



# Picture Schedules for Early Childhood

## Helping Children Adapt to Classroom Routines

by Vangie Rodenbeck

In a room full of so many teachable hearts, we frequently move quickly from one activity to another without thinking about everything involved in the act of transitioning. But for children who experience developmental delays or who face challenges in adaptive functioning, classroom transitions can be anything but smooth and tranquil. In fact, the many changes can seem quite abrupt and frightening.

### UNDERSTANDING ADAPTIVE FUNCTIONING

*Adaptive-functioning skills* are those that assist us in navigating the most basic changes of function within our environment. These include the skills required to move effortlessly, step-by-step, within any single task in order to accomplish the whole task. For instance, the steps associated with getting ready for bed seem simple. They may include brushing your teeth, washing your face, and other routines that you have developed adaptive skills to accomplish. But for the person with low adaptive-functioning skills, the act of brushing teeth is a complex, multistep process that includes finding the toothbrush, grasping the toothbrush, applying toothpaste while grasping the toothbrush, and so on. When we understand the multiple intricacies of tasks such as this one, we realize how important adaptive-functioning skills become. Persons with developmental delays or disabilities often see each part of the task separately, rather than seeing it as a single whole act.

### USING PICTURE SCHEDULES

When this concept is translated to the numerous acts involved in participating in a classroom environment, it is understandable why children with special learning needs often become overwhelmed and anxious. One way to lessen the anxiety of children who struggle with changes in classroom activities is to use a picture schedule. A simple visual map of the daily schedule can help even young children plan out the skills they will need for participating in various activities.

As a management tool, a picture schedule is also useful for pointing out that a preferred activity is on the day's schedule. For instance, if working independently at the art center soothes a child, it might help the child tolerate other nonpreferred activities if he sees when art time will take place. Pointing to a picture schedule, you can say, "First we have Bible story time, and then we will be going to the art center." Children are sometimes willing to endure an activity that is more difficult if the reward they seek is in sight.



# Picture Schedules for Early Childhood

## FOR TODDLERS THROUGH PRE-K AND K

The use of simple pictures, or icons, to visualize your daily schedule can be invaluable when working with young children. Display the pictures near the door of your classroom so that you can introduce your daily schedule when children enter the room. Keep the schedule board available during the entire class so that it can be reintroduced if necessary. For free-play time, keep activity icon cards not being used that day accessible so that nonverbal children can choose and communicate to you the kind of activity they would like to participate in.

## MAKING A PICTURE SCHEDULE BOARD

### Materials

HeartShaper icon cards provided with this article, card stock, scissors, clear adhesive covering (or laminating machine), poster board, self-adhesive hook-and-loop strip, double-sided mounting tape

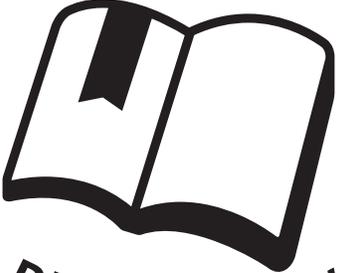
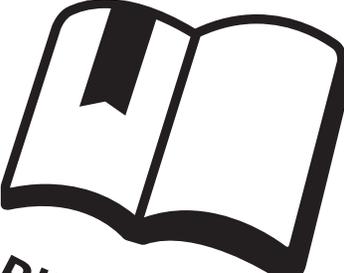
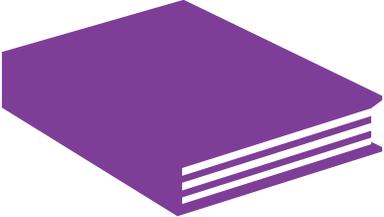
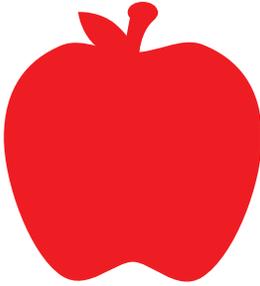
### How to Assemble

1. Cut the poster board in half, making two long, vertical strips. If you have two hours of teaching, one board can be used for the first hour and the second board can be used for the extra hour. Apply the hook side of self-adhesive hook-and-loop strip to each board in one long strip. Use double-sided mounting tape to attach the poster boards to a classroom wall at the students' eye level.
2. Print onto card stock a copy of the HeartShaper icons. Cover the icons with clear adhesive covering (or laminate). Cut the icon cards apart, and attach to the back of each card a piece of self-adhesive hook-and-loop strip (loop side).

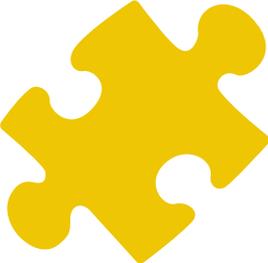
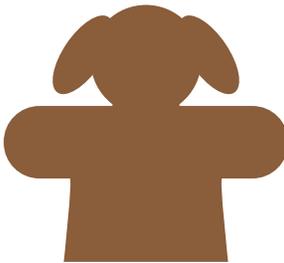
### How to Use

Place the icon cards on the board in the order in which activities will take place that day. As each activity is completed, its icon card can be removed from the board.

**Early Childhood Icon Cards**

 <p><b>Active Play</b></p>	 <p><b>Art</b></p>	 <p><b>Bible Memory</b></p>
 <p><b>Bible Review</b></p>	 <p><b>Bible Time</b></p>	 <p><b>Blocks &amp; Buildings</b></p>
 <p><b>Books</b></p>	 <p><b>CD</b></p>	 <p><b>Cleanup</b></p>
 <p><b>Craft</b></p>	 <p><b>Family Living</b></p>	 <p><b>Food</b></p>

**Early Childhood Icon Cards**

 <p><b>Game</b></p>	 <p><b>Music</b></p>	 <p><b>Pray</b></p>
 <p><b>Puzzles</b></p>	 <p><b>Scamper</b></p>	 <p><b>Scout</b></p>
 <p><b>Sing &amp; Pray</b></p>	 <p><b>Teddy</b></p>	 <p><b>Wonder</b></p>

*NOTE: Use the blank boxes to create your own picture icons for additional activities you may offer.*