

# VISUAL SUPPORTS

## For Home and School

This booklet was created in 2003 by Wendy Stone, PhD and colleagues at Vanderbilt University Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders (TRIAD). Dr. Stone founded TRIAD in 1998 and served as director until joining the University of Washington Department of Psychology in 2010. She currently directs the UW READi Lab (Research in Early Autism Detection and Intervention), and we are delighted to host this resource on our website.

**Posted July 31, 2015**

**[uwreadilab.com](http://uwreadilab.com)**

# HOW TO USE VISUAL SUPPORTS

<b>VISUAL SUPPORTS AS SCHEDULES .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Object Schedules .....	2
Picture Schedules .....	3
Schedules for New Situations .....	4
<b>VISUAL SUPPORTS DURING EVERYDAY ROUTINES .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>VISUAL SUPPORTS AS COMMUNICATION AIDS .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Promoting Language Understanding .....	10
Promoting Expression of Needs and Desires .....	12
Promoting Choice-Making .....	13
Communication During Play .....	15
<b>VISUAL SUPPORTS TO MANAGE BEHAVIOR .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Physical Boundaries .....	16
Behavioral Expectations .....	18
First-Then Systems .....	20
<b>VISUAL SUPPORTS TO CLARIFY LEARNING ACTIVITIES .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Models of Desired End-Points .....	21
Visual Cues to Provide Success .....	22

## *Acknowledgement*

***Many illustrations in this booklet contain Picture Communication Symbols  
©1981-2010 by Mayer-Johnson LLC. Boardmaker™ is a trademark of Mayer-  
Johnson LLC.***

## USING VISUAL SUPPORTS AS SCHEDULES

- To increase predictability for the child
- To convey a sequence of activities or daily events
- To help the child understand what comes next
- To help the child understand when he gets to do his favorite activities
- To prepare the child for new or unfamiliar situations

### Object Schedules



This schedule indicates the sequence of:  
Bathroom – Brush teeth – Relax in favorite chair – Play catch



This schedule indicates the sequence of:  
Breakfast – Bathroom – Play with Play-Doh –  
Play with blocks



This schedule indicates the sequence of activities for the school day

# Picture Schedules



This schedule indicates that completion of two work activities will be followed by a "tickle" reward

← This schedule indicates the sequence of activities for morning routine at home



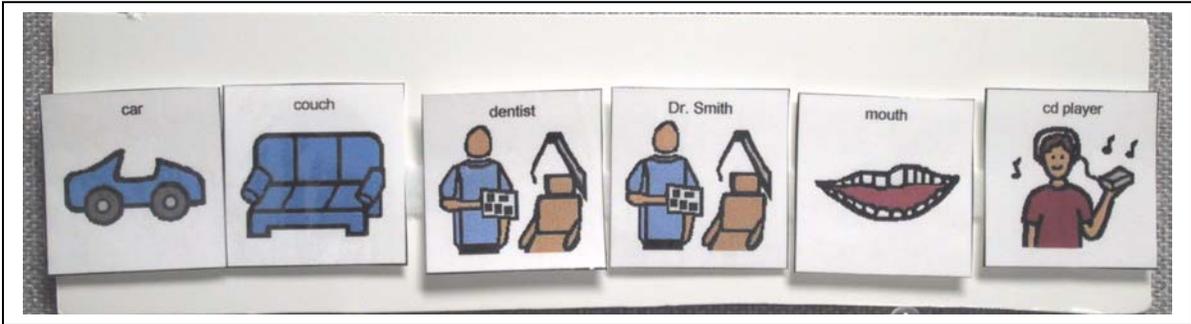
This schedule indicates the sequence of activities at school (cards are turned over after activities are completed)

