

APRIL 2022

# TIMELY TOPICS

JORDAN CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER



## IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

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## PARENT CLASSES:

**No Classes This Month.**

**Classes will resume in May.**

## VISUAL SUPPORTS IN THE HOME

If you've spent any time Googling "how to help my child transition" or "how to teach my child to follow directions" or "how to teach my child to improve his behavior" you may have come across visual supports.

Visual supports are cues in our environment that remind us to do something, how to do something, or in what order to do something.

We use them all of the time as adults -- calendars, grocery lists, "to do" lists, sticky notes, recipes, etc. Traffic signals, construction signs, reminders to wear a mask and stay six feet apart are also examples of visual supports.

Visual supports are one of the most researched strategies for kids with language delays and autism. There are hundreds of studies showing their effectiveness with a wide variety of ages and in different settings.

Why are visual supports so effective? Many of our kids with autism struggle with processing auditory information but excel with processing visual information. If your child has a language delay, he or she may not be understanding the directions we are giving, what activity is happening next, and the rules for certain activities. Having a visual support to back up what we are telling them is very helpful.

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# Play Activities

Take pictures on your phone (you can print them or just keep them on your phone) or use the actual items needed for each activity to teach your child the order in which these play routines occur.



## Mr. Potato Head

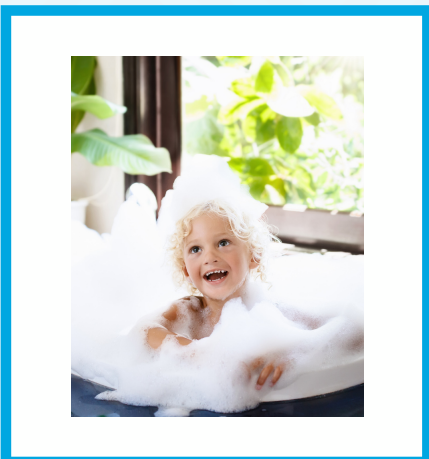
Take photos or draw pictures of the pieces of Mr Potato Head. Put them in a certain order. For example, 1) potato, 2) eyes, 3) nose, 4) mouth, 5) ears. Start with the first photo. Show your child the photo. Label it. Find that part of Mr. Potato Head's body and put it on. Repeat the process until all of the photos have been used.



## Simple Recipe

Make a food, drink or smoothie that your child likes. Take a photo of each ingredient you need. Help your child find each ingredient. Once you have all of your items, make the food or drink.

You can also take out all of the ingredients you need first. Then take photos of the items in the order you need to add them to the bowl or container.



## Bath Time

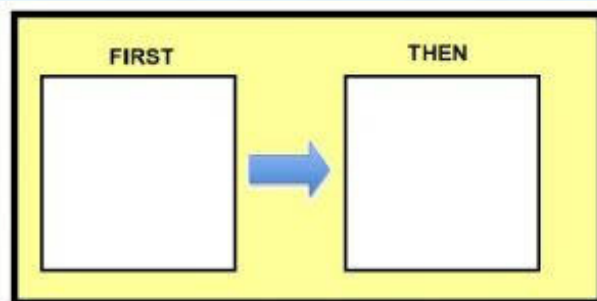
Take photos of each part of your bath routine. For example, turn on the water, add bubbles, turn off the tap, get into the bathtub, play with toys, wash hair, rinse.

When it is time for each part of the routine, show your child the photo and say "bubbles" or "water off" and then do that step.

You can let your child participate by turning of the water, adding the bubbles, or washing themselves.

# Laying the Foundation

- Visual supports provide a number of benefits including:
  - Increasing independence
  - Increasing comprehension (what your child understands)
  - Decreasing anxiety and problem behaviors
- Visual supports can be used in a variety of settings and with different people:
  - Home, school, daycare, store, library, etc.
  - Mom, dad, grandparents, teachers, daycare providers, etc.
- Visual supports take a bit of planning but are inexpensive to make and are portable.
- There is a wide variety of visual supports that can be used at home:
  - Choice boards, picture schedules, First-Then boards, timers, Stop-Go signs, etc.
- We can use visual supports to teach routines, how to play with toys, follow directions and routines, rules and expectations, and where things go.
- Here are some examples:



# Putting It Into Practice

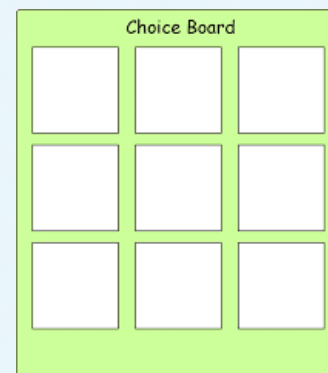
#1) Decide when you want to use a visual support (play time, lunch, bedtime, etc) and what you want to use it for (rules, order of the routine, etc).



#2) Decide on the format. Real objects can be helpful for young children who do not yet understand pictures. If you choose to use pictures, take photos of actual objects in your home. Your child will make the connection quicker when he/she sees a picture of their bed or their shoes or their table.



#3) Introduce the visual support. Start small. You can increase the number of photos on your schedule or board as you go. If you use a First-Then board, start by using two things your child likes or can already do. For example, first sit down, then fruit snacks.



#4) Model how to it is used / use it with your child. Show your child how the schedule works by showing him/her the picture and then going to that activity (meal time) and stay with him/her while you eat. Show him/her the next photo (TV) and transition to that activity.

