



# Timetables and visual supports

Having some form of structure is constructive for everyday life. Most of us will use some kind of visual reminder to help keep organised, from a simple to-do list, to a detailed family calendar. As adults these help us with tasks and events and take away the pressure of having to remember everything!

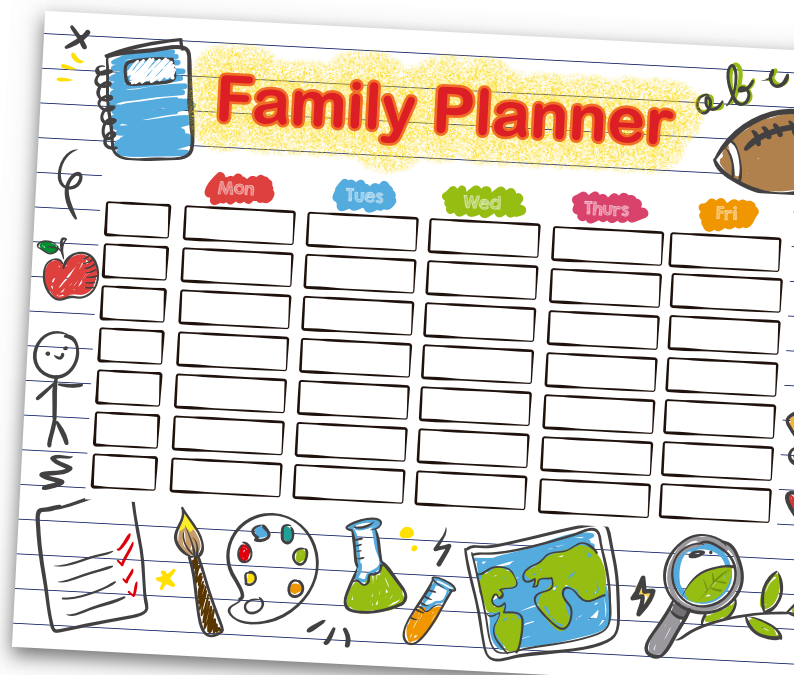
This is just the same for our children. In addition to teaching our children these important organisational skills, this can help reduce apprehension about the day ahead and allow them to communicate without expressing thoughts verbally. Here's some helpful resources to support your family.

## Timetables and schedules

Timetables and calendars can work well for anyone of any age—they give us a reassuring sense of certainty about what is happening that day. However during this time when life is changing, it might be worth scaling back how far ahead you share your plans with your child or young person until things are clearer, particularly when speaking about when things will return to “normal”.


Some children may prefer just to know what is coming up after their current activity so you could use “now” and “next” or “first” and “then”. Other children may prefer having a timetable for the whole day ahead.

You could look at the timetable the night before or in the morning. It may be helpful to get your child to help you decide which order to do things. You could give them a small selection of activities and they could either decide which ones to do that day or in which order to do them. This may help them to be more receptive to following the timetable and give them an element of feeling in control.



Trying to keep to a similar layout for each day may help ease some of the anxiety as everyone knows what to expect. Ensure breaks and “down time” are included on your timetable.

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# Timetables and visual supports

If you are feeling particularly organised, then a plan of the week might be helpful for the family to know what is coming up. This could be as detailed or as brief as you all need. It could reflect which days school work will be done, and if a member of the household is working (whether at home or not).

Depending on the needs of your child or young person the timetable could be made using words, signs, symbols, pictures, photographs or even tactile objects that represent the activity – whatever your child is most familiar with.

Some children find it difficult to relate a drawing or symbol to a real life activity or object, so photographs or short videos of specific items, or your child doing the activity may be helpful. You could also use a tactile object to represent the activity, for example a spoon for breakfast.

Some families may prefer to create something digitally on their smart device or computer, or physically using paper, post-it notes or a whiteboard. Whether it is done as a pristine, colourful table or simply a written list on a piece of scrap paper, do what is manageable and works best for your family.