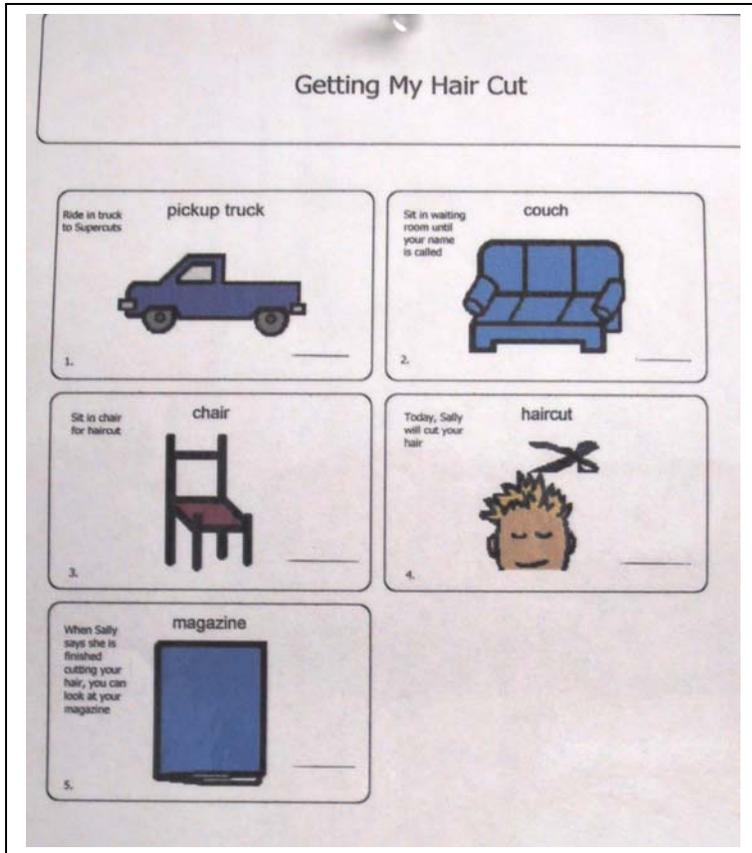
# Schedules for New Situations

### Going To Dr. Smith's Office (dentist)

1.  Ride in car to Dr. Smith's office	2.  Sit in Dr. Smith's waiting room
3.  Go to exam room when name is called and sit in chair	4.  Sit in chair and wait for Dr. Smith
5.  Open mouth when Dr. Smith or his assistant asks you to	6.  Listen to Tim McGraw when Dr. Smith says he is finished

**Going to the dentist:**  
Two different types of schedules  
(listening to music is the reward)





This schedule indicates the sequence of events for **getting a haircut** (looking at a favorite magazine is the reward)

The schedule below conveys the sequence of events for a **shopping trip**



## USING VISUAL SUPPORTS DURING EVERYDAY ROUTINES

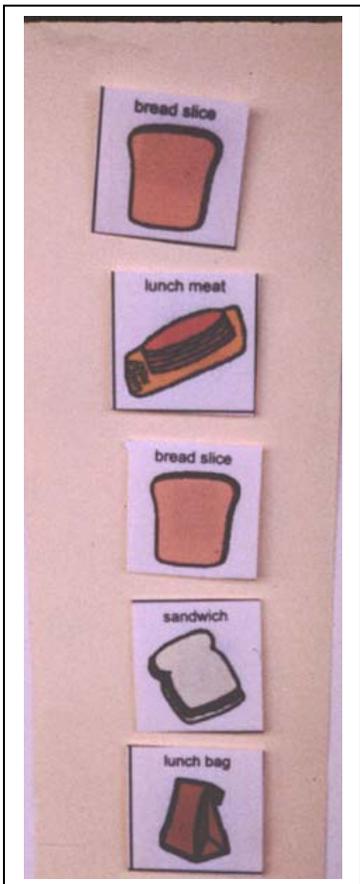
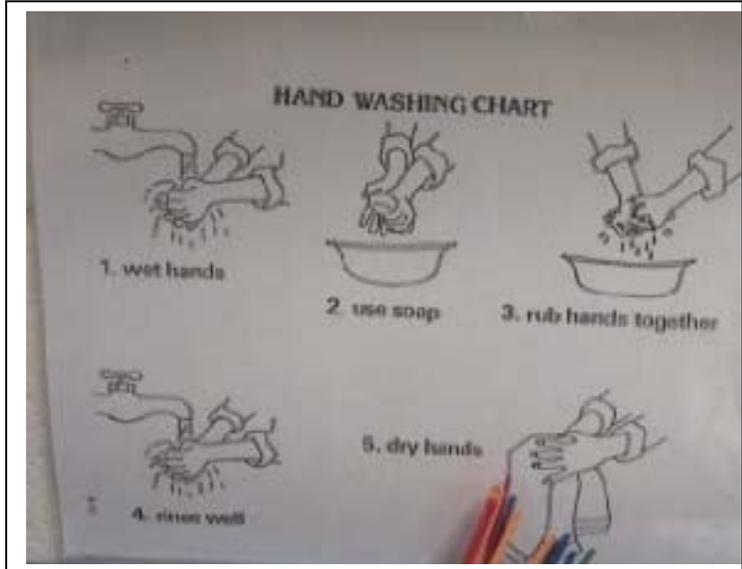
- To teach everyday skills
- To provide step-by-step instructions
- To increase the child's independence during daily activities
- To decrease the need for parental intervention

