

Visual Schedule Templates for Autism

Daily schedules, a first-then board, a full-day timetable, a blank you can make your own, and cut-out picture cards.



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Using visual schedules at home

Visual schedules show your child what happens next, in pictures instead of words. That predictability lowers anxiety and makes transitions smoother. Print what you need, and start with one routine.

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1 Pick one routine to start.

Choose the part of the day that feels hardest, usually mornings or bedtime. One schedule at a time works better than all of them at once.

2 Print, and make it last.

Print in color or black and white. Laminate it, or slip it in a page protector, so you can reuse it with a dry-erase marker or velcro.

3 Use real photos when you can.

Cut-out cards work well, and photos of your own child doing each step work even better, because they recognize themselves.

4 Walk through it together.

Point to each step. Ask "what's next?" Let your child check off or move each one.

These templates support your routines at home; they are not medical advice or a substitute for a personalized plan.

Morning Routine

Check off each step as your child finishes it.

1		Wake up	☐
2		Use the bathroom	☐
3		Brush teeth	☐
4		Get dressed	☐
5		Eat breakfast	☐
6		Brush hair	☐
7		Shoes on	☐
8		Pack backpack	☐

How to use it: Keep it by the bedroom or bathroom door. Walk through it together each morning. As the routine sticks, step back and let your child lead it.

Bedtime Routine

The same order every night helps sleep come easier.

1		Take a bath	☐
2		Put on pajamas	☐
3		Brush teeth	☐
4		Drink of water	☐
5		Story time	☐
6		Lights out	☐

How to use it: Start the routine at the same time each night. Keep the last step calm and quiet. Doing the same steps in the same order helps your child's body get ready for sleep.

After-School Routine

A snack and downtime first, then the rest of the afternoon.

1		Have a snack	☐
2		Quiet / rest time	☐
3		Homework	☐
4		Playtime	☐
5		One chore	☐
6		Dinner	☐

How to use it: Build in decompression before any demands, because school is tiring. Put playtime and rest on the schedule too, so your child sees them as part of the afternoon.

Blank Daily Visual Schedule

Draw, add a sticker, or glue a cut-out card for each step. Write the word next to it.

1			☐
2			☐
3			☐
4			☐
5			☐
6			☐
7			☐
8			☐

Make it yours: Use the cut-out picture cards at the back, or take real photos of your child doing each step. Keep it in the same spot every day so it becomes part of the routine.

Full-Day Visual Timetable

Fill in the time, add a picture, and write each activity.

