

VISUAL STRATEGIES

Reasons to use:

Visuals can be very helpful for communicating expectations to young children. Often children with challenging behavior have a difficult time processing and using language or may have developed the habit of “tuning out” the adult when talking. A visual provides the child with a static symbol of the word or idea. When we say words, they “disappear” once we have completed our verbal expression. When you present a visual, the visual can be held out for the child to examine and process.

Early educators use many visuals in their classrooms. You might label centers with pictures, place pictures on bins to depict the contents that will be found inside, and you may use pictures to help children make the link between a visual symbol and word. The suggestions that you will find in this section of the Teaching Tools provide ideas for ways to use visuals in the support of individual children who have challenging behavior.

1. Visual strategies can cue or teach positive behavior or new skills.
2. Visual strategies support both receptive and expressive communication.
3. Visual strategies enhance memory (e.g., they are reminders for verbal direction).
4. Visuals strategies can portray expectations (e.g., wash hands, stop, etc.).
5. Visual strategies teach routines (e.g., activity steps through pictures).

