



Stephanie Crawford (Speech Pathologist)

Visuals

Visuals are really important for therapy and they can cover so many different areas for the children. One of the biggest concerns that parents have about visuals is that if we use visuals with their children then they think that they either won't develop language or they think that it means they are going backwards.

We really need to think of visuals as everyday life tools. Whenever I put a strategy in for children I think - if this child is doing this in 20 years will it matter? With visuals it doesn't because we all use our own types of visuals, when you use a schedule to explain to a child what is going happen during the day or what is going to happen at kinder this is no different to us having our diary with the jobs that we need to do laid out for us day by day. When you use visuals to help your child make a choice, this is no different to someone in a conversation giving you ideas if you are stuck for words.

When we use visuals to communicate, and encourage children to use the visuals instead of words this is no different to us teaching vocabulary. Often children with autism feel that they have to get things right and feel like if they don't get it right then they can't do it so using visuals for expressive language actually increases the chance of them using words rather than decreasing it because the visuals can take the pressure off and encourage the communication. Children give the visual and they have got their message across so they are much more able to have a go at the words without the fear of failure.

*** This is an approximate transcription only; minor modifications have been made to assist the reader*