

Promoting Independence Using Activity Schedules: Explore the Possibilities

Chrissy Ray MS. Ed.

Jess Wess MS. Ed.

What is an Activity Schedule?

“An activity schedule is a set of pictures or words that cues someone to engage in a sequence of activities”
(McClannahan & Krantz).

Activity schedules can be detailed in breaking down a single task or they can be used to facilitate previously mastered skills.

What is an Activity Schedule?



[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/IJVBQR6B0VI](https://youtu.be/IJVBQR6B0VI)

(RIGHT CLICK ON ABOVE LINK AND CHOOSE "OPEN LINK")

Goal of an Activity Schedule:

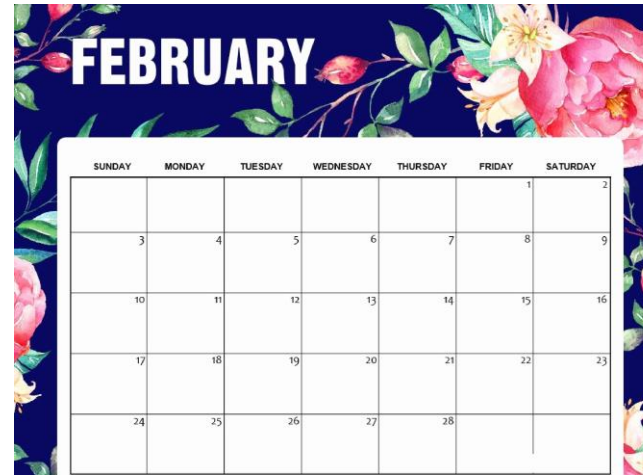
“The goal of teaching schedule use is to enable children with autism to perform tasks and activities without direct prompting and guidance by parents or teachers.” (McClannahan & Krantz).

What does this mean for Parents and Caregivers?

- More time to yourself!
- More structure to the day!
- Decrease in problem behaviors maintained by learners being “bored” or attention seeking!
- Time to complete everyday household chores or job responsibilities

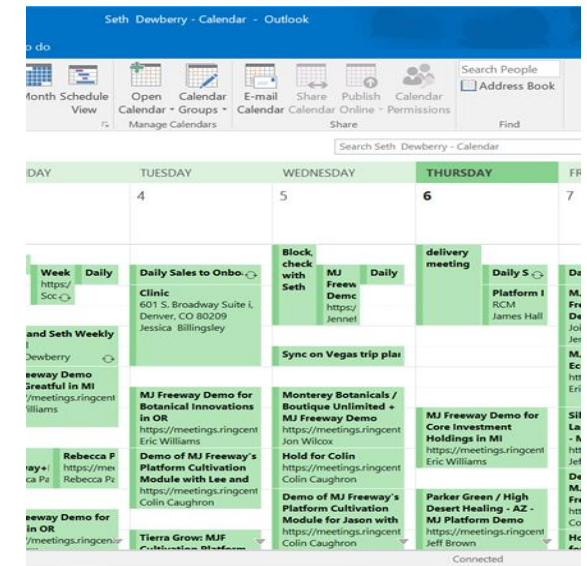
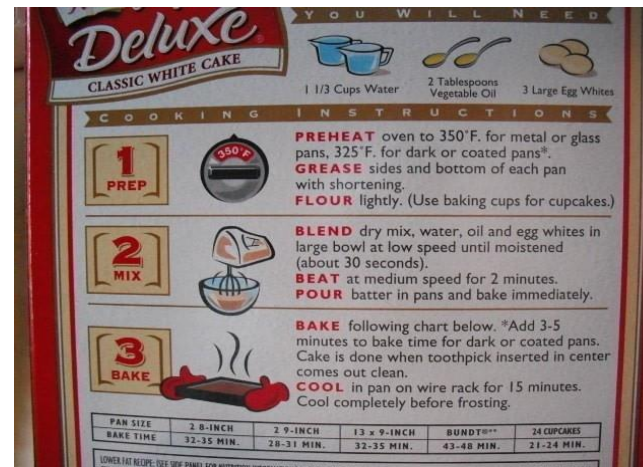
Types of Adult Activity Schedules

- To Do Lists
- Calendar
- Recipes
- Outlook Calendar
- Cell Phones



To-Do List

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
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Activity Schedules Can...



