

# Using Visual Supports



## What are Visual Supports?

Visual supports are all around us and we use them every day. These include road signs, restaurant signs and menus, calendars, grocery lists etc.

We also use words, signing, symbols, photos and objects to understand the world we live in.

Gestures and facial expressions are also examples of visual supports.

## How to use visual supports

Try to reduce the amount of spoken words you use when sharing them.

Use visuals across home and school and be consistent.

Keep them in place and available to young people and review regularly.

Teach young people how to use them. If you're unsure about how to do this, chat to your child's teacher or therapist for some ideas.

## Why use visual supports?

Visual supports can help you to communicate with your child and help your child to communicate with you.

If children hear and see things at the same time it can support them to understand and learn.

Visual supports are a permanent reminder and can support people to be independent.

They can reduce frustration and encourage individuals to communicate and express themselves and make choices.

They support ideas, questions and instructions that are shared verbally and allow for processing time.

Research shows that the use of visual supports **does not** stop children from learning to speak. It has been shown **they encourage** the development of speech and language

**Anyone can make and use visual supports. Here are some ideas for you:**



**use objects to show your child what to do e.g. to let your child know what's happening next**



**use body movements, facial expressions, voice range and gestures**



**take photos of places and people**

Go to [positivepartnerships.com.au](https://positivepartnerships.com.au)

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**put words with pictures  
and encourage your child  
to make choices**



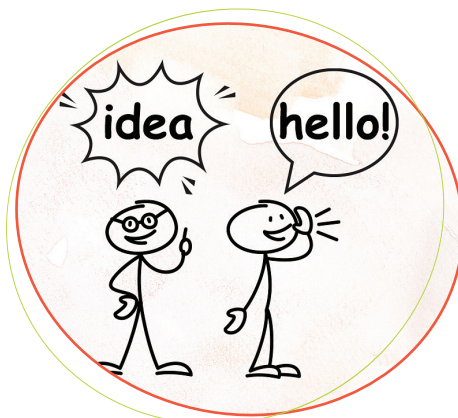
**make checklists**



**find images on  
the internet**



**colour code routines  
and instructions**



**make a comic book script:  
draw and tell the story as  
you go, using stick figures  
and speech bubbles**



**apps on phones,  
i.e. timers, schedules**



**social stories – make one using your child or your child's favourite  
character to prepare your child for a new activity or a plan**

If you are concerned about your child's development, see your doctor or a professional that helps your child. It is better to talk to someone than to 'wait and see'.