

## Using visual support at home during the COVID-19 pandemic

### *Visual supports are for everyone*

Visual supports, such as gestures, symbols and photos, are helpful for everyone, whether we are able to talk verbally or not!

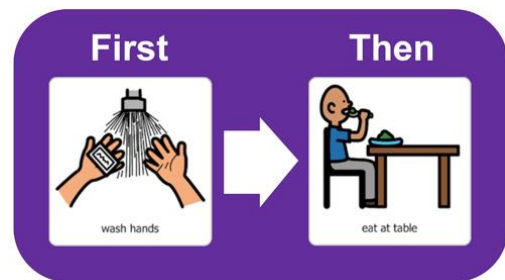


As adults, when we are overwhelmed we will often write a 'to do' list as a way of organising our thoughts: this is one type of everyday visual support.

Road signs use symbols as these are quickest for drivers to process: this is another type of everyday visual support.



**In school**, we often use gestures, short written lists, signs, symbols and photos to help our students understand instructions, anticipate activities and make choices. We use visual supports of some kind or other with all our students, whether they speak verbally or communicate using another system.



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We know that visual support can be especially helpful for everyone at times of change, as we adjust to new routines and expectations. **During the period of school closure due to COVID-19, you may therefore find it useful to use some simple visual supports at home.**



If your young person can read well, making a **simple written list** of the things you are going to do in your day may help them to feel calm. Encourage them to cross off each thing they have done once it is completed.

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Other young people may find it helpful to have a **visual timetable** for the day.



Visual timetables can take lots of forms, but all tend to use photos or symbols to show what is coming up.

[Click here](#) for some symbols you may like to use as part of a visual timetable (document supplied by boardmakeronline.com).

You can print these symbols at home (on card works best if possible) and cut them out, then blu-tac them up somewhere easy to see. You may like to use one of the timetable formats included in the attached link, but it is equally OK just to blu-tac symbols to a cupboard door! Do what works for you. You could also use your own photos if you feel your young person understands these more easily.



Refer to the timetable frequently throughout the day. Some people find it is helpful to remove each symbol/photo once the activity is over, with a short verbal summary e.g. 'crafts are finished (take craft symbol down) now it's time for snack (point to snack symbol)'.

Some young people just need to know just what will be happening in the very short term, so showing just one or two photos or symbols immediately before you go to do something may be useful. For example you may say 'first wash hands' (show washing hand symbol) 'then dinner' (show dinner symbol).



For families of students who are supported by Makaton signing, the Makaton website shop has some useful free resources:

<https://www.makaton.org/shop/shopping/browseStore/Free-resources>

## **Using visual support at home during the COVID-19 pandemic**

If you would like to discuss further strategies to support your young person's communication at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, or require additional resources, please do not hesitate to contact us by email:

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