■ Morning

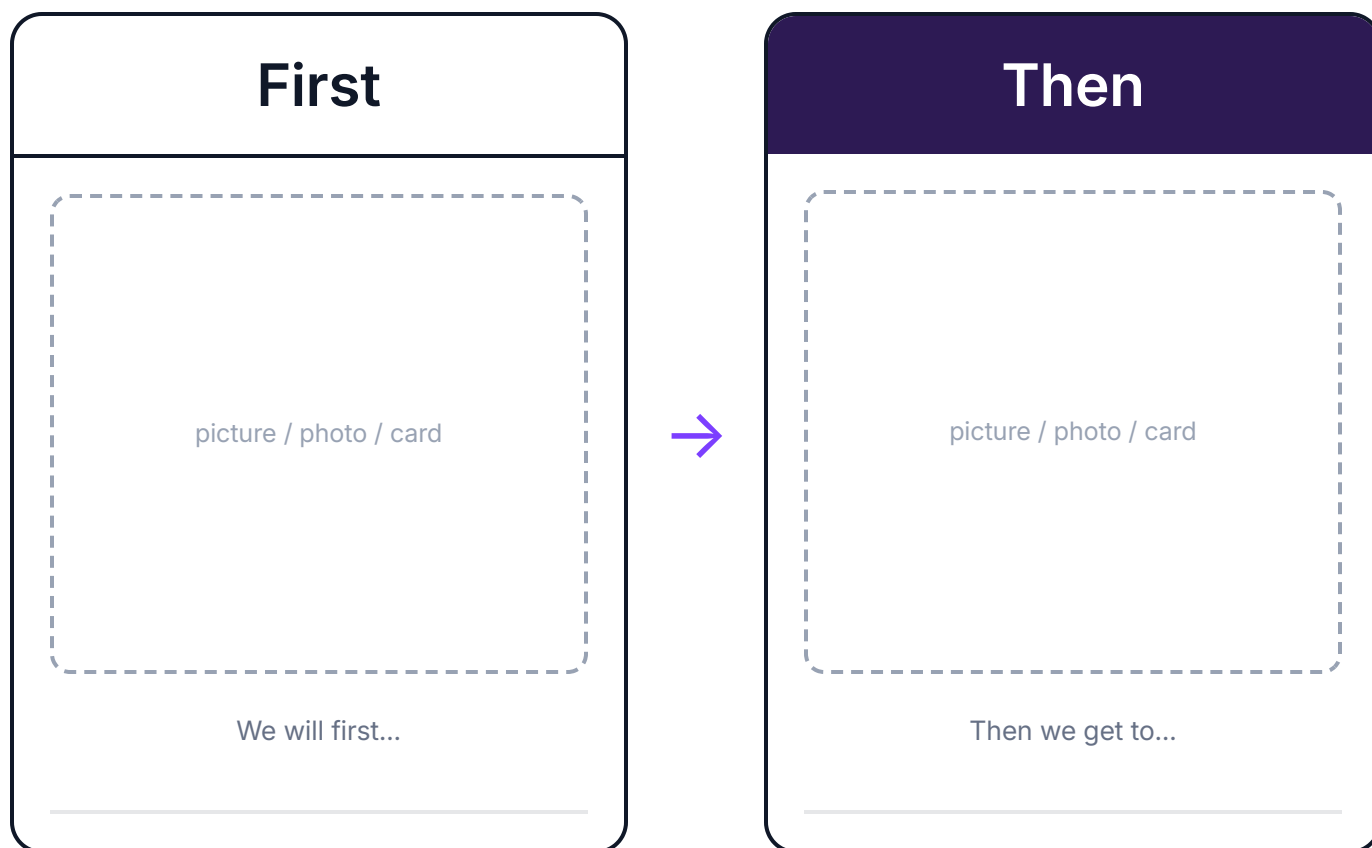
■ Afternoon

■ Evening

How to use it: Seeing the whole day at once helps on unpredictable days, appointments, or school breaks. Move a marker to "now" as the day goes.

First-Then Board

Show the "have-to" first, the motivating thing second. Point to "First," then "Then," before a transition.



How to use it: Put the task on the left and something your child likes on the right. Keep it short and predictable. Once the routine feels familiar, you can stop using the board.

Now · Next · Later

For longer stretches: show three steps at once so your child can see the whole plan.

Now	Next	Later
picture / card	picture / card	picture / card

How to use it: Use it for outings, appointments or a busy afternoon. Slide "Next" into "Now" as each step is done, so there is always a clear plan in view.

Choice Board

Offer 2 to 6 real choices. Letting your child choose builds communication and lowers power struggles.

I would like to...

picture / card	picture / card	picture / card
picture / card	picture / card	picture / card

How to use it: Fill the boxes with real options (snacks, toys, activities). Ask your child to point to or hand you their choice, then honor it. Pointing to a choice gives your child an easy way to communicate.

Cut-Out Picture Cards

Build any schedule from these. Cut them out and place them on the blank schedule or first-then board.

✂ Cut along the lines. Laminate, then attach with velcro or tape so cards can be reused.

 Wake up	 Bathroom	 Brush teeth	 Wash up
 Get dressed	 Brush hair	 Shoes on	 Breakfast
 Snack	 Drink	 Backpack	 Bus / school
 School	 Homework	 Play	 Outside

Cut-Out Picture Cards (more)

Build any schedule from these. Cut them out and place them on the blank schedule or first-then board.

