

# Visual Supports for Infants and Toddlers

## Schedules, Activities, and Routines



Visual supports, such as objects, photos, or drawings, add visual information to a learning environment to help children know what to do and how to interact during routines and activities. Visual supports have many different uses and can support children with a variety of learning characteristics.

This special collection of visual supports was designed with **young children between the ages of 16 to 36 months in mind**. The visuals are simple and concrete to match the developmental needs of young children who are just beginning to develop symbolic thought. Each visual support has a guide with information to help determine a child's need for support and what visual cues will be most useful.

Below find the information needed to create and use visuals for **schedules, activities, and routines** to help infants and toddlers understand what's happening during daily activities.

### What?

The schedules, activities, and routines visuals show examples of daily activities and routines that often take place and materials that are often used during the day. Each photo shows an object or action that gives information about an activity or routine. Use these visuals to help young children understand what's happening and support them to engage more independently in daily activities.

### Why?

Visuals of activities and items in early learning and care settings help young children understand what's happening, where to be, or what to do during daily activities and routines. Using visual cues can help children who may benefit from more support to understand a verbal direction on its own.

You can use the visual activities to:

- Remind children of what they can do in certain areas of the learning environment.
- Help a child who needs support during play to choose an item or activity.
- Help children know what will happen next during transitions.

## How?

1. **Make schedules, activities, and routines visual supports.**
2. **Decide how and when you'd like to use the visuals.** Will you use the visuals with the entire group of children? Will you use the visuals for an individual child?
3. **Select which visuals you want to use for the group and/or for an individual child.** Which visuals represent the activities, routines, and items in your environment?

**Tip:** Translate the rules into the languages spoken by the children in your learning environment or make separate visuals for each language.

4. **Select the format of the visual support you will use.** These visual supports, which are generic photos of common items and activities, will meet the needs of many older toddlers. But to be most effective, visual supports should match the developmental needs of the children in your environment. For example, some children may benefit from a more concrete visual, such as a real object, a photo of an actual object from their environment, or a photo of the children themselves doing the activity or routine.

There are a range of visual support formats, ranging from most concrete to most abstract, including:

- Real object
- Miniature versions of object
- Photograph of real object
- Photograph of non-identical object
- Drawing
- Printed words

**Tip:** If a visual is too abstract and the child doesn't understand the relationship between the symbol and the item or activity, it won't be successful in supporting their participation, independence, or behavior.

5. **Print the visuals.**
  - Use them as a portable “key ring” visual support.
    - Cut out individual cards or photos and laminate them.
    - Punch a hole in the cards and put them on a ring so you can carry them easily with you to use as needed throughout the day.
  - Use them as a chart.
    - Print the entire visual support grid and laminate or place in a sheet protector.
    - Post the board at children's eye level in different areas of the environment where children interact with one another. Make sure the chart is easy to see and access.

6. **Use schedules, activities, and routines visual supports.** Introduce the visuals to children throughout the day to teach the schedules, activities, and routines. Describe the activities visuals — label objects in the visuals, point out the areas in the learning environment, or model the transitions and have children practice them.

**Tips:**

- Show children where they can find the materials and objects depicted in the visuals so they know where to find them.
  - Talk about transitions, schedules, and routines and practice them when children are feeling calm. It will be easier for them to engage in the routines. Don't wait until children are having a difficult time engaging in a routine to introduce the visual.
  - Introduce each routine separately so children don't become overwhelmed with learning too much at once.
  - Ask children with language or communication delays to repeat the routine or item in the photo or point to the corresponding photo to make sure they understand. Ask the child, "Which picture says, 'Diaper change'?" or "Which picture has a puzzle?"
    - During daily transitions, use a visual to show children what to do next. Explain, "It's time to change your diaper" or "It's time to go for a walk." Point to the picture as you say the word to help children understand.
7. **Use visuals to support a child to choose an activity during play time.** Show two visuals depicting toys or materials to the child and ask them, "What do you want to play with?" or "Do you want to play with a puzzle or a shape sorter?"

**Tip:** For visual supports to be most useful to infants and toddlers, they should be used consistently each day.



National Center on  
Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning

This resource was supported by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$10,200,000 with 100% funded by ACF. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACF/HHS, or the U.S. Government. This resource may be duplicated for noncommercial uses without permission.

# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

Bus



Drop Off



Say Goodbye to \_\_\_\_\_



Pick Up



Say Hi to \_\_\_\_\_

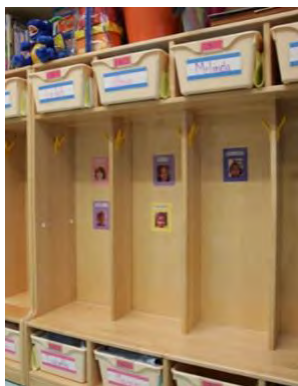


Say Bye to your Teacher



# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

Cubbies



Hang Your Coat/Backpack



Going for a Walk



Going for a Walk



Going for a Walk



Going for a Walk



# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

Snack Time



Snack Time



Snack Time



Bottle



Food



High Chair



# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

Nap Time



Nap Time



Crib



Cot



Sleeping Mat



Pacifier



# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

Lovey



Security Blanket



Security Blanket



Potty Time



Changing Time



Changing Table



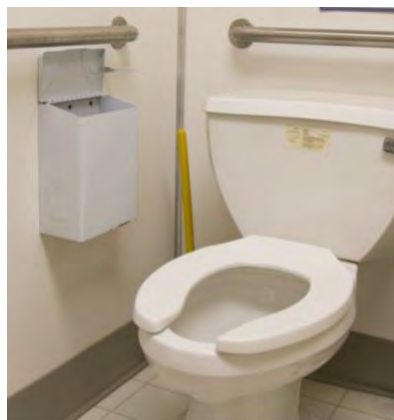


# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

Diaper



Toilet



Training Toilet



Outside Play



Nature Play



Nature Play



# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

Swing



Climbing Structure



Climbing Structure



Outside Play House



Playing Outside



Playing Outside



# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

Play Car



Tricycle



Play Centers



Play Centers



Music



Dramatic Play



# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

Dramatic Play — Kitchen



Dramatic Play — Kitchen



Dress Up



Gross Motor — Inside



Science



Art



# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

Crayons



Markers



Sensory Bins



Sand Table



Water Table



Play Time



# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

Play with Friends



Tummy Time



Movement Time



Walk



Walk



Walk



# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

Crawl



Run



Peek-a-Boo



Nesting Cups



Beads



Pop-Beads



# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

Counting Beads



Shape Sorter



Shape Sorter



Pop-up Toy



Pop-up Toy



Puzzle Time





# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

Puzzles



Blocks



Blocks



Building



Building



Book Area



# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

Book



Book



Read with an Adult



Read with an Adult



Read with an Adult



Clean-up Time



# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

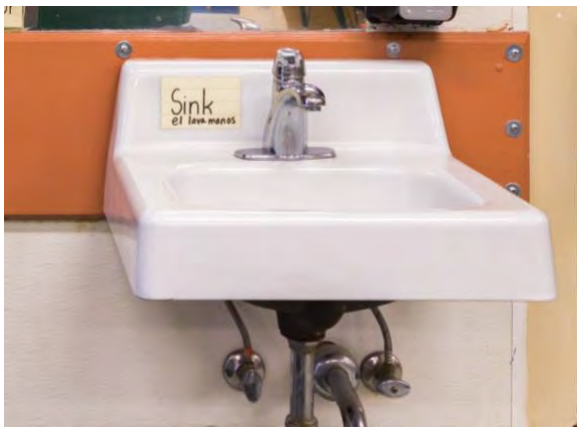
Wash Hands



Wash Hands



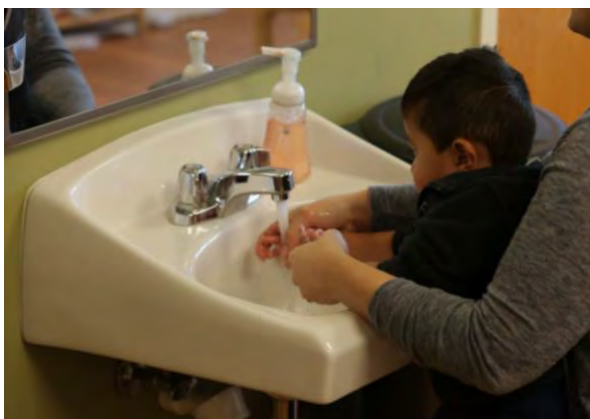
Wash Hands



Wash Hands



Wash Hands



Wash Hands



# Schedules, Activities, and Routines

Wash Hands



Brush Teeth



Brush Teeth



Teether



Teether

