

Pivotal Practices in Early Childhood: Visual Schedules

What It Is:

A visual schedule is an evidence-based tool that establishes a predictable and consistent routine. It shows a child what activities will happen and when. This helps a child understand the expectations and engage in activities. Visual schedules support social-emotional development, reduce challenging behaviors, and support receptive and expressive language development.

How To Do It:

1. **Plan a balanced daily schedule** with adult-led and child-led activities, mixing large and small groups while minimizing transitions
2. **Create a visual schedule** using real photos or clear icons labeled with words at child eye-level in a frequently used area
3. **Make it flexible** with moveable pictures to accommodate changes
4. **Refer to the schedule throughout the day** at activity beginnings, endings, and transitions — visually show how time passes (e.g., moving an arrow to the current activity)
5. **Update the schedule when plans change**, explaining the change verbally and visually to children

Ready, Set, Implement

Use these ideas and examples for inspiration:

- ★ Include a child to help review the schedule with peers during group time
- ★ Involve a child or children in moving the marker or visuals during transitions
- ★ Model **self-talk** (ex. "I am at centers now, what will I do next? Let me check the schedule. That's right. After centers I clean up and go outside!")
- ★ Individualize assistance using a **First/Then** board or **Task Schedule** showing pictures of 2-4 steps to help a child engage

Cut out the APP strip and place it in visible spots in your setting. These prompts serve as reminders to use the practice regularly and consistently.



Action Practice Prompts (APPs): Visual Schedules



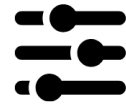
**Make the Daily
Schedule**

Prepare



Review

**Revisit the
Schedule
Multiple Times
Daily**



Modify

**Update &
Review
Schedule as
Needed**