Increase learner independence



Increase learner leisure, academic, self-help, and domestic skills



Increase the development of meaningful social relationships



Encourages less screen time



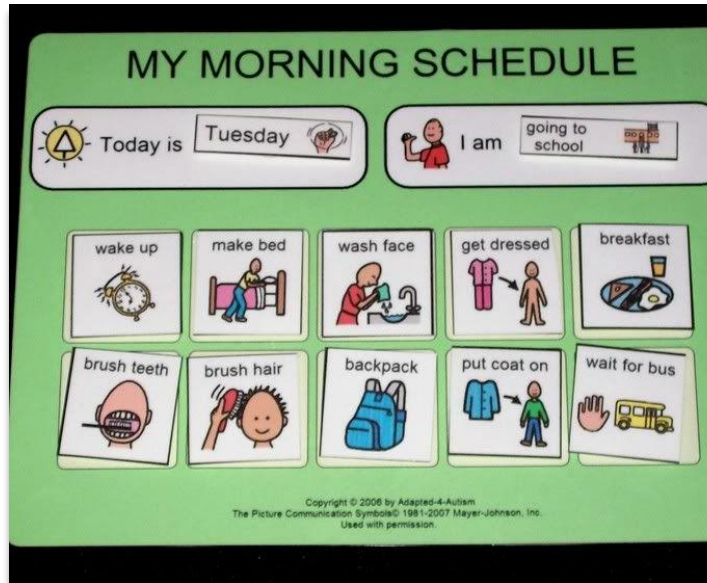
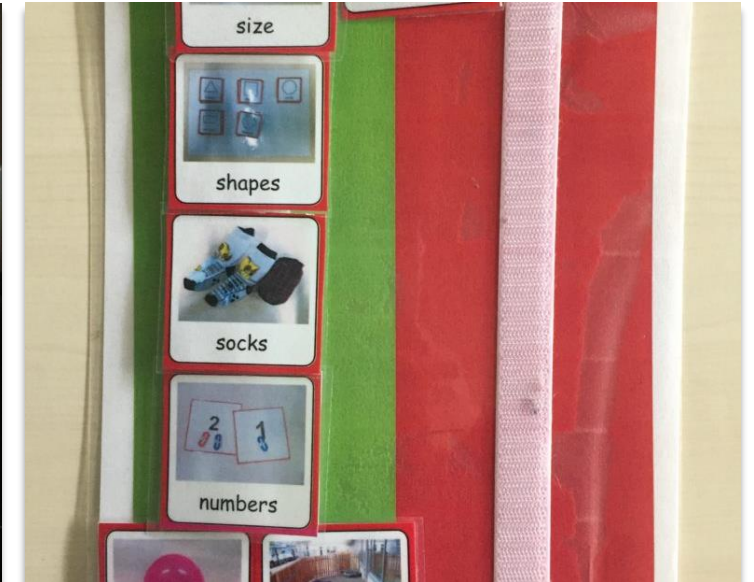
Provide for skill and activity maintenance



Increase learner stamina with attending and time on task

Types of Student Activity Schedules

- Visual Routines
- 3 Ring Binders
- Check Lists
- Bin Activity Schedules
- Visual Strips
- First/Then Boards

