



## Visual Supports: What They Are and How to Use Them

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### What Are Visual Supports?

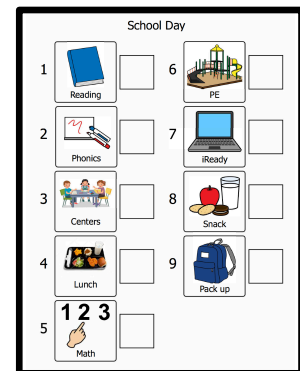
Many autistic people are visual learners, so seeing something often works better than just hearing it. Pictures, charts, or written words are some ways to make things clearer and more predictable for them. Visual supports are research based and widely used.

Things like spoken instructions, changes in routine, and being able to express wants and needs can be challenging in autism. Visual supports can help to:

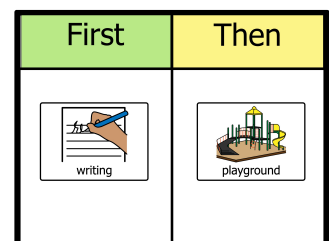
- Understand what's happening
- Know what to do next / follow routines
- Make choices and communicate
- Feel calmer and in control
- Gain independence

### Common Examples of Visual Supports:

- **Visual Schedules** - show what will happen and in what order.
  - Helps to feel in control and increase predictability.
  - Can be pictures and/or words in a line or calendar format.
  - Can be paper-based or in apps like “Lil Planner: Visual Schedule” & “Choiceworks”.



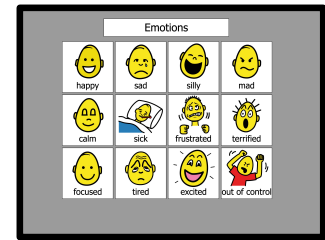
- **First-Then Boards** - show two steps: first do this, then do that.
  - Helps with motivation and getting through less preferred tasks.
  - Can be paper-based or in apps like “First Then Visual Schedule: & “First and Then”.



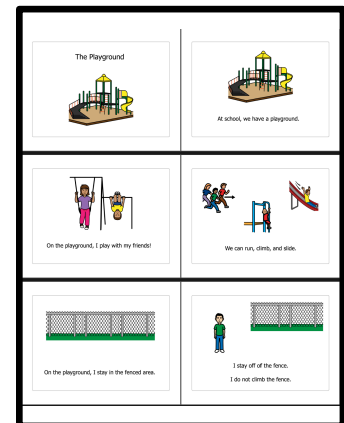
- **Choice Boards** - allow making a choice from options (a few or dozens).
  - Helps to feel in control and reduce meltdowns.
  - Can be paper-based or in apps like “Verbal Me”, “Twinkl”, & “ChoiceBoardCreator”.



- **Emotion Charts** - collection of faces paired with words.
  - Helps with identification and comprehension of emotions in self and others.
  - Can be color coded to help with understanding.
  - Can make your own or print for free from “Zones of Regulation” & [autismteachingstrategies.com](http://autismteachingstrategies.com)



- **Social Narrative** – simple page or book format with pictures and sentences explaining what to do in specific situations.
  - Helps with understanding expectations and social rules.
  - Tells what the individual should do and what may happen if they don’t.
  - Topic can be anything: going to the park, doctor, how ask for help, etc.
  - Make yourself or find pre-made versions on [autismlittlelearners.com](http://autismlittlelearners.com) & [abaresources.com](http://abaresources.com)



**Remember:** Visual supports need to be taught to the individual and used consistently for the best outcomes! They don’t need to be fancy and can be made at home.

OR

**Reach out to your CARD consultant to talk about which visual supports would work best for you or your child. We can help in choosing and personalizing each type of visual support for use in the home, at school, or anywhere!**