

ROUTINE & VISUALS

During School Closure

We are aware that this has been a significant change to you and your child's daily routine. This is difficult for all families, but for children with Autism who find routine and predictability calming this may be making things for your family more challenging.

ROUTINE

Routine is important and finding the right one for you and your family is something we will leave to you. In order to help we have a few ideas that may make it easier.

'Anchor points'

- Think of the things that happen every day e.g. mealtimes, bedtime – start here
- Try keep these consistent around the same time each day

'Movement'

- All children need to move
- Schedule in some movement time once a day
- See Sensory Play advice sheets

'1:1'

- Schedule in 1:1 time once a day or every second day with your child
- You could choose activities that help develop your child's communication and interaction skills
- Speak with your child's therapists to get ideas of what to do at this time e.g. Intensive Interaction, social/people games, playing together with a toy/game, looking at books/family photos together, fine motor skill activities

You can find an example routine using the advice given above, on the next page:

6-8am	Morning Time includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast • Getting dressed • Brushing teeth • TV or free time
8-10am	Movement Time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside play/exercise • Sensory play
10-12am	Freetime & Downtime
12am	Lunch
1-2pm	Freetime & Downtime
2-3pm	One on One Time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social/people games • Playing together with a toy/game • Looking at books/family photos together • Fine motor skill activities
3-5.30pm	Freetime & Downtime
5.30pm	Dinner
6.30pm	Bedtime Routine

Try implementing routine at a pace you can manage. Remember this is a big change for everyone, including you

- First try and establish your **Anchor Points**
- Then try and add in **Movement Time** and **One on One Time**
- Then once you feel you've managed this you can consider if you can support your child's play and time in the **Freetime & Downtime** areas (you can discuss this with your therapist)

VISUALS

To show your child their routine, which helps them remain calm, visuals should be used throughout transitions (i.e. moving your child from one part to the next part of the daily routine).

Please speak with your child's therapist to find out what level of visual your child is at.

It develops in the following order:

1. Objects of reference

Where you show the child an object to represent the activity e.g. nappy for nappy change, plate for mealtime



2. Single photo or picture

Where you show the child a single photo/picture of the activity e.g. toilet, mealtime, bedtime (you can put these on a lanyard or keychain, or keep them on a board stuck up close by to have them all in one place)



3. Now and Next

4. Now, next, later

Where you show the child 2 to 3 pictures of what they will be doing placing them on the now next OR now, next, later boards (a good tip is to put the board on a lanyard, stick the pictures you aren't using on the back of the board so you have it all in one place)



5. Longer visual timetables e.g. whole day schedule using visuals

Where you set out the day routine (this can be broken down into morning routine, then afternoon routine) placing pictures on a long strip in order



Top tips for using visuals:

- Use these to help your child understand and to reduce anxiety
- Be consistent
- Show the visual (photo, symbol, picture or object) each time you do the activity
- Name each stage if you are using more than one picture e.g. 'first snack then play'
- If using pictures/photos = post them in a box or envelope when the task is finished – get your child to help and say 'finished'
- You can use pictures on your phone, or make them from packaging, or draw them on post-it notes or cut out squares of paper, or look on google images and print them - be creative
- Keep showing the pictures, even if you think your child is not looking yet
- Your child may need some warning that an activity is going to finish. You could use a timer on your phone to show them how long they have left of the activity, or count down out loud and on your fingers from 5 to 1 e.g. '5, 4, 3, 2, 1...finished'.

If you would like help using the above therapy ideas at home, please do contact:

By phone: During the school closure period, please call us on our central number at the Northern Health Centre: 0203 316 1892

By email:

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