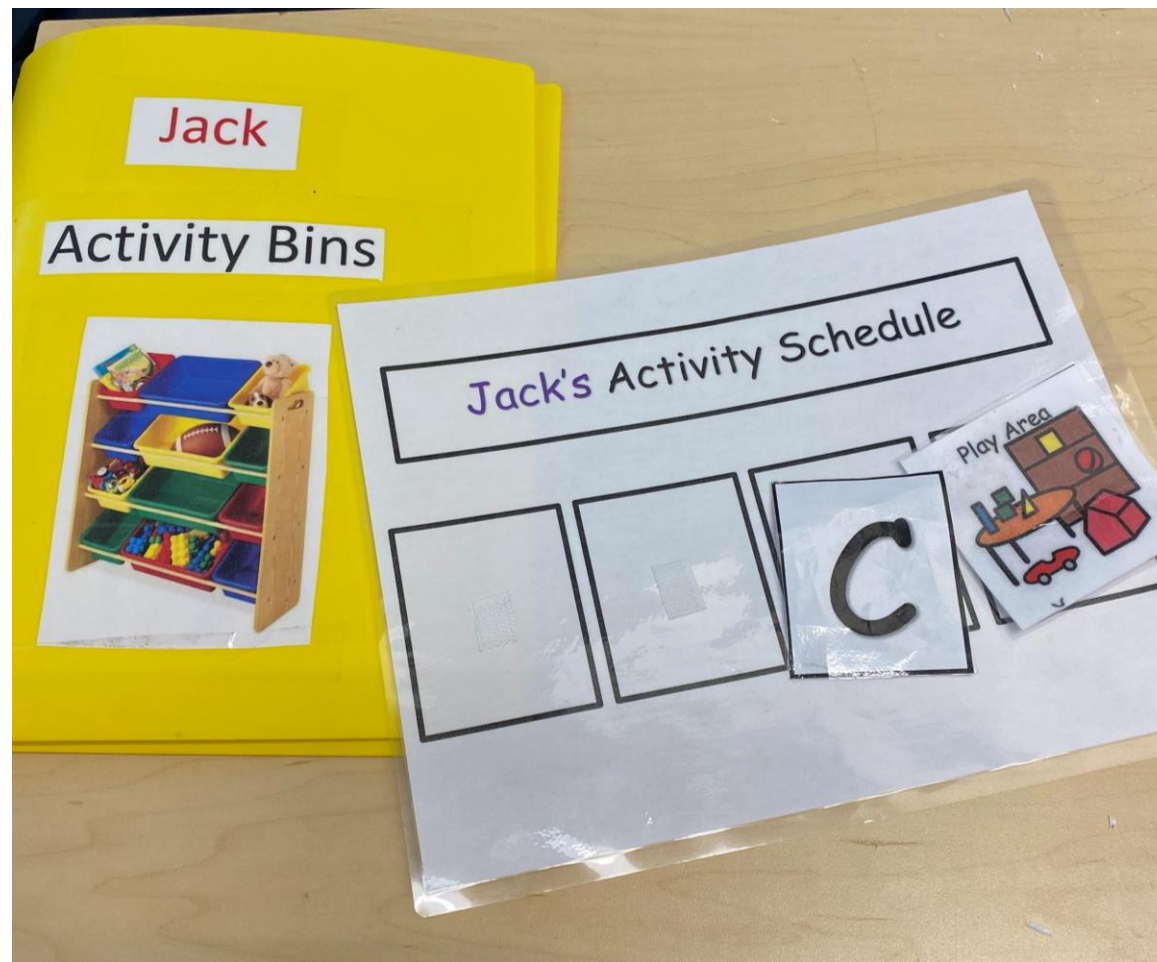


Task Bins for Activity Schedules



- **Activity Schedules can also include bin activities that are easily changed up throughout the day.**
- **When using bins it is important to remember that tasks should include only those activities that the learner has previously mastered.**
- **When a learner completes a task it is important for them to return the task “put together” or “complete” into the bin. We do not want learners to “un-do” their work.**

Examples of Bin activities



Home Activity Schedule Example



<https://youtu.be/KCJyOB9afom>
(Right click link above, select "Open Link.")

What kind of activities should be chosen?

Teachers and Parents will work together to choose activities that the learner has “mastered” at school and in the home setting. These activities should be able to be independently completed by your child with little to no prompting or help.

Beginner Activity Ideas

- Simple Puzzles
- File Folders (matching, sorting)
- Simple Toys (shape sorter, piggy bank, ring stacker, stack Legos, etc.)
- Social Interactions (high fives, tickles, thumbs up, etc.)

****Start with preferred activities**

Advanced Activity Ideas

- Household Chores (dishes, laundry, folding towels, cleaning up after meals, sweeping, vacuuming, making a bed, etc.)
- Leisure Activities (video games, iPad games, Watch TV, movies, exercise, painting, etc.)
- Social Interactions (greetings, social questions, topic conversations, etc.)