Two different examples of using pictures to illustrate the routine of **brushing teeth**



These pictures illustrate the steps involved in **taking a bath**

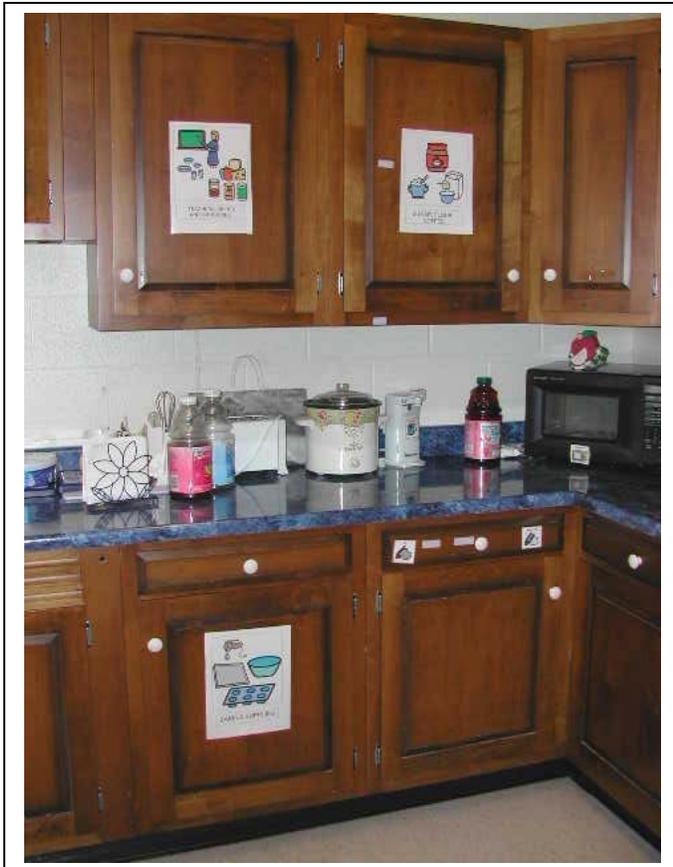
Two sets of visual instructions for **washing hands**



This sequence of photos and pictures helps boys remember three important **toileting** steps

← These pictures illustrate the sequence of making a sandwich to bring to school

These pictures indicate which drawer the child's clothes should go in



These pictures illustrate the contents of kitchen cabinets



These photos indicate where the child should put back his/her toys after playing with them



This placemat provides visual cues that enable children to set the table by matching the objects to the pictures

