



Using a Visual Timetable to support your child

Visual timetables can help your child to:

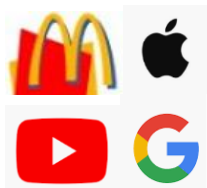
- Understand what is going to happen during the day
- Have a sense of routine and structure
- Reduce anxiety and behaviour that can sometimes occur if your child is feeling
- unsure about what is going to happen
- Develop independence
- Provide continuity and consistency especially if Visual Timetables have been used in your child's early years setting or if recommended by the Speech and Language Therapist

- ✓ Introduce one or two visuals at a time.
- ✓ Gradually add more and more visuals to the timetable as your child gets used to going through the routine of checking the timetable.
- ✓ Don't worry if your child does not immediately respond to the timetable. They may need some time to learn to use it.
- ✓ Try to keep the timetable in the same place.
- ✓ Stick to one type of visual, e.g. object or photo or picture or words.
- ✓ Use visuals that your child will understand.
- ✓ Before each transition, give your child some warning, e.g. '*Last one*' / '*2 minutes then finished*' / '*1 minute then finished*'.
- ✓ You can put anything on a visual timetable, from teeth brushing, breakfast, IPAD, TV, toilet, bath, shopping, park to bedtime...the list is endless, anything that your child does in the day can go on the timetable.



Remember

***Some children are better at learning visually.
Have you noticed how some children quickly recognise famous logos?***





What you need to make a visual timetable

There are different ways of making a visual timetable. Most timetables are arranged so you go from top to bottom. Some are arranged so you go left to right. Consider the resources you have to hand and pick what works for you and your child.

Top to bottom timetables

Option 1: You can make a visual timetable on a board.

You will need:

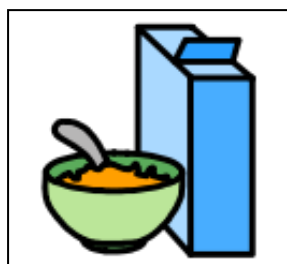
A board or place to put the visuals (any of the following):

- Visual timetable board
- A piece of cardboard
- A clear space on a wall
- The edge of a door or fridge
- An old chopping board
- A clipboard



Printed set of visuals to attach to the board or wall. These should represent key events or activities that will take place during the day (pick one type of visual from the list below ~ What you use will depend on your child's level of understanding):

- Photographs
- Pictures
- Words



Cereal

If you have a laminating machine, you can laminate the visuals to help them last longer.



A way of attaching the visuals to the timetable (any of the following):

- Blu tack
- Masking tape
- Sticky tape (you might need to replace this as it will lose it's stickiness)
- Post it notes with picture stuck on the front
- Velcro
- Magnetic tape

A finished box with the 'finished' symbol on it (any of the following):

- Small box
- Empty tissue box
- Plastic takeaway container
- Empty shoe box



Option 2: You can make a visual timetable out of an old box.



You will need:

- An old cardboard box e.g. shoe box or cereal box. If it is patterned, cover it in plain paper.
- Printed set of visuals (see above).
- Scissors to cut out a 'slot' at the bottom of the box (large enough so you can take the visuals out at the end of the day).



Option 3: You can make a visual timetable from objects set out on a piece of paper or mat on the floor.

This option might be a good starting point when you want to teach your child about routines and they have good understanding of objects but may not yet be ready to use photographs, pictures or words.



You will need:

- A large piece of plain card / mat / carpet.
- Objects (to represent events or activities during the day) e.g. nappy for nappy changing / cereal box for breakfast etc.
- A large container with 'finished' on the front to put the objects into when the activity is finished.



Using a finished box is great for children who like to post things.



Left to right timetable

Option 4: You can make a visual timetable using an A4 sheet of paper and visual symbols



You will need:

- An A4 left to right coloured template
- Visual symbols
- Something to stick the symbols onto the timetable (Blu tack, masking tape, Velcro etc)

*Whichever type of timetable you choose,
set it up each morning for the key events or activities that
will be happening throughout the day.*

*Use the visual timetable consistently to help with
routine and structure.*



How to use a visual timetable

Top to bottom timetable



1. **Show** your child the visual timetable.

