Visual Supports
Fact Sheet

Brief Description

Visual supports (VS) are concrete cues that provide information about an activity, routine, or expectation and/or support skill demonstration. Visual supports can provide assistance across activity and setting, and can take on a number of forms and functions. These include but are not limited to: photographs, icons, drawings, written words, objects, environmental arrangement, schedules, graphic organizers, organizational systems, and scripts. Visual supports are commonly used to: 1) organize learning environments, 2) establish expectations around activities, routines, or behaviors (e.g., visual schedules, visual instructions, structured work systems, scripts, power cards), 3) provide cues or reminders (e.g., conversation and initiation cues, choice making supports, visual timers, finished box), and 4) provide preparation or instruction (e.g., video priming, video feedback).

Qualifying Evidence

Visual supports meet evidence-based criteria with 18 single case design studies.

Ages

According to the evidence-based studies, this intervention has been effective for toddlers (0-2 years) to young adults (19-22 years) with ASD.

Outcomes

Visual supports can be used effectively to address social, communication, behavior, play, cognitive, school-readiness, academic, motor, and adaptive skills.

Research Studies Poviding Evidence

Angell, M. E., Nicholson, J. K., Watts, E. H., & Blum, C. (2011). Using a multicomponent adapted power card strategy to decrease latency during interactivity transitions for three children with developmental disabilities. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, *26*(4), 206-217. doi: 10.1177/1088357611421169

Betz, A., Higbee, T. S., & Reagon, K. A. (2008). Using joint activity schedules to promote peer engagement in preschoolers with autism. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, *41*(2), 237-241. doi: 10.1901/jaba.2008.41-237

Blum-Dimaya, A., Reeve, S. A., Reeve, K. F., & Hoch, H. (2010). Teaching children with autism to play a video game using activity schedules and game-embedded simultaneous video modeling. *Education and Treatment of Children*, *33*(3), 351-370. doi: 10.1353/etc.0.0103

Bock, M. A. (1999). Sorting laundry: Categorization strategy application to an authentic learning activity by children with autism. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, *14*(4), 220-230. doi: 10.1177/108835769901400404

Bryan, L. C., & Gast, D. L. (2000). Teaching on-task and on-schedule behaviors to high-functioning children with autism via picture activity schedules. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *30*(6), 553-567. doi: 10.1023/A:1005687310346

Cale, S. I., Carr, E. G., Blakeley-Smith, A., & Owen-DeSchryver, J. S. (2009). Context-based assessment and intervention for problem behavior in children with autism spectrum disorder. *Behavior Modification*, *33*(6), 707-742. doi: 10.1177/0145445509340775

Cihak, D. F. (2011). Comparing pictorial and video modeling activity schedules during transitions for students with autism spectrum disorders. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, *5*(1), 433-441. doi: 10.1016/j.rasd.2010.06.006

Hughes, C., Golas, M., Cosgriff, J., Brigham, N., Edwards, C., & Cashen, K. (2011). Effects of a social skills intervention among high school students with intellectual disabilities and autism and their general education peers. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, *36*(1-2), 46-61. doi: 10.2511/rpsd.36.1-2.46

Krantz, P. J., & McClannahan, L. E. (1998). Social interaction skills for children with autism: A script-fading procedure for beginning readers. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, *31*(2), 191-202. doi: 10.1901/jaba.1998.31-191

MacDuff, G. S., Krantz, P. J., & McClannahan, L. E. (1993). Teaching children with autism to use photographic activity schedules: Maintenance and generalization of complex response chains. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, *26*(1), 89-97. doi: 10.1901/jaba.1993.26-89

Matson, J. L., Sevin, J. A., Box, M. L., Francis, K. L., & Sevin, B. M. (1993). An evaluation of two methods for increasing self-initiated verbalizations in autistic children. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, *26*(3), 389-398. doi: 10.1901/jaba.1993.26-389

Morrison, R. S., Sainato, D. M., Benchaaban, D., & Endo, S. (2002). Increasing play skills of children with autism using activity schedules and correspondence training. *Journal of early intervention*, *25*(1), 58-72. doi: 10.1177/105381510202500106

Murdock, L. C., & Hobbs, J. Q. (2011). Tell me what you did today: A visual cueing strategy for children with ASD. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, *26*(3), 162-172. doi: 10.1177/1088357611405191

O'Reilly, M., Sigafoos, J., Lancioni, G., Edrisinha, C., & Andrews, A. (2005). An examination of the effects of a classroom activity schedule on levels of self-injury and engagement for a child with severe autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *35*(3), 305-311. doi: 10.1007/s10803-005-3294-1

Peterson, L., McLaughlin, T. F., Weber, K. P., & Anderson, H. (2008). The effects of model, lead, and test technique with visual prompts paired with a fading procedure to teach "where" to a 13-year-old echolalic boy with autism. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, *20*(1), 31-39. doi: 10.1007/s10882-007-9077-1

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West, E. A. (2008). Effects of verbal cues versus pictorial cues on the transfer of stimulus control for children with autism. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, *23*(4), 229-241. doi: 10.1177/1088357608324715

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