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HOME VISUAL SCHEDULE KIT

Free printable Resource for Daily Routines

What is a Visual Scedule?

A visual schedule is a tool that uses pictures or words to show your child what activities will occur and in what order. It increases structure and consistency, which often leads to fewer interruptions, clearer expectations, and smoother transitions between tasks.

Why it works:

Visual schedules support independent responding by providing consistent cues across activities. They reduce reliance on repeated verbal prompts and help decrease the likelihood of task refusal or negotiation during transitions.



How to use it:

- 1. Select a few consistent activities from your child's daily routine (start with 3–5 to avoid overwhelming them).
- 2. Post the schedule in a visible, frequently used area of the home (e.g., fridge, bedroom wall, or near the play area).
- 3. Review the schedule with your child at the start of the day. Label each item and model how to follow it step-by-step.
- 4. Provide specific reinforcement (e.g., praise, tokens, or access to a preferred item) when your child completes each scheduled activity—especially during initial teaching.

Tips for Success:

- Use praise or a small reward (like a token or sticker) after your child completes each activity.
- Make sure to include breaks or fun choices to keep things balanced.
- Laminating the pieces or using clear pockets can help the schedule last longer.
- Stick with it—even if it's hard at first. Kids learn best when routines stay the same and are practiced every day.
- If your child ignores the schedule, calmly redirect them back to it using a simple prompt (e.g., "Check your schedule") and show them the next step.

 Keep your response brief and consistent.

Troubleshooting: When Your Child Resists the Visual Schedule

Even with the best tools, it's normal to hit bumps. Here are some common challenges and ways to respond:

1. My child ignores the schedule completely.

Try this:

Keep it simple. Say, "Check your schedule," and walk over with them. Point to the next step without overexplaining. If they follow through—even just a little—offer praise or a small reward right away.

2. They keep asking to do something that's not on the schedule.

Try this:

Acknowledge the request ("I hear you want your tablet") but redirect to the schedule: "Let's finish what's next, then tablet time." Use a First-Then phrase or visual if needed.

3. They meltdown or cry when the next task is something non-preferred.

Try this:

Keep the demand low at first—break the activity into tiny steps if needed. Follow the hard task with something easier or fun (this is called the Premack Principle, or "Grandma's Rule").

4. The schedule just seems to make them more frustrated.

Try this:

Check that it's not too long or too detailed. Reduce the number of steps, use clear visuals, and make sure preferred items or breaks are built in. Sometimes less is more.

5. I forget to use it consistently.

Try this:

Keep it somewhere you see it too—fridge, bathroom door, entryway. Set a phone reminder or sticky note for the first few weeks until it becomes part of the routine.



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