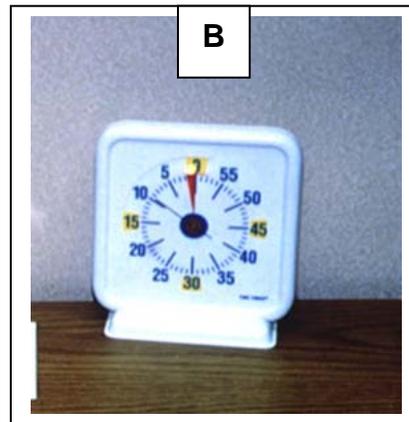
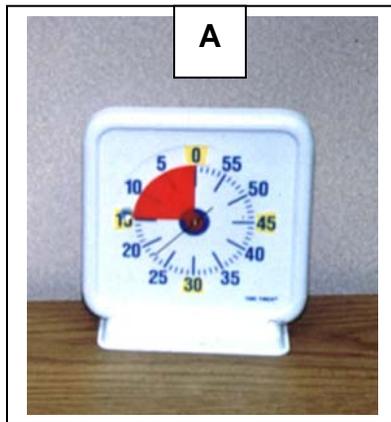
## USING VISUAL SUPPORTS AS COMMUNICATION AIDS

- To help the child express his/her desires
- To help the child make choices
- To promote understanding of language-based activities or instructions
- To help convey the concept of time

### Promoting Language Understanding



← This symbol-word card is used to indicate to the child that s/he will need to wait for a brief period

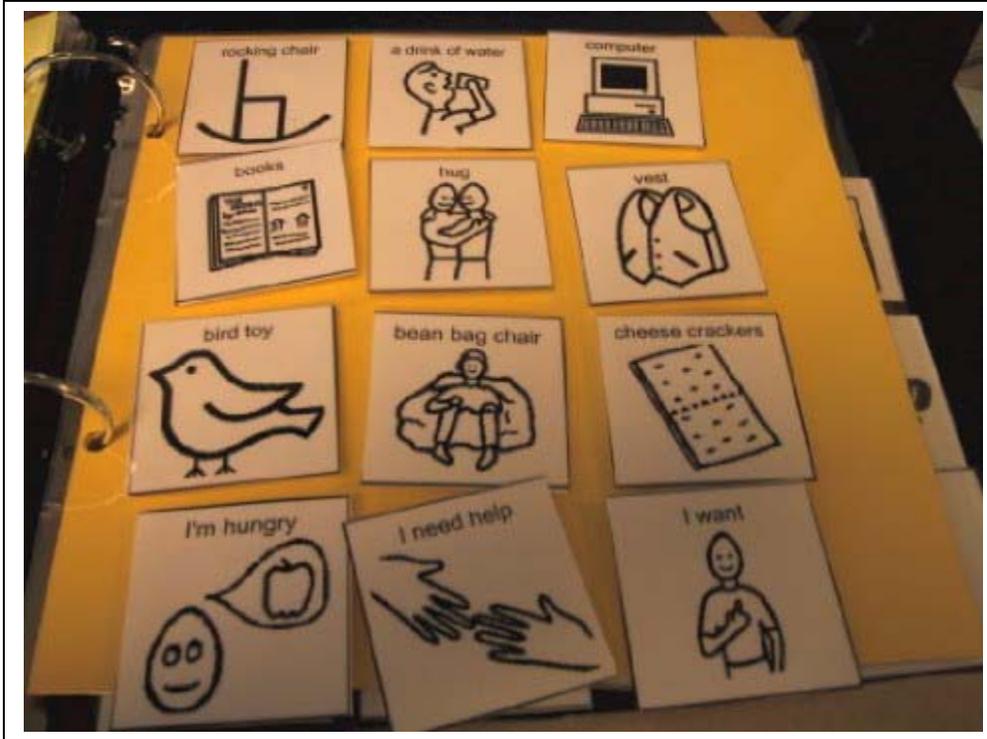


These photos illustrate the use of a Time Timer to indicate how much time activities will last. The red portion of Timer A indicates that there are 15 minutes left. The red portion of Timer B is almost gone, indicating that time is almost up.

