

• Quick Tips for Teaching Schedule-Following Skills

- Choose one cue to let the child know it is time to check his/her schedule, and use this cue consistently. Examples of cues: Asking the child, “What’s next?”; Having the child put completed items in a designated “all done” container.
- Use physical prompts rather than verbal prompts to help the child learn to follow the schedule. Physical prompts are easier to fade than verbal prompts and can help the child develop independence more quickly.
- Physical prompts should be delivered from behind the child.
- Only the child should manipulate the schedule cards. Adults should use hand-over-hand prompting so that only the child touches the schedule.
- Place the schedule in a convenient and central spot. The schedule should be displayed at a height that will enable the child to reach all of the pictures/objects displayed.
- Display the schedule in the same location every day.
- Reward the child for following his/her schedule appropriately. Rewards can be delivered while following the schedule (back rubs, small snack, etc.) and when arriving at the correct location (verbal praise, tickles, preferred toy/snack, etc.).
- Intersperse preferred activities with less preferred activities. Following a schedule should not be a punishing activity for the child.
- Begin by using the same picture consistently to represent the same activity. For example, use only one car picture to represent “going out”, only one table picture to represent “eating”, and only one park picture to represent “going to the park”. You do not need separate pictures of every activity that falls in the same category.
- A variety of techniques can be used to make schedule cards. Some children respond better to photos (digital, 35mm, or Polaroid), some respond to pictures (e.g., PictureThis CD [www.silverliningmm.com]), some prefer line drawings (e.g., Mayer-Johnson), and others respond best to actual objects.