



What is it?

- A visual schedule communicates the sequence of upcoming activities through objects, symbols or photographs.
- A means to provide structure and predictability to all children in the classroom.
- A tool to reduce a child's stress levels by showing them what is coming.



Why use it?

- To show what is happening now, next, and later on.
- To show when it is snack time, lunchtime, and home time.
- To support understanding of daily routine.
- To show or teach when something has finished.
- To show when a sensory break is coming.
- To show that time is passing and give a sense of how long something lasts.
- To support transitions – Big and small.
- To show when preferred activities are coming, such as playtime.
- To provide extra detail when needed.
- To reduce stress levels by allowing the child to know what is coming next.



Steps to success

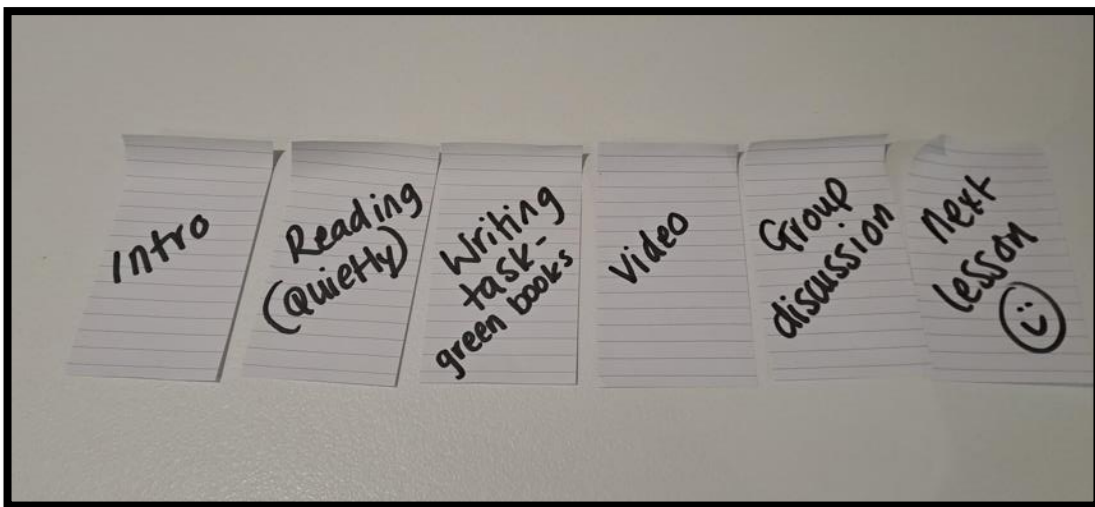
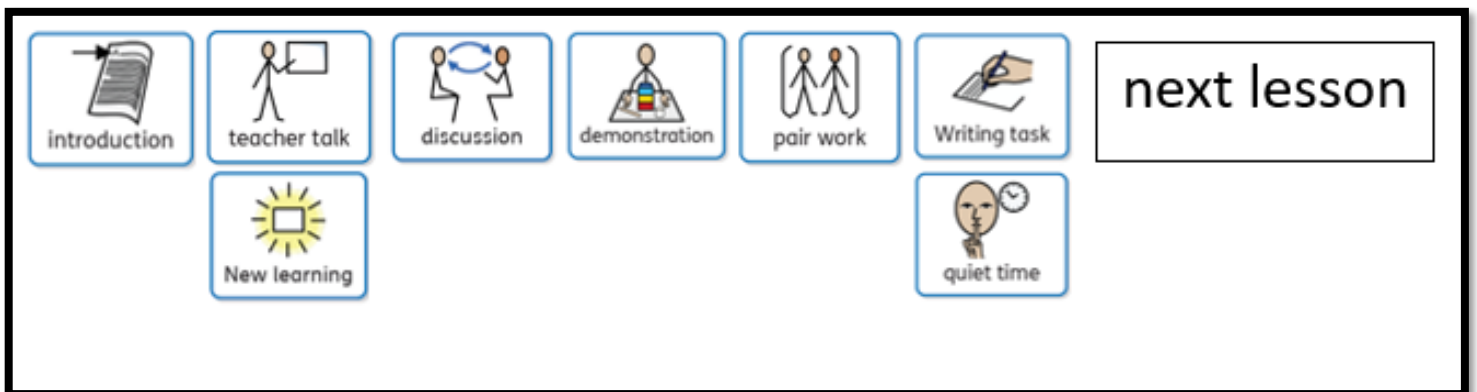
- Have a consistent approach across school.
- Use A5 size minimum, presented in a clear area near the board where all children can see it from anywhere in the room – Have no other clutter around it.
- Remove or turn over each activity as it passes so only the remaining activities are on show.
- A visual schedule can be broken down further for some children who need first/ then approach.
- **Never underestimate the importance of a visual timetable!**

Examples



Thinking Ahead

- A visual schedule continues to be good practice as the child gets older, especially in **secondary school** when children with social and communication differences can become overwhelmed with the transitions between lessons and different teachers.
- It gives clear expectations and boundaries within lessons. It also allows a child to see when 'quiet' time or preferred activities such as reading are coming which can help them to cope better.
- Consider the use of post-it notes, flip chart paper, bullet points, or electronic presentation for a schedule.
- Subject specific schedules can be re-used each lesson if structures remain predictable.
- Display near the board for all children to see clearly from anywhere in the room.



Further information

- <https://library.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/visual-support-timetables/>