At first you may need to take the visual symbol to your child and encourage them to follow you to the timetable.

2. Say '**Check timetable**'. 

3. When your child is at the timetable, **encourage** them to put the visual at the top of the timetable.

At first, you might need to guide your child's hand to do this.

4. Say the name of the activity, e.g. '**Dinner time**'. 

5. You can then take your child to the activity / routine that is on the timetable.

6. When it is time for the next activity / routine, again, guide your child to the timetable.

7. Say '**Check timetable**'. 

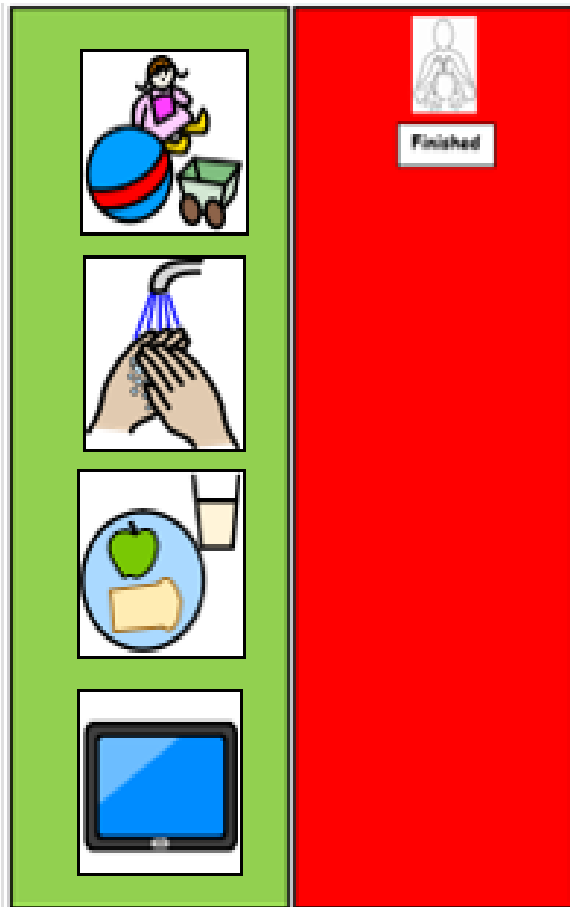
8. Guide your child to put the last visual in the finished box or post it in the finished slot.

9. Say '**Finished**'. 

10. Guide your child to the activity you have just put on the timetable.



Left to right visual timetable




The red and green on this timetable is instantly visual and can help your child understand what tasks need to happen and which ones are finished.

1. **Show** your child the timetable.

At first you may need to take the visual to them and encourage them to follow you to the timetable.

2. Say '**Check timetable**'. 


3. Say the name of the first activity, e.g. '**Play time**'. 

4. Then guide your child to the activity.

5. When it is time for the next activity / routine, again, guide your child to the timetable.

6. Say '**Check timetable**'. 

7. Guide your child to put visual of the activity that has just finished on the red side.

8. Say '**Finished**' or '**Play time finished**'. 

9. Say the name of the next activity on the green side, e.g. '**Wash hands**'.

10. Guide your child to the activity.



Whichever timetable option you use, remember to keep your language simple throughout:

'Garden finished'

'Dinner time'

'Check timetable'

'Finished'

When to use a visual timetable

- ✓ Use the timetable as part of your routine, e.g. breakfast / TV / garden / lunch / play etc.
- ✓ When you want your child to learn to move from one activity / time of day to another.
- ✓ If there is a particular transition that your child is finding stressful, the visual timetable can be useful at these times.

To find out more / Useful links

- If your child has a Speech and Language Therapy programme or report, a visual timetable may have been recommended. Refer to the report for further guidance.
- <https://ican.org.uk/media/1290/visual-timelines-factsheet-parents.pdf>