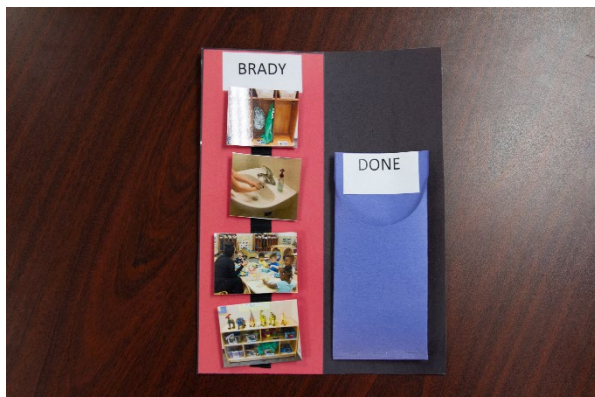


Creating a Visual Schedule

A mini schedule is one type of targeted support you may use with children who need more help following routines and expectations. Pictures of what will happen next or what a child should do, reinforce verbal instructions and are especially helpful for children with communication and social delays. The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) provides [ready-to-use](#) mini schedules and other types of visual supports, and there are a variety of programs such as [Boardmaker](#) that supply stock pictures. Websites such as [Pixabay](#) and [Pexels](#) have free stock and copyright free pictures, but it may be most helpful to use real pictures from your program and classroom environments. It can be difficult for children to interpret that a stock picture of a bathroom, for example, represents a picture of your classroom's bathroom when the colors and layout are different. Also, children often enjoy seeing pictures of themselves, their friends, and their real environments. Review the steps below to guide your creation of a mini schedule for children needing targeted support.

1. There are a variety of formats you can use, and you can make schedules for the entire day or for a specific routine.



For a child who needs help during a specific part of the day, such as the morning routine, the steps might look like this.

1. Say good-bye to Dad.
2. Hang up coat and backpack in cubby.
3. Move name tag to the “Who’s Here Today” board.
4. Pick a center and play.

2. Once you have determined the routines and steps the child needs support with, gather pictures that easily represent these for the child. You might take pictures of the specific environments for each step or you might take a picture of the child engaging in the actual task. When using pictures of program children, make sure you follow your program’s media policy. For example, has the parent consented to allowing the program to use pictures of their child? Does your program have specific rules about staff taking pictures of children using their personal cell phones?





3. Print, laminate, and cut out the pictures so you can use them flexibly and so they are durable. It is helpful to have the pictures for each step cut out individually, so you can easily make adjustments if the child's routines change or for days when the schedule may be a bit different due to a special event or other circumstance.



4. Use Velcro strips or dots so the pictures can stick to the base of your schedule. This allows you to change the steps to a routine or use the board



Now you have a visual schedule that is ready to use. There are a few ways you can implement these with children. For some children, you may place all of the steps in the schedule for them to see how the day will flow.

For children who become easily overwhelmed by multiple steps or a lot of pictures, you can add a picture of what comes next throughout the day or remove pictures as the child completes a task. Experiment with what works best for the child you created the mini schedule for, and remember that this does not replace the rich language input and social-emotional support children need to learn routines. Always pair developmentally appropriate communication with schedules and other types of visual support.

