

Transition Visuals

Transitional visuals are not the same as PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System). Transition visuals are not expected to be used by the children to request items. They are to be used to help children to understand what is happening. The aids will in turn aid communication through daily use and good language modelling by staff. The aim is for children to show an interest in the visuals and gain an understanding of what the visual means.

It is important for all staff to have access to the visuals to enable consistency. Often the symbols being laminated and put on a key ring can be useful so each staff can have access to the symbols and use them with ease. It is often helpful if there is consistency between the visuals shown to the child and those that are seen elsewhere such as the visual timetable. This enables links to be made and a generalised understanding formed.

These symbols enable children to recognise what is about to happen and give them an opportunity to prepare for the change. It provides opportunities for children to learn cause and effect: the card is shown, alongside verbal cue, and the event happens i.e. tidy up time. It is important for staff to be consistent with the verbal cue and to keep it simple e.g. playtime, tidy-up, assembly etc.

Start by identifying 5-6 key transition times within the day. Staff should ensure they have the visual ready, bend down to the child's level, say the child's name and show the visual whilst giving the verbal cue. It is important the visual is seen by the child so staff should ensure the visual is between the child's eyes and what they are focussed on. Staff should look for signs of the child communicating an understanding and acknowledge this.

When the visuals are used consistently children will begin to understand the meaning of the visual which will reduce the uncertainty of transitions and in turn the anxiety the child may be feeling.

