

## VISUAL SUPPORT SYSTEM

### **What is it?**

A Visual Support System uses pictures to break down steps of a task or set out a routine throughout the day. It is like using a diary, following a recipe or making a list using pictures. It will take time to embed the strategies and for the child to start responding. Do not stop once the strategies start to work.

### **Why is it useful?**

- It provides structure and predictability.
- Visual timelines remain long after the words spoken to a child have disappeared.
- They are relevant and meaningful to your child and allow them to know what is happening.
- A lot of children are visual learners and timelines therefore hold their attention.
- They reduce anxiety as your child can anticipate what happens next.
- Concepts such as before, after, first and next are more concrete and meaningful.
- Can be used as a prompt or reminder.
- They communicate things that a child might otherwise find difficult to understand.
- Help children cope with and prepare for change.
- Increase independence.
- Encourage children to read as the timeline goes from left to right.
- Help a child to identify the final goal e.g. getting dressed and going to school.
- Easy to use.

### **How can I make a timeline work effectively?**

- Visual timelines should be used as part of an interactive approach. Where possible try to involve your child in making the timeline.
- Introduce the cards so your child learns to associate words and symbols with activities.
- Use it consistently and refer to it throughout the day.
- Make sure the language you use is simple and consistent i.e. first tidy up, then outside.
- Use the timeline alongside other approaches such as signing. This makes sure you have a multi sensory approach to help your child's communication needs.
- Keep the timeline where your child can see it and use it- at their height!
- Laminate your pictures so that they last longer!
- The child needs to remove the symbol when an activity has finished and return it back to the folder or posting box .
- Show the child the next symbol.



## ALL FOLDERS

- A4 Ringbinder - Any colour.
- First & Then sheet attached on the front on two lines of Velcro.
- Two lines of Velcro on the back of the folder .
- Hook (rough) Velcro used on all boards and centre of First & Then squares.
- Loop (soft) Velcro used on the back of all cards.
- Pale/Pastel colour (Not white) laminated pages used to display cards and for First & Then boards.

### 7cm Folders

- Have two long strips of Velcro on each laminated page.

### 4 cm

- Have three long strips of Velcro on each laminated page.



If you require copies of any symbols, please email us at [sendearlyyearsassessment@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:sendearlyyearsassessment@solihull.gov.uk).