****Generalize to both preferred and non-preferred activities**

Role of Student Choice in Activity Schedule

- The teacher/staff members will create pictures based on the different kinds of activities that will be included in the schedule.
- The teacher will also create pictures based on common reinforcers that the learner can access.
- One picture will be a generalized “Surprise” or “Special” picture to use when changes in routines arise or when a picture is not able to be readily available.



Surprise



Change In Routine

Student Choice

When possible, allow students to incorporate choice in their own schedules.

How?

~ Adult picks all tasks that need to be included; the learner gets to order those tasks.

~ Allow for student to choose what reinforcement and where reinforcement will be presented within the schedule.



Different kinds of Activity Schedules

Routine Specific



Daily Schedule	
1	arrive at school
2	check in
3	reading
4	writing
5	math
6	recess
7	Journal
8	P.E.
9	lunch
10	art
11	shared reading
12	bus



Prep: Step 1

- Identify the appropriate pictures needed for the kind of activity schedule you are creating (task specific or routine specific)
 - Place identified pictures/text in the order in which the task(s) should be completed
- **Remember to incorporate learner choice when possible**



Prep: Step 2

- Identify learner reinforcer(s)
- Place those pictures within the schedule where appropriate
(work with your teacher on how often reinforcement should be accessible)



Prep: Step 3

- Identify a cue that you will use naturally and consistently while implementing activity schedules. Examples of possible cues include “Follow your schedule” or “It’s time to start your work”.
- Refrain from phrases such as “It is time to play.” Not every activity is going to be considered a play activity according to the learner.



Click On The Sound Icon Below For Cue Examples:



Step 4: Begin Schedule



After providing the student with a cue, the student should begin the first activity identified on their schedule.



Learners should not move the order in which activities are presented on their schedules at this point. Opportunities to choose activities and activity order should be provided prior to giving the cue to the learner.



Schedules should be completed from left to right, front to back, or top from bottom depending on the materials being used.

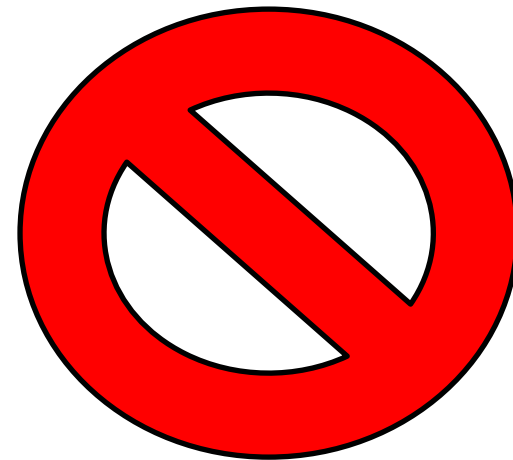
Step 5: Reinforcement

When To Reward:

- FREQUENTLY!
- Deliver rewards from behind the learner, as close to the desired behavior being reinforced as possible
- Rewards should be delivered quickly and timed simultaneously with appropriate behavior

When **NOT** to Reward:

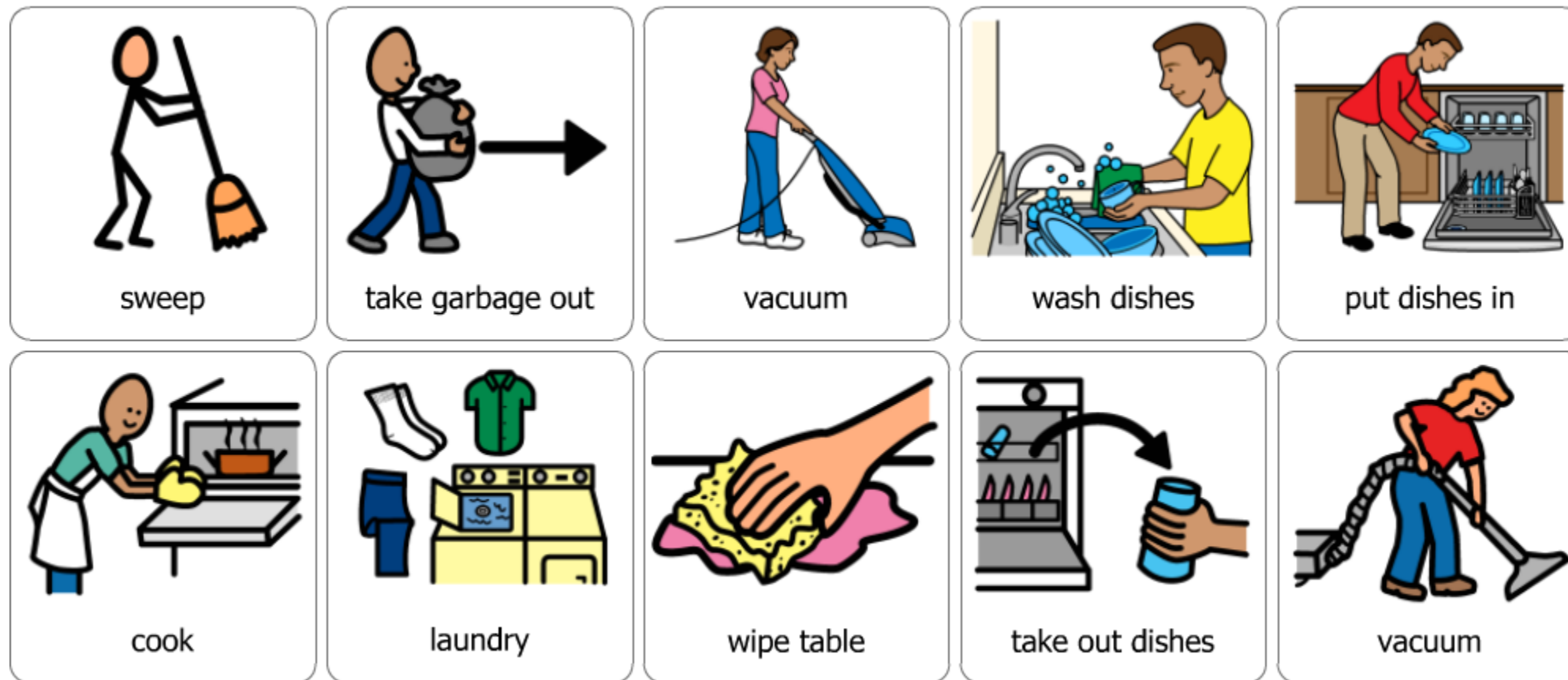
- Delaying task initiation
- Delaying task completion
- Engaging in tantrum behavior
- Resisting gradual guidance



Home Activity Schedule Example



Domestic Skills within Activity Schedules



Teachers and Parents can work together to brainstorm and create age appropriate activities and pictures.

Self-Help Skills within Activity Schedules



Teachers and Parents can work together to brainstorm and create age appropriate activities and pictures.

Hygiene Routine

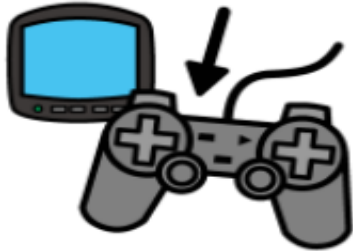
- Put visual schedule in designated place
- Put materials in designated place near where the schedule is done



Leisure Skills within Activity Schedules



iPad



play video games



watch TV



puzzle



computer time



ride bike



jump on trampoline



walk



arts and crafts



nap time

Teachers and Parents can work together to brainstorm and create age appropriate activities and pictures.

Example of Leisure Activity Schedules



Social Skills within Activity Schedule



Teachers and Parents can work together to brainstorm and create age appropriate activities and pictures.

What can schedules look like at home?

Summit Academy - Creekside

Tyler's JULY 2020 Schedule

9:00	Breakfast ✓ Ty's Pick	Breakfast Paco's Pick	Breakfast Dean's choice	Breakfast Tyler's choice
10:00	Hygiene ✓	Hygiene	Hygiene	Hygiene
11:00	Math ✓ 3 sheets	Reading 2 stories	Noun + Verb Sheets	Group delay
12:00	Lunch ✓ Capri Sun Chicken nuggets	Capri Sun Mac n cheese	Capri Sun Chicken patties	Capri Sun pizza
1:00 Speech → 1:00 ✓		Word Search	1:15 Speech	Adjectives
2:00	Word Search ✓	2:30 Delay	Math Sheet + flash cards	
3:00 3pm Monday Jen W.	Practice Hand writing	Practice Hand writing	Reading	

L walk
perfection

What if the learner needs help to complete the schedule?