 Screen time	 Read a book	 Chores	 Clean up
 Dinner	 Bath	 Pajamas	 Calm down
 Quiet time	 Bedtime	 Lights out	 All done
 _____	 _____	 _____	 _____

Token Board

Your child earns a token for each finished step and gets the reward when the board is full.
Pick the size that fits your child.

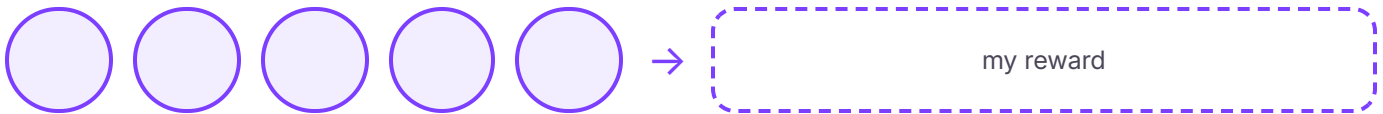
Starter board: 3 tokens

I am working for: _____



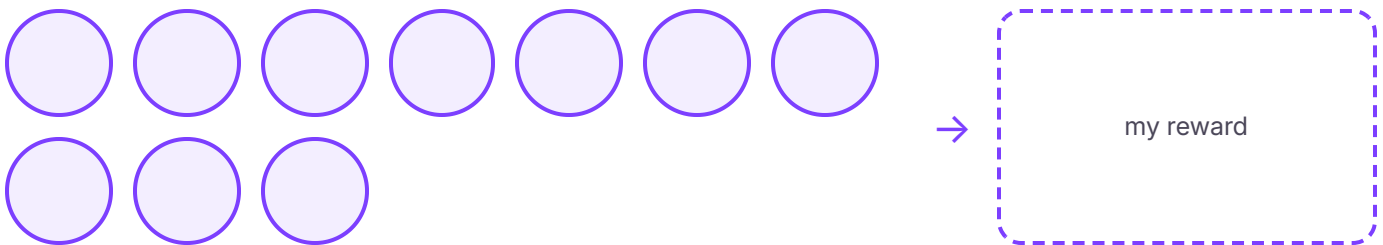
Building board: 5 tokens

I am working for: _____



Challenge board: 10 tokens

I am working for: _____



How to use it: Start small so the first win comes fast, then grow the board. Let your child place each token. Always give the reward when the board is full, so your child can trust the board.

When to ask a BCBA for help

Some moments call for a professional who can build a plan around your specific child. Reach out if you notice:

- Transitions stay hard even after a few weeks with a visual schedule.
- New or intense behaviors, or anything that feels unsafe.
- Your child was recently diagnosed and you want a clear, personalized plan.
- You want guidance and support from a professional.



Get matched with a BCBA.

Alpaca Health connects families with vetted, in-network Board Certified Behavior Analysts, at home, in clinic, at school, or by telehealth. We handle the insurance paperwork.

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Scan to start

References & a note

Visual schedules are a well-established, evidence-based practice for autistic children.

Key sources:

National Autism Center. (2015). *Findings and Conclusions: National Standards Project, Phase 2*. Randolph, MA: National Autism Center.

Steinbrenner, J. R., Hume, K., Odom, S. L., et al. (2020). *Evidence-Based Practices for Children, Youth, and Young Adults with Autism*. National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice, University of North Carolina.

Mesibov, G. B., Shea, V., & Schopler, E. (2005). *The TEACCH Approach to Autism Spectrum Disorders*. New York: Springer.

Knight, V., Sartini, E., & Spriggs, A. D. (2015). Evaluating visual activity schedules as evidence-based practice for individuals with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 45(1), 157-178.

These templates are for education and family support. They are not medical advice, a diagnosis, or a treatment plan. Always consult a qualified professional for guidance specific to your child.