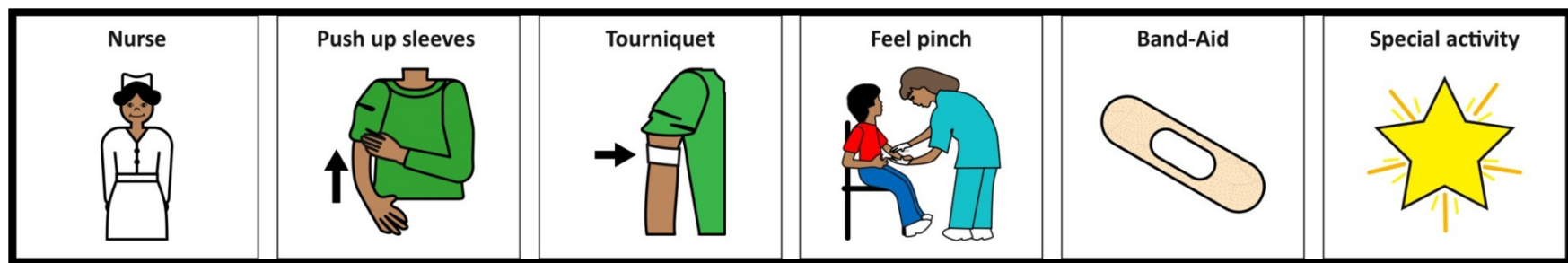
Change

Surprise!

Examples: Visual Schedules for Changes in Routine

Macro schedule for going to the doctor

Micro schedule for getting a shot

How do I know when Visual Schedules are Necessary?

Questions to Ask to Determine if a Visual Schedule is Necessary:

- Does your child have a hard time transitioning between activities?

- Does your child have a hard time learning sequences?

- Does your child have difficulty understanding expectations?

- Does your child have difficulty with new environments?

- Does your child have a hard time with changes in routine?

- Does your child show challenging behavior (e.g. aggression, passivity, non-compliance) during transitions?

?

…If you answered yes to any of these questions, your child would likely benefit from visual schedules.

thumbs up

Creating and Customizing Individualized Visual Schedules for your Child

Getting Started

- Think about one routine or time of your child's day that is the most difficult/stressful
- How would a visual schedule make this routine easier?

Going to the Bathroom Checklist ✔

1. Pull pants down.
2. Sit on toilet until finished.
3. Use toilet paper.
4. Put toilet paper in toilet.
5. Stand up.
6. Pull pants up.
7. Flush toilet.
8. Wash hands (use soap! rinse!).
9. Dry hands.
10. All done!

Cleaning Eye Glasses Checklist ✔

1. Take off glasses.
2. Rinse glasses with water.
3. Clean right side to side.
4. Clean right side in a circle.
5. Clean left side to side.
6. Clean left side in a circle.
7. Check to see if clean.
8. Don't touch.
9. Put on glasses.

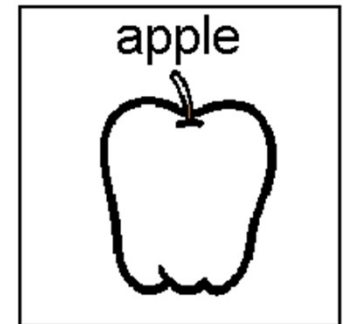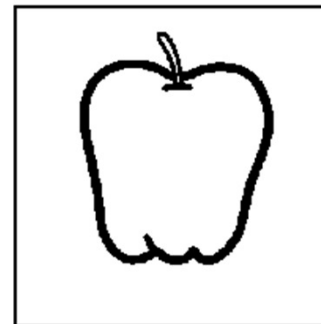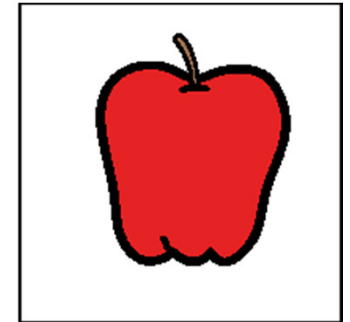# STEP 1: Determine what type of schedule your child will respond to best

- Determine visual representation level
- Select format (vertical, horizontal, clip board, iPad)
- Consider size of visuals, color coding, etc.
- Decide how child will interact with the schedule (check off, flip over, etc.) and whether schedule will be portable or stationary
- Consider motivational components
- Consider including time/duration information
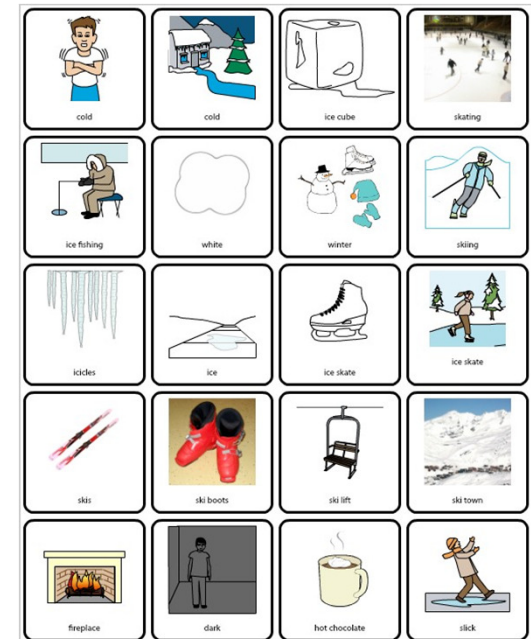
Visual Representation Levels

