

Creating a Visual Schedule at Home:

Supporting Your Deaf and Hard of Hearing Toddler

Daily routines can feel much easier for toddlers when they know what is happening in their day. A visual schedule uses pictures to show your child the order of activities throughout the day. This helps reduce frustration, support transitions and build language.

1 Choose Your Daily Routines

Start with your family's daily routines that happen every day. Some examples can include:

- Brush teeth
- Meal time
- Outside play
- Bedtime
- Potty/diapering time
- Play time
- Reading books

You don't need to include everything at once. Start small! Focus first on the routines your family does most often and the activities that really motivate your child. Choosing familiar and engaging routines helps your child understand the schedule faster and makes following it more fun!

2 Gather or Create Pictures

Use:

- Real photos of your child doing the activity
- Cut out pictures from magazines or newspapers
- Simple printed pictures (such as clipart)
- Your own drawings

Real photos are often easiest for toddlers to understand, as they connect best to pictures of themselves and familiar family members. You can also involve your child in choosing or helping take the pictures, which can make them more interested in using the schedule and proud to recognize themselves and their favorite activities!

3 Put the Schedule in Order

Place the pictures in the order they happen. You can:

- Tape them to the wall
- Use Velcro on a poster board
- Put them in a small binder
- Add them to your fridge with magnets
- Use a pocket chart

Keep your visual schedule at your child's eye level so it's easy for them to see and reach, and place it in a consistent spot each day. You can even point to or touch the pictures together, letting your child explore and practice following the order themselves, which helps them understand the flow of their day and builds independence!

4

Use the Schedule Every Day

Consistency is important! Before transitions:

1. Get your child's visual attention
2. Show/point to the picture
3. Sign and/or say the activity
4. Point to what is happening now and what is next

It's okay if your child doesn't respond right away. Keep using the schedule calmly and consistently. Over time, your child will begin to understand the routine and may even start pointing to or bringing you the pictures to show what comes next!

5

Mark Activities as Finished

When an activity is done, you could:

- Remove the picture
- Move it to a "Finished" pocket
- Turn it over
- Let your child take it off

This shows progress and builds independence. Let your child take the lead whenever possible, and celebrate with positive reinforcement when they check the visual schedule independently. Giving them the chance to move or flip the picture themselves helps them feel proud and more in control of their day. Adjust and add to the schedule as your child grows and your family's routines change.

Growing With Your Child

As your toddler develops, you can:

- Add more steps (such as washing hands before meal time)
- Introduce "first-then" boards
- Add choice boards (choose book, choose outside toy)
- Encourage your child to help create and set up the schedule