

Quick Tips for Teaching Schedule-Following Skills

- Determine what type of visual representation you will use. 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.
- Get all the needed schedule cards together and keep in a convenient location.
- Start with short schedules representing part of the day (e.g. morning routine) and move up to longer schedules.
- Start with a 'First – Then' board to teach your child the concept of completing a non-preferred activity and then accessing a preferred activity.
- Choose one cue to let your child know it is time to check his/her schedule, and use this cue consistently. Examples of cues: Asking your child, "What's next?"; Having your child put completed items in a designated "all done" container.
- Use physical prompts rather than verbal prompts to help your child learn to follow the schedule. Physical prompts are easier to fade than verbal prompts and can help your child develop independence more quickly.
- Physical prompts should be delivered from behind your child.
- Only your child should manipulate the schedule cards. Adults should use hand-over-hand prompting so that only your child touches the schedule.
- Place the schedule in a convenient and central spot in the house. The schedule should be displayed at a height that will allow your child to reach all of the pictures/objects displayed.
- Make a portable schedule to promote consistency outside of the home.
- Intersperse preferred activities with less preferred activities. Following a schedule should not be a punishing activity for your child.