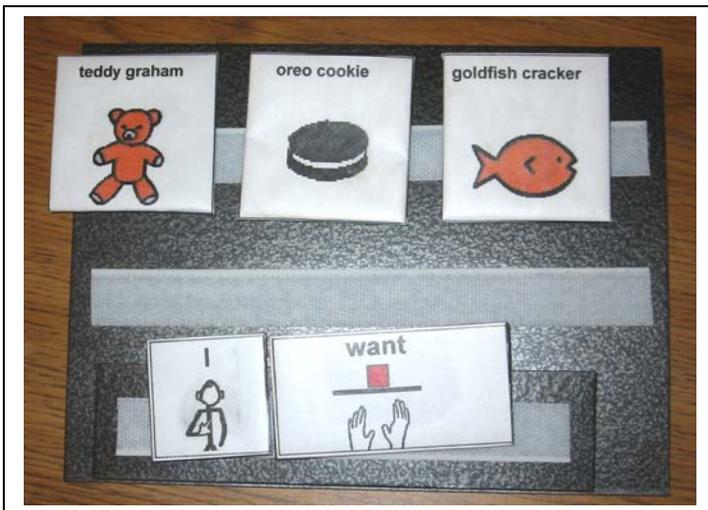


The photos above illustrate a hand-made system for conveying time. A picture of a clock is divided into 4 strips. The strips are placed over a “Stop” symbol, using Velcro. Each “clock” strip is removed after a certain amount of time, and when they have all been removed, the stop sign indicates that the activity is over.

## Promoting Expression of Needs and Desires

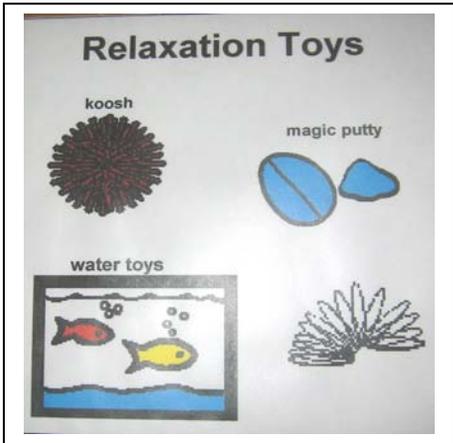


This photo illustrates a page in a child's communication book. Pictures are attached to the page by Velcro and can be handed to an adult to request food, help, and other preferred objects or activities

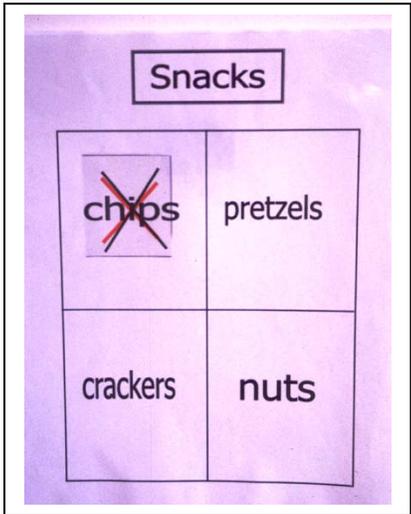


These pictures enable the child to indicate which type of snack s/he would prefer

Promoting Choice-Making



This choice board enables the child to select the toy s/he would like to play with during "down time"



This choice board can be used for a child who reads. The "X" indicates that the snack is not available as an option that day

