



Visual Timetables, Schedules and Routines

What's the aim?

Visual timetables, schedules and routines help you to communicate to your child when activities or events will occur throughout the day or week. This helps them to understand what they are doing and when and can significantly reduce anxiety and related behaviours that may occur when these things are not made clear or certain.

What to do

The TomTag 4 P's approach:

Plan

- Does your child understand the idea of an activity sequence?
If you need to work on this first, read the TomTag First-Then-Next guide for advice on how introduce this idea.
- Decide which activities for the day or part of the day you want to show. Worried about challenging behaviour? Try starting with activities that your child usually does successfully and willingly!

Prepare

- Choose appropriate symbols to show the activities you have identified. Use the blank stickers to make your own drawings if you can't see the activity you want.
- Build up an activity sequence in a TomTag tag using these symbols to show the activities you want to happen, or that will occur, and in what order.
- Aim to involve your child with the preparation of the tag. Many children love stickers and the action of clicking the buttons into place. Helping prepare their tag gives them a sense of ownership and may motivate them to use it. This is also a great time to talk with them about how and why their TomTag will help.
- Decide where is the best place to put TomTag so that it is easily seen by your child before they start the first activity. Do you want them to carry it or fix it to a permanent place like the fridge or a wall? It must be easily visible to your child during the rest of the activities.



Prompt

- Cue your child with a brief verbal instruction when it's time for an activity to begin e.g. "Check your TomTag".
- Gently guide them to look at their TomTag or place it in their hand and prompt them to point to the next activity symbol
- Use the least amount of words and describe what the activity is, e.g. "Get dressed".
- Help your child do the activity or model how to do it. If they are finding an individual activity too difficult, set up a separate and more detailed skill prompt TomTag to teach it. Read the Daily Living Skills guide for more information about how to do this.
- Show them how to turn over the button on their tag once they have completed the activity.
- Praise your child for completing the activity
- Cue them to check their TomTag again so that they can move smoothly onto the next activity

Patience

- If challenging behaviour occurs, focus on the activity not the behaviour.
- Keep prompting, praising and be patient!