

Visual Supports

Visual supports are tools that help 2-way communication between a person with autism and the people in their life.

We all rely on and use visuals such as road signs, clocks, calendars, public toilet symbols, plus many more every day. Children on the spectrum may need more personalised visuals available to them more often.

Many people on the autism spectrum respond particularly well to visual information.

One reason for this is that visual information is permanent, which means it can be revisited as often as needed, compared to spoken communication which is instant and disappears immediately.

Visuals can help reduce frustration for the child and their support network, and increase success and independence across a range of skills.



Less Abstract

Most Abstract

There is no limit to the information that can be represented as a visual support.

It may include communication books or boards, visual cues, symbols, visual schedules, timers and more.

There is no set way a visual support needs to look, the key to a visual is that it is clear, consistent, and understood by the person it is designed for.

Typically when introducing visuals it is best to start with the least abstract option that the person can understand, then over time as the person's understanding and skill increases, the visual support can be changed to be more abstract and flexible.

Visual schedules can also be used to show a person on the spectrum what is happening next or show when there is a change in routine. As people on the spectrum generally do not like change, this can help them prepare for a change and cope with it more easily.

Visuals can incorporate the use of symbols, photos, written words, and objects to help children with autism to:

- learn and understand others' language
- communicate their needs and wants to others
- process information
- follow instructions

For more information on visuals please visit <https://thespectrum.org.au/autism-strategy/>