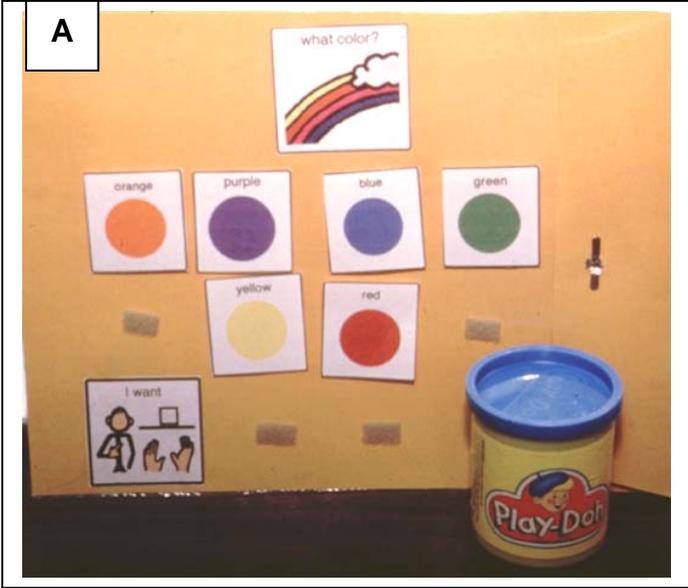
This choice board enables the child to select which type of reward s/he would like to work for





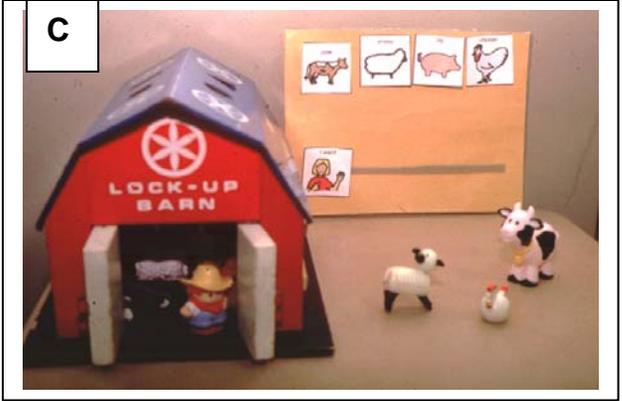
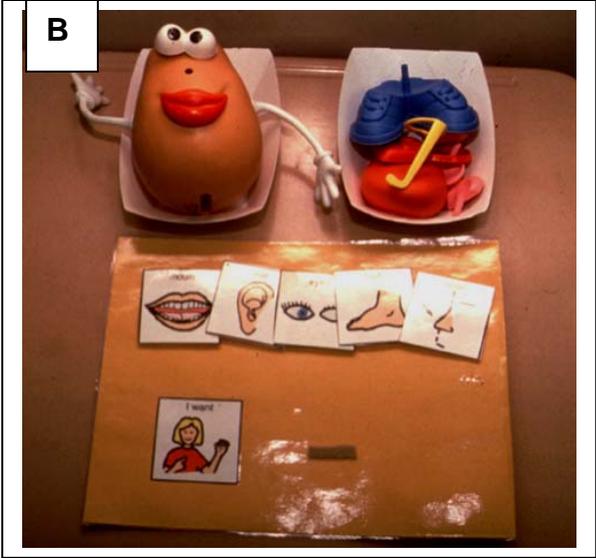
This type of choice board can be used for a child who has difficulty settling down for bed. The child is allowed to select 3 activities from those displayed that will become part of the bedtime routine for that evening. The child chooses the activities as well as the order in which they occur. The pictures can be changed so that different options are available on different days.

Communication During Play



Pictures enable the child to communicate:

- A:** Which color of Play-Doh s/he wants
- B:** Which potato-head piece(s) s/he wants
- C:** Which barnyard animal(s) s/he wants
- D:** Which animal sounds s/he hears on the See 'N Say



## USING VISUAL SUPPORTS TO MANAGE BEHAVIOR

- To convey rules and behavioral expectations
- To convey rewards and consequences
- To increase motivation to perform less desired activities
- To delineate areas that are on- and off-limits
- To encourage self-monitoring and self-control

