

# Visual Timetables

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Having a visual timetable can be really useful for some children. It helps them keep track of what's happening next, supports transitions and helps them recognise the passing of time.

It is important that visual timetables do not restrict a child from regulating themselves. So for example, it should not force a child to continue doing something that is making them overstimulated, in favour of spending time in a quiet space, or it should not restrict a child from accessing a toy or tool that calms them until they complete a particular activity. A visual timetable should instead simply be an aid to help the child know what is coming next, regardless of whether they finish the prior task/activity. It's okay to pick your battles, you can't always know what is going on for a neurodivergent child or how much they can handle, especially if you are not neurodivergent yourself. Chances are, most children won't get through everything you plan for a day anyway, so prepare for some things to remain incomplete.

## **In a visual timetable you might include:**

- Images/pictures. These can be illustrations or photos of actual items or places.
- Text describing the task. This can help you use consistent language each time you carry out the routine.
- Tick boxes. These can be useful if you laminate the routine and use white board markers to tick them off each day, or if you put it on the fridge and use magnets to mark things off.
- Times. Putting times for tasks can be useful if you're teaching the passing of time or how to read time. It can also be useful in teaching a child about deadlines if you have to be somewhere by a certain time.

What will work for each child depends on their varying needs and abilities. It may take some trial and error to figure out the right combination of elements or if it's going to work at all.

Below is an example of what a visual timetable might look like:

## Morning Routine

 <p><b>Get dressed</b> 7:30</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	 <p><b>Eat breakfast</b> 7:10</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	 <p><b>Get dressed</b> 7:30</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
 <p><b>Play</b> 7:45</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	 <p><b>Pack bag</b> 8:10</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	 <p><b>Get in car</b> 8:30</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
 <p><b>Brush teeth</b> 7:40</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	 <p><b>Go outside</b> 8:25</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	 <p><b>Put shoes on</b> 8:20</p> <input type="checkbox"/>