

Transitions

For children with social and communication difficulties transition times are often difficult. Ensuring children are prepared for the transition and that staff are consistent with their approach will reduce the anxiety and ambiguity of the transition. Visuals are key to the process. Visuals will benefit all children regardless of need and should be part of the universal teaching.

Staff can use sand timers to prepare children for the change of activity. When the timer runs out, staff should use simple language alongside objects of reference or symbols. For example, 'trains finished (either sign finished or show visual), next nappy (showing either a nappy or visual representation of the nappy). It is important the verbal cues are consistent and all staff use the same approach. Some children with social and communication difficulties will prefer a real object to a picture as it does not require them to have generalised the object in their minds. Generalising objects is difficult for all children, often the symbol representing the object may not be completely accurate, such as a red cup on the symbol but blue cups used at snack, which can cause difficulties. Therefore, using objects to aid transitions ensures the representation is accurate.

When children are able to use symbols or pictures, a now and next board can be introduced. This needs to be carefully introduced as to not confuse the child.

Children may not show any interest in the visuals used, don't give up! Using visuals needs to become a common practice for children to begin to understand the meaning. Verbal cues must be short, direct and consistent i.e. nappy, tidy up, snack etc.