### Physical Boundaries

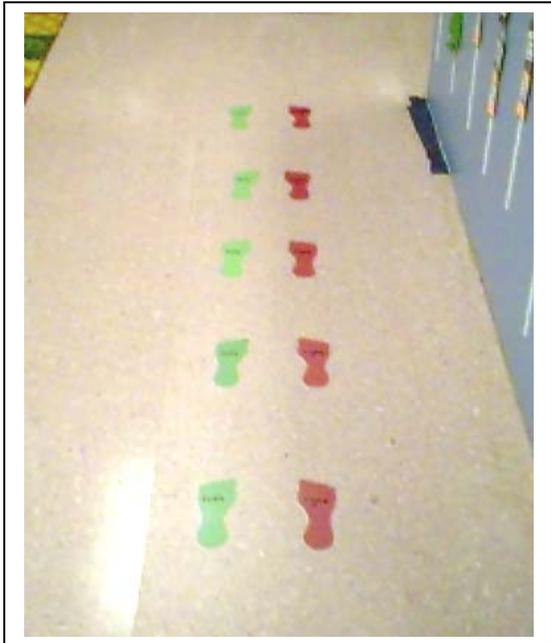


These photos illustrate the use of rugs, masking tape, and furniture to delineate specific activity areas. Children are expected to remain in these areas while the activities are in progress.





This relaxation area is defined by walls and shelves and is located away from other activities



These cutouts of footprints help children know where to go to line up and which way to face



These rubber mats on the floor help children locate where they are supposed to stand

# Behavioral Expectations



Pictures, words, and symbols are used to depict specific rules or behavioral expectations





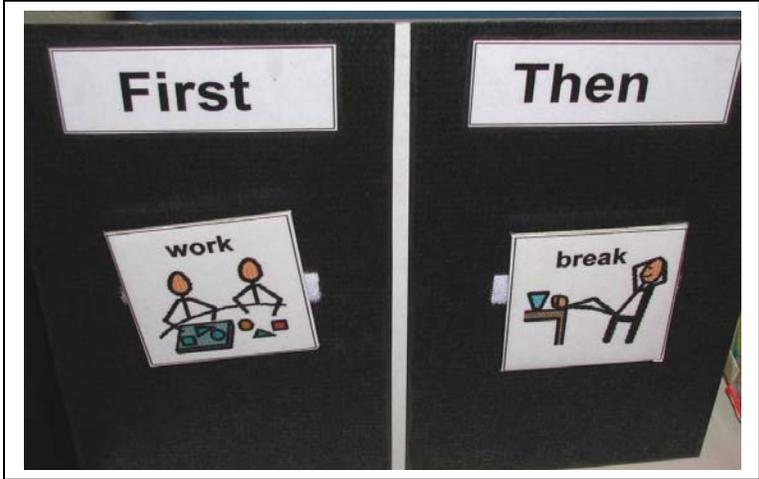
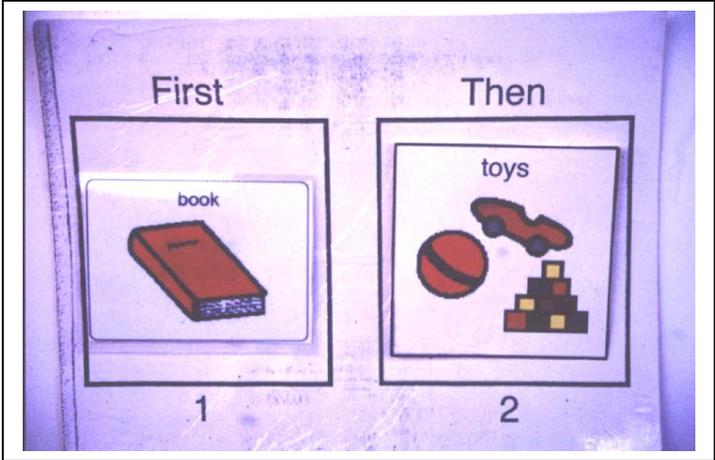
The stop sign is used to indicate that the TV is off-limits to the child

For children who can read, this chart lists specific behaviors and their consequences

