

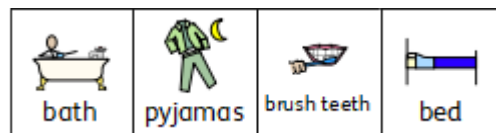
VISUAL TIMETABLES

A GUIDE

What is a visual timetable?

A now/next board or first/then board can be developed into a visual timetable once the child understands the concept.

Visual timetables can be photos or symbols depending on what the child understands. They can be only a few activities, whole day or even a whole week.



Why should I use one?

Visual timetables, if used regularly, can help:

- children to see that they will get a chance to do their favourite activity later on
- transition from one activity to another
- children who are anxious to see and understand what activities will happen over a set time period
- children to use photos or symbols from a timetable to make choices or express wants and needs
- to bridge the gap between home and school:
 - o teachers can help the child express what they've done at the weekend using pictures supplied by the parent.
 - o parents can help the child talk about their day in school using pictures supplied by the teacher.

How do I use a visual timetable?

Make some symbols of common activities, or take photos of the activities. Mount them onto card or laminate them so you can re-use them. You can make a long strip of plastic pockets to contain the activities for the day, and insert the correct symbols in order. Alternatively, you can stick them onto a long card with Velcro.

Or, at the beginning of the day you can sit down with the child/a group of children and draw the activities that they will be doing in the correct sequence.

When it's time to do an activity, take the photo/symbol off the timetable and show it to the child, naming it. Each time an activity is complete, it can be crossed off or removed. You can then talk about what the child will be doing next.



Top Tips

- Have a 'finished' tray or pocket that you can put the used symbols in.
- Put the word for the activity underneath it so everyone uses the same language.
- You might want to have a 'surprise!' or 'different' symbol for when the timetable isn't going to plan, e.g. there is an unexpected event like a fire alarm, or the toy has run out of batteries. Practise using this in situations you have set up, so that when a real surprise happens the child is used to it.
- Be prepared! Make sure you have every symbol/photo you need in case plans change. Putting symbols on a keyring can help if you are moving around a setting and need quick access to them.
- Some children may need more specific individual timetables, e.g. 'outside' might be too general and they need one with 'shoes on, coat on, hat on'. Settings often have a main timetable with some smaller timetables for individual children.
- Children will need adult support to engage and respond to the timetable – it won't work if it's just put on a wall.
- Gloucestershire uses a specific symbol set across the county called Widgit which is available to all settings.

