The Benefits of Visuals

ChildInÜ Oxford

"Learners respond to visual information faster as compared to text only materials. Visuals overall help improve learning tremendously and on multiple levels. Hence, around 65% of the population is comprised as visual learners."

Why Visuals are Important:

As adults, we use visuals frequently: a calendar, day timers, street signs and maps daily as a visual cue. This allows us to, "plan, organize, and most of all be independent." Visuals are equally as important for children as they come to learn and better understand what is expected of them in the world around them. While visuals can help children with language and communication difficulties (non-verbal, auditory processing, etc.), all children benefit from the use of visuals as "Sixty-five percent of the population is comprised as visual learners."
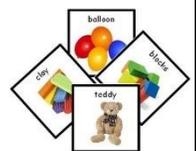
The Benefits of Visuals in Supporting Children:

- Visuals direct attention to the child and hold their attention.
- Allows a child more time to process the information.
- Using the same words when a visual is shown, teaches a child those words.
- Supports a non-verbal form of communication for a child that may not be able otherwise communicate their want/needs.
- Visuals assist in a child remembering i.e. What's happens next?
- Words "disappear" right after we say them, visuals hold time and space.

Labeling

A simple yet effective way to introduce visuals is by labeling. Below are some ideas to consider:

- Objects/items- take a photo of the objects/items and place it where the object belongs i.e. on a shelf or on a bucket.

- Important Locations- especially if a child in adjusting to a new space or routine, posting a visual will help support a child in making a connection between the space and the visual i.e. washroom.

- Emotions- providing examples of different emotions helps a child to make a connection between how they are feeling and by labeling/naming it. Placing an 'Emotions Chart' in a common space allows a child to reference it frequently when needed.

"If I can't picture it, I can't understand it."
~ Albert Einstein

References

https://connectability.ca/2010/09/23/using-visuals/

https://www.erinoakkids.ca/getmedia/3c701adc-46a1-4f4e-9813-5ff6121fff65/000103-AODA-Choice-Boards.pdf

https://elearningindustry.com/visual-learning-6-reasons-visuals-powerful-aspect-elearning

https://ramapoforchildren.org/2014/08/29/the-importance-of-using-visuals-with-children/

If you require assistance in better supporting a child with visuals, please contact your Resource Consultant at Childinu Oxford or by visiting:
https://childinuoxford.com/about/meet-our-team/

Additional ways visuals can be used:

Visual Schedule

A 'Visual Schedule' is commonly used to encourage children to better understand what comes next in their day. Pictures are placed in order to show what chronologically will happen next i.e. arrive at childcare, put on shoes, play, clean-up etc. By using a visual schedule, a child will come to understand what comes next in their routine.
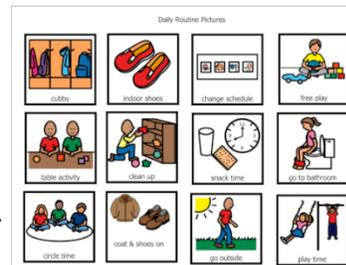
A Visual Schedule can also be used to support the breakdown of a single activity/task that is being taught to a child. Each step is included from start to finish i.e. brushing teeth.
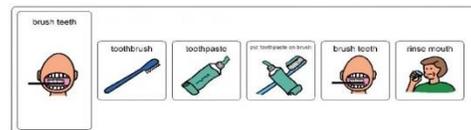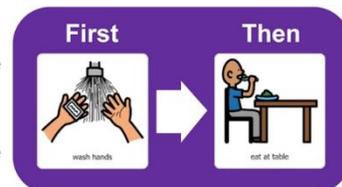

Choice Board

A choice board is a strategy that is used before an activity/task begins in order to increase participation, while decreasing the possibility of a child engaging in challenging behaviours. This may increase the child's motivation by providing them with a choice over which activity comes next or what they would like to work for. Providing a choice will give a child a sense of control over what happens in their environment, while you are still in control over what options they have to choose from.
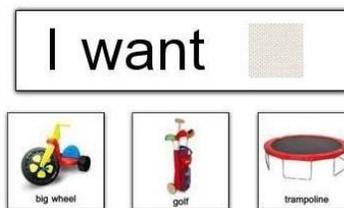
First/Then Board

The language used while using a visual is also very important. When using a 'First/Then' Board, the less desirable activity/task is placed on the left side and the more desirable is on the right. By stressing what is to come *next*, a child will learn to identify that what they want will follow once the task has been completed i.e. snack.