- Visual Representation Level – the type of visual that a child understands to represent or stand for something

    - Objects

    - 3D Representations

    - Photographs

    - Color line drawings

    - Black and white line drawings
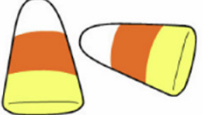
Example: Visual Schedule with Duration Information

Leisure Time Schedule

listen to music	look at magazine	use computer	get a snack
3 songs	15 minutes	15 minutes	1 snack

Example: Visual Schedule with Greater Detail

Event	Where	Who	What	How Long	Reward
Halloween	My Neighborhood	Me	Put on costume / Get treat bag	30 Minutes	Eat a treat
		Mom	Knock on door / Say trick-or-treat		
		Dad	Put treat in bag		
		Sister	Go home		

STEP 2:

- Break down the difficult routine into smaller steps

- Example: <u>Bedtime</u>

  - Take a bath

  - Brush teeth

  - Put on pajamas

  - Bedtime story

  - Say goodnight

STEP 3:

- Represent each step visually

bathe

brush teeth

put on PJ's

night time story

good night
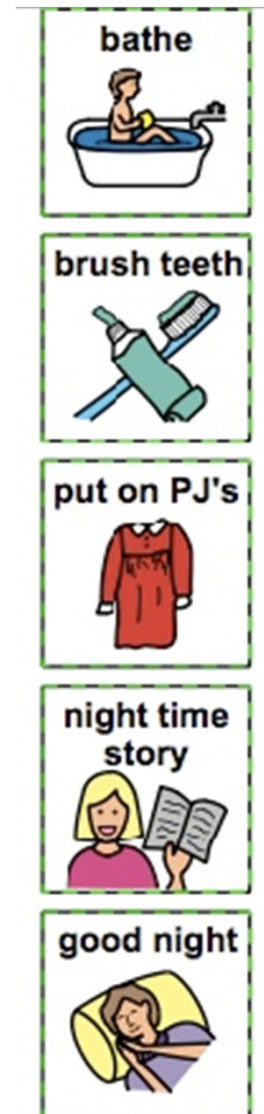
Using your Child's Visual Schedule

Levels of Implementation

- Level 1: Parent/teacher presents child with visual information/schedule

    Video 1

- Level 2: Visual schedule is stationary and child refers back to it after each step

    Video 2

- Level 3: Child takes responsibility/ownership of schedule and carries it with him/her.

    Video 3

    Video 4

Ex. #1: Sample activity schedule for brushing teeth

Using a Visual Schedule with Your Child

- Decide how the schedule will be used throughout the day

- Introduce the visual schedule to your child: draw attention to it, practice it, and use it consistently! (Make it an essential part of your daily routine)

- Stick with it!

- Refer back to it

- As your child becomes more familiar with the schedule, scale back your prompting to increase independence

- Give positive reinforcement

Ex. #1: Sample visual calendar
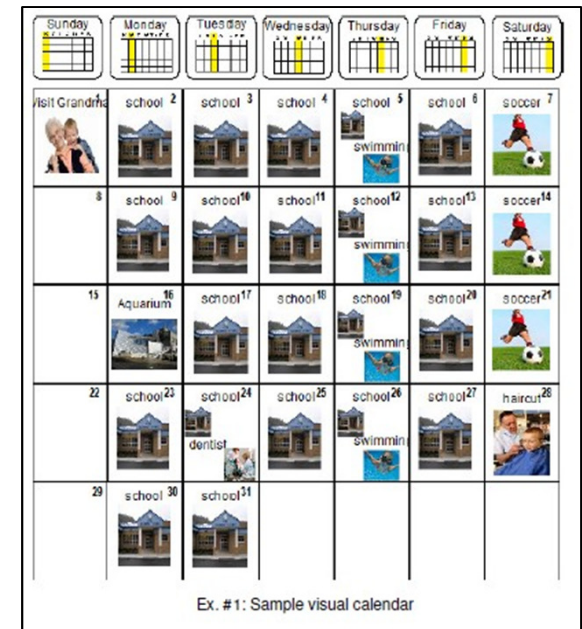
Which Technology should I use to Create Visual Schedules?

- There are several ways to create visuals, from drawing or cutting out pictures, to utilizing online image websites

- Some of our favorite visual making resources include:
  - Google Images (http://www.google.com/imghp)
  - Picasa (http://picasa.google.com/)
  - VizZle (http://govizzle.com/)
  - Boardmaker (http://www.mayer-johnson.com/boardmaker-software)

- There are also some great Apps (available on iTunes) that can be used to create visual schedules:
  - Visual Schedule Planner by Good Karma Applications, Inc.
  - Picture Scheduler by Petr Jankuj
  - Choiceworks by Bee Visual, LLC
  - First Then Visual Schedule by Good Karma Applications, Inc.

- Depending on your child's visual representation level: a camera may be your best tool

Questions?

Monarch Center for Autism

- Preschool

- Day School

- NEW Autism Virtual Program

- Transition Education Program

- Extended School Year Program

- Boarding Academy

- Adult Autism Program

- Adult Supported Living Residences

- Free Webinar Series

- Online Resource Center

- Welcoming Spaces Program

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