

Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time® at Home

Creating a Visual Schedule

What We're Learning

Schedules help children feel secure. Children, like adults, need to know what is happening in their lives and when. This gives them a strong sense of safety and security. Schedules can also help children with responsibilities. In a visual schedule, a family member can talk with their child about what responsibilities or tasks the child will complete. These might be brushing their teeth or picking up toys and putting them in their storage places. Those tasks or responsibilities will be a part of the visual schedule.

Parents, Did You Know?

Schedules also help to reduce challenging behaviors. Some children struggle when they don't know what is happening in their lives. This causes confusion and a sense of insecurity. They may have negative behaviors like tantrums. Schedules can help reduce those challenging behaviors because a child will know what is coming next—which can reduce insecure feelings. Schedules can also help children know what is expected of them. As a parent or caregiver, you can tell/show children what is about to happen and what behavior you would like to see from them.



Image source: teachingmama.org/visual-schedule-for-toddlers

Together Time

Think about the large chunks of the day to include.

- *Get ready for the day*
- *Eat breakfast*
- *Play*

If a child has a hard time with one of these chunks of time, try breaking it into smaller parts. *Get Ready for the Day* could be:

- *Wake Up*
- *Get Dressed*
- *Breakfast*
- *Brush Your Teeth*

Be flexible with times. Like activities of the day, think about chunks of time. For example, breakfast doesn't need to happen every day at 8:00 a.m., but it could be between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.

Creating a Visual Schedule

Goal: Create a visual schedule that helps your child feel safe and secure about their day.

- Use pictures, drawings, or clipart to show children the chunks day.
- Add written words so the children can associate the picture with words.
- You might add pictures of your child engaged in an activity that happens during a part of the day.

Get your child involved! Ask your child to take photos, choose pictures, or draw pictures to use for the schedule. Talk with your child about the sequence of the day. Think about parts of the day where children can make a choice about the sequence of events.

Be sure you and your child can touch or move the different pieces of the visual schedule. You might use something like a piece of cloth to cover parts of the schedule.

Hints for Success






Give children the opportunity to make choices. When you do these steps, children will buy into the process and be more active in using the virtual schedule. It will take time and repetition to get children to rely on the visual schedule you create together. Have patience with yourself and your child.

As you create the schedule, ask questions like:

- What do we do first?
- What should we do next?
- What picture could we find or draw?
- What else can we add?

Reflection and Next Steps

Reflect on how it's going and make adjustment to parts of your schedule that need to be changed. Visual schedules take time to build. Be comfortable with making changes.

Breakfast		8:00
Play Time		8:30
Virtual Learning		10:00
Outside Time		10:30
Lunch		12:00