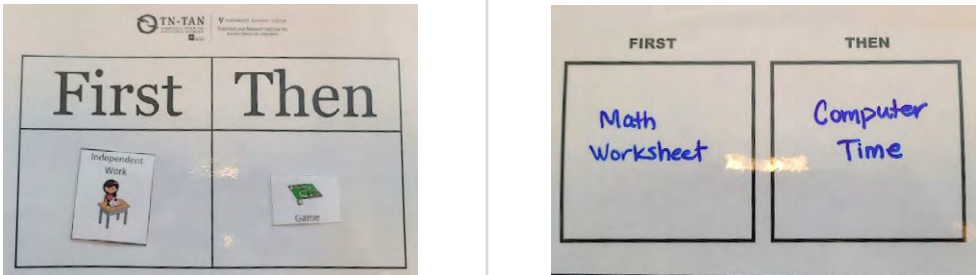


First-Then Board: An Overview

<p>Definition and Purpose</p>	<p>First-Then boards are a visual support that incorporate reinforcement, which is an evidence-based practice for autistic students. First-Then boards are also a useful strategy for students who may be reluctant to engage in an activity, need expectations clarified to increase success, or engage in challenging behavior during certain tasks or activities. Reinforcement is defined as “application of consequence that happens after a skill or behavior occurs that increases the learner’s use of the skill or behavior in a future situation” (Steinbrenner et al., 112). First-Then boards are based on the principle of positive reinforcement, in which reinforcement is provided to an individual or a small group to increase a desired behavior.</p>
<p>When to Use First-Then Boards</p>	<p>Ideal times to use First-Then boards could include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » independent work time, » non-preferred activities or tasks, or » large or small group instruction.
<p>Why Use First-Then Boards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provides clarity on what is expected in order to earn access to a reward or preferred activity » Includes a visual reminder of what will be earned upon completion of the task » Promotes predictability and structure of activities » Motivates student to complete tasks independently and efficiently
<p>Critical Components of Choice Boards</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine what types of visual cues are appropriate for the student (photographs, line drawings, written text). 2. Identify preferred items or activities that can be used as a reward. 3. This is a two-step work-reward sequence. Both the “first” and the “then” boxes should display a picture or word that clarifies the expectation and the reward for the student. 4. The picture in the “then” box should always be something that the student enjoys. Consider changing reinforcers frequently to keep them effective or incorporate student choice prior to setting up the work-reward system. 5. Short practice trials with the First-Then Board may be helpful to teach the student how the system works and what their role looks like. 6. Keep the First-Then Board where the student can see it. 7. Provide access to the reward immediately following completion of the task.

<p>First-Then Board in Action</p>	
<p>Assembly Tips</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Print and laminate the First-Then Board. 2. If photographs, line drawings, or other similar visuals are used with the board, place one piece of Velcro in the middle of each box. This will allow you to change the appropriate work and reward symbols as necessary. 3. A Velcro strip along the back of the First-Then Board can serve as a good storage option for visuals not in use. 4. If written text is used on the board, no further assembly is required. It can be used and reused with a dry-erase marker.
<p>Using First-Then to Support Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)</p>	<p>A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) is a process for gathering, analyzing, and summarizing information about the relationship (i.e., function) between a person’s challenging behavior and their environment (Cooper, et al., 2019). An FBA provides specific information around how behavior interventions should be individualized in consideration of a person’s skills, preferences, sensitivities, and environment. For students in schools, an FBA is conducted to address one or more of the following situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » a change of placement to a more restrictive setting is considered due to a student’s behavior, » a student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is removed from current placement for more than 10 school days for behavior determined to be a manifestation of their disability, » the IEP provides for the use of restraint or isolation, » a student’s behavior impedes learning for self or peers, » a student’s behavior threatens safety of self or others, » when determined appropriate by the student’s IEP team, » a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is considered ineffective by virtue of incomplete or flawed understanding of the student’s behavior, and/or » a student’s behavior limits student engagement, inclusion, and/or independence. <p>An FBA may be conducted, as appropriate, in the following situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » a student with an IEP is removed from current placement for more than 10 school days for behavior not determined to be a manifestation of their disability, or » a student with an IEP is removed to an interim alternative education setting for up to 45 school days for a zero-tolerance offense.

<p>Using First-Then to Support Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)</p> <p><i>Continued</i></p>	<p>Ultimately, a complete FBA will present one or more functional hypotheses supported by available evidence as to why behaviors of concern are occurring, along with an appraisal of student' skill deficits that are impacting the behavior targeted within the FBA. The results of this FBA are used to individualize the BIP. The BIP focuses on decreasing challenging behavior and increasing appropriate behavior (Cooper, et al., 2019).</p> <p>First-Then boards are an intervention strategy that can be built into the BIP as a means of reinforcing the identified replacement behavior and increasing appropriate behaviors. They can also be used as an antecedent strategy for supporting the student to reduce challenging behavior.</p>
<p>Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) and Antecedent Supports</p>	<p>A BIP should include antecedent strategies that will be effective and actionable in the context in which the behavior targeted within the FBA occurred. These strategies are meant to prevent challenging behavior by either modifying the context or providing supports or prompts to the student before challenging behavior occurs. Antecedent strategies should consider the student's unique needs by clarifying expectations, establishing predictability, promoting skill acquisition, fostering independent functioning, and/or reducing stressors.</p>

EXAMPLE DESCRIPTION WITHIN A BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLAN

<p>Intervention Description</p>	<p>Staff will use the First-Then Board to show the student that after <antecedent event identified in FBA>, they can receive <preferred reinforcers determined in FBA>.</p> <p>When starting a task, the educator will show the student the First-Then Board and say, "First, finish your (math), then play with Legos". When the student finishes the math lesson, the adult will provide the student with 3 minutes to play with Legos.</p>
<p>Who will implement?</p>	<p>General education teacher</p>
<p>When will it occur? (e.g., time of day, days of week)</p>	<p>Prior to academic instruction</p>
<p>When will the intervention begin?</p>	<p>8/1/24</p>
<p>Materials Needed</p>	<p>First-Then board, reinforcers</p>

<p>Learn More</p>	<p>First-Then boards apply the basic principles of reinforcement. Visit TRIAD's online learning portal to access the free Reinforcement Systems course. To get started, first register for an account at triad.vkclearning.org. If you already have an account, log in here. View more resources at triad.vumc.org/schools.</p>
<p>References</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Steinbrenner, J. R., Hume, K., Odom, S. L., Morin, K. L., Nowell, S. W., Tomaszewski, B., Szendrey, S., McIntyre, N. S., Yücesoy-Özkan, S., & Savage, M. N. (2020). Evidence-based practices for children, youth, and young adults with Autism. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice Review Team. https://ncaep.fpg.unc.edu/sites/ncaep.fpg.unc.edu/files/imce/documents/EBP%20Report%202020.pdf » Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2019). <i>Applied Behavior Analysis (3rd Edition)</i>. Hoboken, NJ: Pearson Education.



VANDERBILT KENNEDY CENTER
Treatment and Research Institute for
Autism Spectrum Disorders

First

Then

FIRST

THEN

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First	Then

I am working for:

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