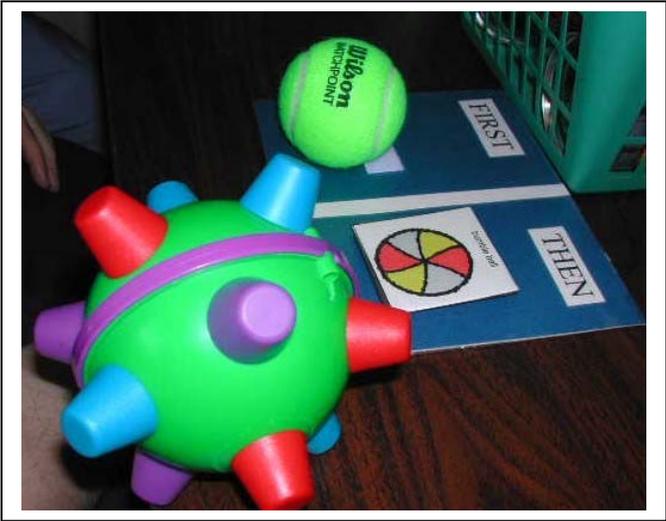
# WHEN I AM MAD?

THINGS I CAN DO:	WHAT WILL HAPPEN:
I CAN KICK	NO BROWN ICECREAM
I CAN HIT	NO BROWN ICECREAM
I CAN SPIT	NO BROWN ICECREAM
I CAN POKE EYES	NO BROWN ICECREAM
<i>I CAN RUN AWAY</i>	<i>NO BROWN ICECREAM</i>
I CAN SAY:	
"I DON'T UNDERSTAND"	SOMEONE WILL HELP ME (GET ICECREAM)
I CAN SAY:	
" I AM MAD"	SOMEONE WILL HELP ME (GET ICECREAM)

**First-Then Systems**



First-Then systems can be very effective in increasing children’s motivation to perform less desired activities. They provide visual reminders of the reward the child will receive after attempting or completing the activity. The examples above employ pictures and the examples below employ concrete objects to illustrate this two-step routine.



## USING VISUAL SUPPORTS TO CLARIFY LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- To help the child understand task expectations
- To provide physical models of desired end-points
- To increase the visual clarity of tasks
- To help children organize their responses
- To make it easier for the child to succeed

### Models of Desired End-Points

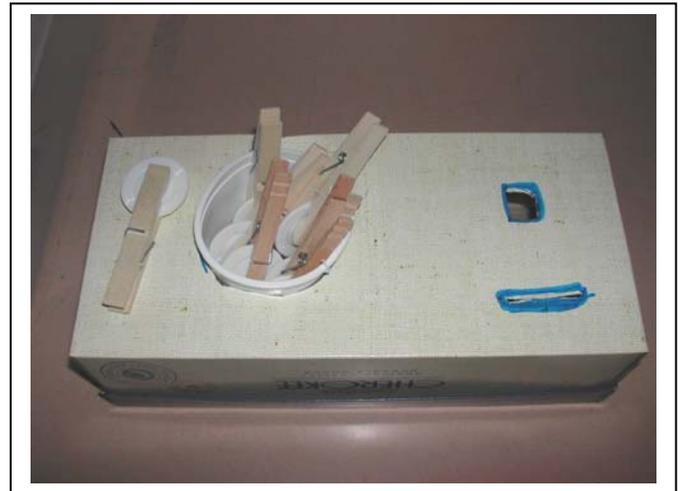
The models at the right side of each photo provide the child with information about what the finished product should look like



Visual Cues to Provide Success



Sorting trays provide information about where the materials should be placed. They provide visual clarity and help the child organize his/her responses.



Beginning sorting activities should employ objects that are very different from each other. The task can be simplified by: 1) having the child sort objects into a covered box so that s/he will not be distracted by the objects that have already been sorted; and 2) cutting out outlines of each object so that the objects will only fit into the correct hole



Placing exemplars of small, medium, and large bears on the containers makes it easier for the child to sort the bears correctly



Placing pictures of big and little animals on the cups makes it easier for the child to sort the animals into the correct cups

