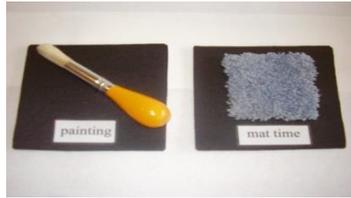


Visual Supports

Visual supports of “visuals” as they are commonly named are pictures, photos, real objects, parts of objects, covers, packages, symbols, line drawings and written words. Visuals are everywhere within our everyday environment.



Visuals are not used to replace speech but to further support communication and understanding, to streamline and support learning, empowering people to participate and achieve success.

Words are available for a brief moment – a visual lasts as long as it is needed.

Visual cues support children to focus on relevant and key information minimizing stress and anxiety levels, helping children to understand what is happening in their environment. Visuals support children to learn more effectively, developing children’s ability to function independently in all aspects of their life. Visuals support communication, socialization, attention to task, organization, motivation and independence skills.

Visual supports allow children the time they need to process what they are being asked to do, visual supports do not disappear into thin air to be forgotten. A visual remains the same and allows opportunity for repetitive patterns to be developed and memory pathways to be created. Visuals are also sequenced to breakdown new skills into step-by-step tasks.



Visual supports can be used in two ways:

- To help children understand what is said to them.
This is called using visuals receptively.
- To help children communicate their needs and ideas, as well as support the development of their speech.
This is called using visuals expressively.

Using visual supports receptively means:

- A child is shown a picture of an experience that is about to happen
- A child learns to use a visual schedule which shows the sequence of experiences that have been planned for them
- A child is shown a “finished” card to help them understand that their current experience has finished and then they will be moving onto another experience

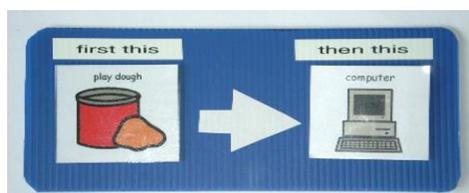
Using visual support expressively means:

- A child makes a choice from two or more pictures. The child may do this by looking at, or touching the picture of the object or experience they would like
- A child exchanges cards to express their needs or ideas. This means that the child chooses a card and hands this to another person to communicate their message
- A child looks at, or touches pictures to communicate a range of ideas or feelings



Using visual supports expressively helps children to communicate their thoughts, which in turn can relieve some of their frustration that many children experience when relying on speech alone.

Visual supports are only one of a range of strategies that are used to assist children to learn to communicate across a variety of environments



Visual Tool Mini Test

	Yes	No
<input type="radio"/> Do you have a calendar that you write things on to help organise your life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="radio"/> Do you have a list of “things to do” on your desk or refrigerator?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="radio"/> Have you ever pointed to a picture in an advertisement or a menu to show someone what you want?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="radio"/> Do you make up a shopping list before you go to the store?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="radio"/> Do you ever read a sign to tell you what line to stand in or what door to exit from?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="radio"/> Have you ever followed a recipe in a cookbook to create some delicious dinner entrée? Did you go back to that recipe each time you wanted to cook that item?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="radio"/> Do you scan the menu to evaluate your choices before ordering in a restaurant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="radio"/> Have you ever made a checklist for your children to help them remember to brush their teeth?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="radio"/> Did you ever attach a note to your bathroom mirror to remind you to do something?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="radio"/> Have you had the experience of assembling a new bicycle by following the “easy to follow step-by-step” instructions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="radio"/> Have you ever read the label on a medication bottle to ensure it was being taken properly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="radio"/> Do you read the movie titles or descriptions before choosing a videotape?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>