

Using Visuals: “First and Then”/ “Now and Next”

Some children can find change difficult. This can include something that we might consider to be an insignificant or small change. It is important that we support children that find change difficult effectively through transitions

Please read this advice sheet to understand how to use the now and next board.

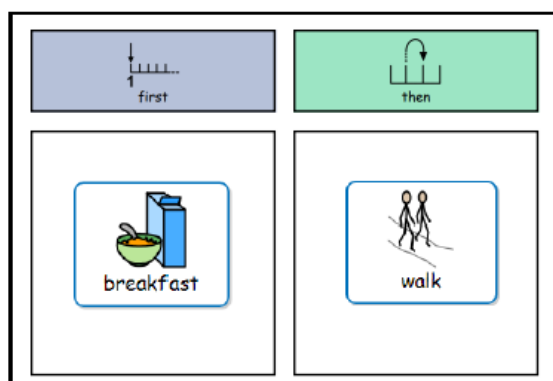
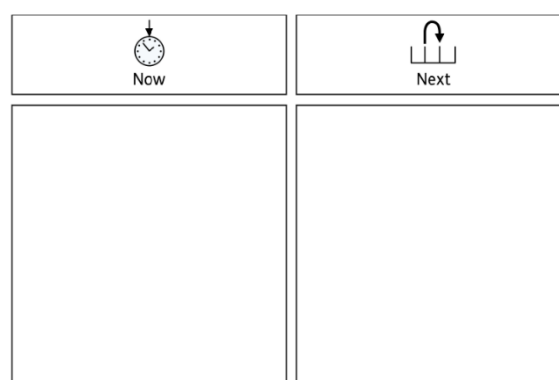
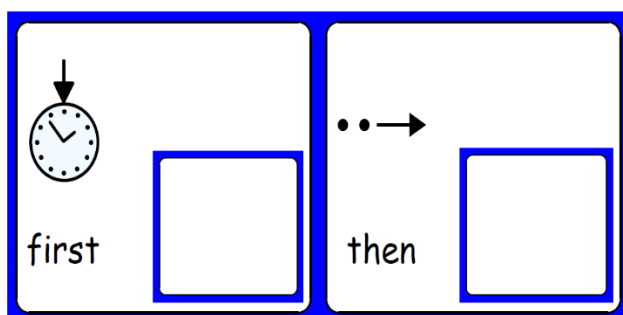
Why is a Now & Next board important?

Now & Next boards are one way that we can help with transitions/change.

They support the child by:

1. Helping to explain what will be happening next. This visual information is key when a child has language difficulties and may not understand the spoken words
2. Help the child to understand the situation by reinforcing what has been said
3. They can act as a reminder to us so that we keep repeating what is going to happen, preparing the child for a change

*** It is important that first-then/now-next visuals are used to support transitions and not to encourage compliance with an adult chosen task ****



Top Tips for Implementation:

- Use visuals on the child's 'Now and next' board to support their understanding of what is happening across the day. Visuals could include, objects, pictures, symbols or a mixture.
- Ensure that the 'Now and Next' board is **kept up to date** across the day so that the child can refer to this to support this understanding of what is happening
- Show the child the now visual each time you are about to follow the routine you are referencing and name this, keeping **language simple and consistent**
- Ensure that you **follow the routine referenced** immediately after showing and naming the photograph/symbol
- Keep the **visual within the child's sight** whilst completing the activity, and once the activity is finished, let the child know and remove the visual from the 'Now' section of the board e.g. 'snack time finished'
- Move the 'Next' visual into the 'Now' section on the child's 'Now and Next' board and put the new 'Next' visual on to show the child what will happen. Ensure that this is shown to the child and labelled for them as the board is being updated e.g. 'Now maths, Next playtime'
- Ensure that any **lost or damaged visuals are replaced quickly** so that they can continue to be used to support the child's understanding
- Ensure that all adults working with the **child are aware of their Now and Next board**, and how to use this, to ensure consistency with how the child's understanding is supported across the day
- It is important not to think of 'first-then'/ 'now-next' visuals as a behaviour support to encourage compliance with an adult chosen task. When we withhold a fun activity or desirable item until a child has completed another activity, we are using it as a reward or motivator and no longer as a support for transition. Consider daily, routine transitions such as 'wash hands, then snack' or 'circle time, then outside' as appropriate and useful sequences to support visually