

Visual Supports

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Visual supports are vital in the preschool classroom. Visual supports are pictures that illustrate messages we want children to understand. Visual supports are good for teaching any child; but, are especially useful for young children, children with speech delays, or dual language learners. By showing pictures to children of what we expect them to do or what activity will be coming up next, we ensure children understand the message we are trying to convey. **Visual supports help children feel safe and secure by diminishing anxiety and confusion. When children are comfortable, they are at their best to learn and thrive.**

Visual supports serve as prompts and reminders of what was verbally said. This can be especially helpful if there is a child in your classroom that needs a little extra assistance successfully completing a task. For example, posting pictures of hand washing steps right above the sink can serve as a helpful reminder to children to use soap or turn off the water when they are finished. **Adding such visuals helps children to become self-sufficient and to manage their own behavior.** Using visually supported communication is an extremely helpful approach for students with communication and behavior challenges. **Visual supports help children understand:** Where do items belong? What to do and how to do it? What will happen during the day? What choices are available? When a preferred activity will take place?

Look around in your classroom. Are the following displayed in pictures: Daily schedule, Where and how to line up, Feelings chart, Choice boards (songs, books, etc), Classroom rules, Number of children allowed to play in a center at one time, Circle time rules and expectations Step by step directions for dressing to go outside, hand washing, etc. Problem-solving steps?

Visuals are beneficial to the management of the classroom and encourage positive behavior. **Once your classroom is a visual oasis, the rewards are endless!** Effective praise from you will also encourage more independence and appropriate behavior. As time goes on, the children will require less assistance from you and be able to complete the task easily while managing their own behavior.

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