Images, ideas and templates can be found on the links above right, or via search engine images or Pinterest.

First and Then [https://do2learn.com/picturecards/howtouse/first\\_then.htm](https://do2learn.com/picturecards/howtouse/first_then.htm)

Picture Schedule <https://do2learn.com/picturecards/howtouse/schedule.htm>

Library of printable images <https://do2learn.com/picturecards/printcards/index.htm>

Downloadable Timetable Templates for Excel <https://www.calendarpedia.co.uk/timetable-excel-templates.html>

Daily Visual Timetable Resources <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/class-management/daily-routine/visual-timetable>

Visual Timetable App <https://mypicturepath.com/>

Symbol Library <https://symbolworld.org/categories/show/46>

Printable PDF Timetable <https://www.pricelessparenting.com/documents/family%20schedule.pdf>

Microsoft Office has a huge number of downloadable templates for Word and Excel <https://templates.office.com/en-us/schedules>

## Other visual supports

We can also use visual supports to help children and young people learn new skills or routines.

This could be related to hygiene, such as washing our hands or brushing our teeth, or learning to do something independently such as getting dressed or making a sandwich.

For some routines (if appropriate) you could take photos or a video of your child or young person completing each step in the process. For older children and young people you could compare it to creating a YouTube tutorial. This may also be helpful if you do not have a printer at home as they can be viewed on your smart device.





# Timetables and visual supports

Visual supports can also help children communicate their wants, needs and emotions. This could be anything from showing what they like or dislike, to communicating pain or sensory overload.

Images, ideas and templates can be found on the links below, or via search engine images or Pinterest.

## Visuals for routines and/or independence skills

Hand Wash Routine <https://www.widgit.com/resources/popular-topics/wash-hands/index.htm>

Getting Ready Routines <https://do2learn.com/picturecards/howtouse/reminderstrips.htm>

Sesame Street Daily Routine Stories <http://autism.sesamestreet.org/daily-routine-cards/>

Visual Timetable Resources <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/specialeducationalneeds-sen-cognition-and-learning/sen-visual-timetables-and-routine/sen-daily-routine>

Self Care/Getting Ready Routines <http://www.livingwellwithautism.com/how-to-use-picture-cards-and-schedules/self-care-visual-helpers>

Sequencing a routine activity <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-s-625-how-do-you-questions-and-answers>

## Visuals for communicating

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) <https://pecs-unitedkingdom.com/pecs/>

Objects of Reference <https://www.totalcommunication.org.uk/objects-of-reference/>

What is Important to Me ECC Talking Mat direct download <http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/sites/default/files/What%27s%20important%20to%20me%20%28Using%20Talking%20Mats%29.pdf>

Communicating feeling unwell <https://www.twinkl.com.au/resource/t-t-3912-parts-of-the-body-communication-cards>

Lego Face Emotions and communicating sensory overload [http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-gnfrVRA0t7M/Tf\\_DaVa2YJI/AAAAAAAAANU/gWzMLt6lj\\_Y/s1600/Feel+PECS.png](http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-gnfrVRA0t7M/Tf_DaVa2YJI/AAAAAAAAANU/gWzMLt6lj_Y/s1600/Feel+PECS.png)

Emotional Resources <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/specialeducationalneeds-sen-communication-and-interaction/sen-autism-spectrum-disorders/sen-autism-spectrum-disorders-emotions>

The Zones of Regulation is a full curriculum aimed at teaching children and young people to identify, communicate and regulate their emotions. <http://www.zonesofregulation.com/free-downloadable-handouts1.html> It is designed as 18 lessons which are to be taught in order, to get the most benefit from the programme. However even without the lesson plans there are a lot of helpful resources for identifying and discussing emotions and building a “toolkit” of strategies to help regulate feelings. You can find a huge amount of resources by searching Zones of Regulation online or on Pinterest.

