

## Environmental Supports

### Visual Supports

Visual supports are any images, hand signals, objects or demonstrations that help children understand activities, routines or expected behaviour. In general, people's brains process images faster than sounds or words - so visual supports can be a powerful way to reinforce verbal instructions and information.

#### Static Supports

Static visual supports are objects, pictures or signs featuring images, words or drawings.



##### Visual Schedules

Customized, visual schedules can meet the needs of any program. Use text and images for each activity to show what is planned. This helps children better prepare for transitions and upcoming activities. Rather than using times (such as 10am), simply order activities by 1,2,3,4 to make it more flexible.



##### Jerseys or Uniforms

Sports jerseys or uniforms are a great way to help children identify their teammates or group. If you are running one-off or ad-hoc games throughout your program, consider using coloured stickers, handkerchiefs, headbands or break-away lanyards to visually separate teams.



##### Labels and Signs

Clear labelling can help children participate more independently. The best labels combine both pictures, symbols or images with text.



##### Example Objects

Doing a craft activity? Have a 'finished' version available as a reference point. Asking children to grab or look for something? Showing them a concrete object can help everyone understand exactly what you mean.



##### Boundaries or Barriers

If your program area doesn't have clear visual 'boundaries', consider using pylons, chalk, tape or ropes to delineate the space.

#### Dynamic Supports

Dynamic visual supports involve movement, gestures or videos.



##### Gestures

Using simple gestures, in addition to words, can be extremely helpful when providing instructions or getting children's attention. Try gestures or hand signals such as 'quiet coyote' to reinforce verbal commands.



##### Demonstrations

Physical demonstrating an activity can help children better understand a set of instructions, especially if it is a new skill/game.



##### Travel White Boards

White boards are a versatile tool that can be used over and over as different visual supports, from creating quick signs to writing down a set of instructions.



##### Visual Timers

Visual countdown timers can help children prepare for transitions or the end of an activity.