

FAMILY VERSION

USING VISUAL ACTIVITY SCHEDULES

AT HOME

A simple way to help young children understand routines, finish tasks, and feel successful.

Adapted from Meadan, H., Ostrosky, M. M., Triplett, B., Michna, A., & Fettig, A. (2011). Using visual supports with young children with autism spectrum disorder. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 43(6), 28-35.

What

is a Step-by-Step Visual Schedule?

A step-by-step visual schedule shows your child **each step of an activity in order** using pictures or photos.

It helps children:

- understand what to do next
- remember the steps of a routine
- stay engaged until the activity is finished
- rely less on adult reminders

This is especially helpful for routines with **more than one step**.



When

Are Step-by-Step Visual Schedules Helpful?

They work well for activities like:

- getting dressed
- washing hands
- cleaning up toys
- brushing teeth
- art or cooking activities
- bedtime routines

If your child often stops, gets stuck, or needs lots of reminders, a visual schedule may help.



How

to Use
Step-by-
Step Visual
Schedules
at Home

Show the schedule before the activity starts
Point to each picture and name the steps briefly.

Use short phrases and gestures
“Wash hands... dry hands... all done.”

Help your child follow each step
Guide them back to the pictures if needed.

Let your child mark off steps
They can point, flip, or remove pictures as they finish.

Show when the activity is finished
An “all done” picture helps your child know when to stop.

Examples at Home



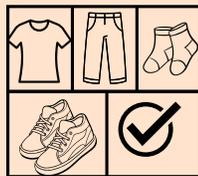
Handwashing



Wet hands → Get soap →
Wash & Rinse → Dry
hands → All done



Getting Dressed



Shirt → Pants → Socks →
Shoes → All done



Cleanup



Pick up toys → Put in bin
→ Check shelf → All done

Tips

for
Success

- ✚ Keep the number of steps small
- 📷 Use real pictures if possible
Use pictures your child understands
- 📍 Same place
Keep the schedule where the activity happens
- 😊 Stay calm and encouraging
- ★ Praise effort, not perfection



If
Your
Child
Is
Struggling

Try

- ➖ • Use fewer steps
- 📷 • Switch to photos instead of drawings
- ↔️ • Make the pictures bigger
- 🤝 • Help more at first, then slowly help less

If needed, you can combine a step-by-step schedule with a **First-Then board** to help with motivation.

**Family
Reminder
!**

Visual schedules are meant to **support independence and confidence**, not perfection.

Small supports can make everyday routines feel easier and more successful for everyone.