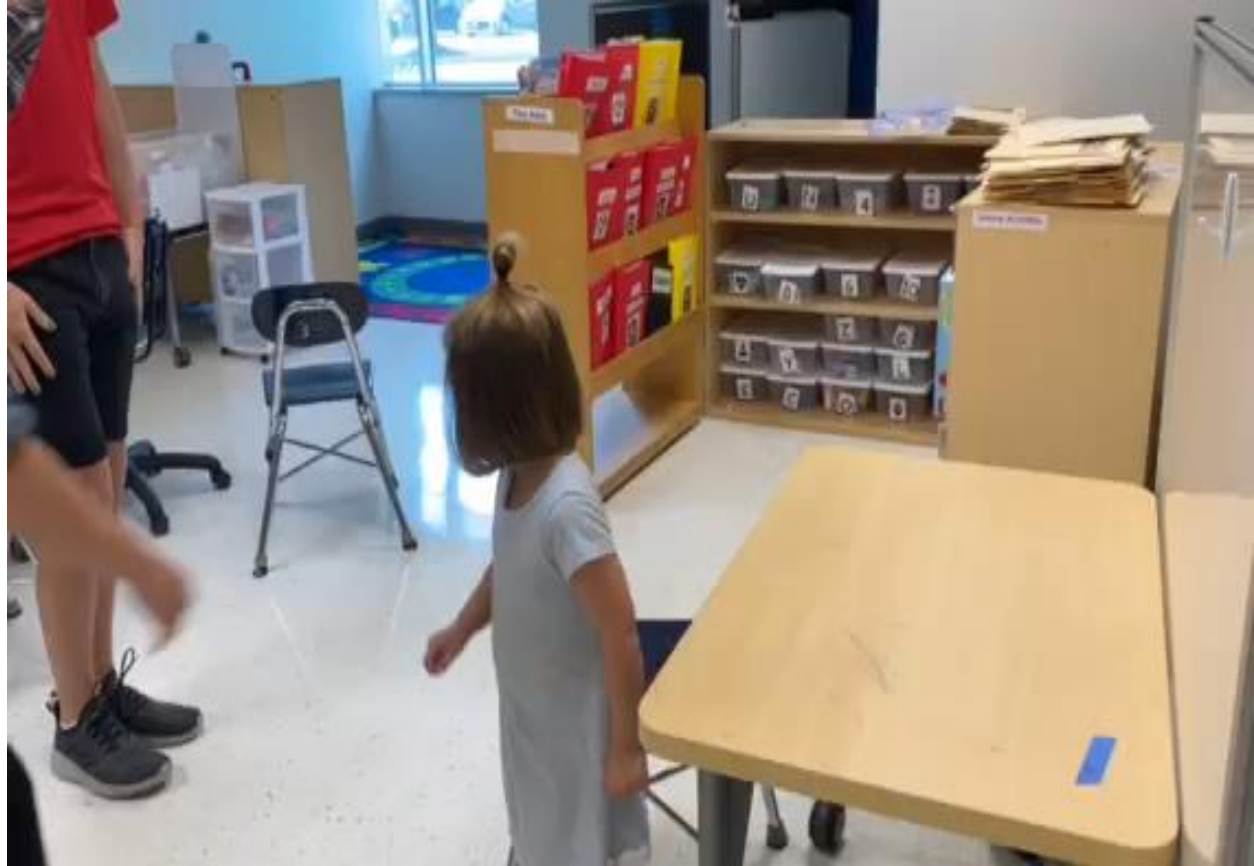
Having to prompt the learner in the early stages of Activity Schedule training is expected and ok!

- If the learner needs a reminder or help in following the schedule the adult should **NON-VERBALLY** prompt the learner first.
- Examples of non-verbal prompts would be gesturing or pointing to the correct activity or schedule picture or moving the materials and/or schedule closer to the learner. The adult may also hand over hand the desired action but physically guiding the student to the correct response or behavior.
- If non-verbal prompts are not effective, verbal prompting can be used. When verbal prompting keep directions short and do not repeat. For example, “Go check you schedule” vs. “I wonder what is coming next on your fun activity schedule? Let’s go see together!”

Example In Practice

What Good Prompting Looks Like:

- Non-Verbal (No talking! 😊)
- Adult positioned behind the student
- Adult allows for appropriate wait time, gives the learner the opportunity to independently complete the current step of the routine
- Reinforcement for current step (thumbs up) as well as completing the routine at the end (verbal praise).



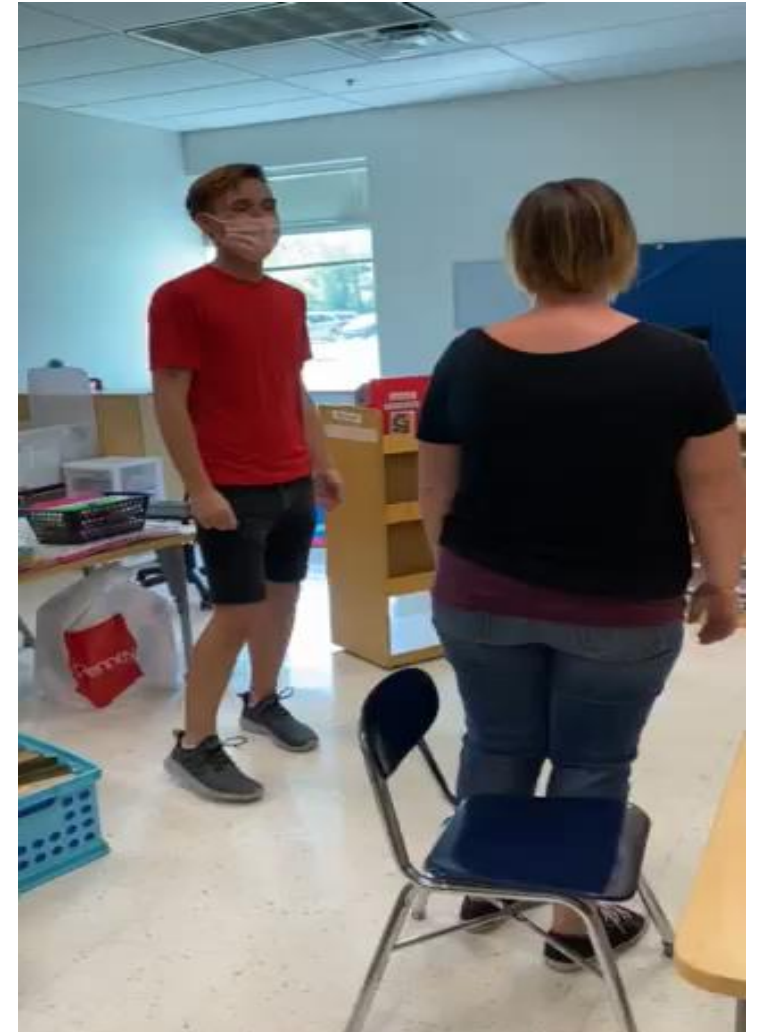
Click on the above picture to view video example

Example In Practice

What Prompting Should **Not** Look Like :

- Verbal directions throughout
- No opportunity for the learner to independently complete current step of routine
- Over-Prompting
- No reinforcement

Click on the picture to the right, to view video example



I'm not convinced I can do this...



You CAN!

Your child's educational team is here
and ready to help you with
EVERYTHING!

What If I “Mess Up” Implementing The Routine?

This is ok!

There is no such thing as a “One Way Works For All” routine! Together, you and your child’s educational team will create activities, materials, schedules, and support that works for you!

We realize every home is different! There are many other factors such as supplies available, parents working from home, caregivers, and/or siblings that can affect the home environment. Together we can do what works for YOUR HOME and you’re YOUR CHILD!

Questions? Comments?

Chrissy Ray:

cray@thesummitcenter.org

Clinical Trainer/Educational Coordinator