

Information Sheet

Visual Supports

4. Using Photos of Real Objects

Before using the guidance in this document, please refer to the following:

Visual Supports - 1 Using Real Objects of Reference

Visual Supports - 2 Using Real Objects to Make Choices

Visual Supports - 3 Using Real Objects to support 'Now & Next'

It is Important to Remember:

- Using visuals is a **whole team approach** - all adults use visual supports for all parts of the day and routine.
- **Everyone** in contact with the child must have an understanding of the child's preferred form of communication.
- When getting your setting ready for the day/session - this should include checking that visual supports are accessible.
- Visual supports can be personalised to support individual children.
- Visual supports enable the child to have a visual image alongside the verbal word(s).
- Use of visual supports will help reduce some of the child's frustration and anxiety.
- Visual Supports encourage some independence, as well as develop the child's confidence.
- When using verbal communication, remember the child's **current stage of development** (not their actual age) and their current level of understanding.
- It is important to choose the words you will use with the photo of the real objects of reference - then all adults will use these same word(s) with the same photo(s).
- Photos must be of the real objects within your setting, e.g. toilet, taps, hand towels, etc. This includes photos of the child's real belongings, e.g. water bottle, coat, shoes, wellies, etc.
- An adult will get down to the child's level and use the child's name to get their attention - then pause, briefly. The adult will use the chosen words while showing the child the photo.
- Take it slowly - start off with using photos of the real object for one purpose, then introduce more once the child is using these purposefully.

- Remember, that using visual supports doesn't automatically mean the child will co-operate.
- ❖ The following examples are based on a child who is not receiving support from a Speech and Language Therapist. If the child is receiving support from a Speech and Language Therapist, please contact them for advice.

Recognising Photos of Real Objects:

Recognising photos is a skill that needs to be learnt. However, many children are not yet at the stage where they are able to recognise a photo/ 2D flat image. However, once the child can recognise photos, this can be a more mobile resource.

When Taking Photos of Real Objects:

Keep all photos simple - take the photos on a plain surface and have as little as possible, in the background. Remember to take the photo from the child's line of sight.

For this example:

This is a photo of the child's actual nappy, the real object of reference.



This is a generic picture of a nappy - from the internet.



Remember: to the child these **are not** the same thing.

(you may need to retake the photo if the nappy size or brand changes)

Creating Photo Cards:

When creating Photo Cards, always include the word(s). If you have access to symbols, you could add these too.

Laminating your photo cards will help them last longer, however, remember - when laminating, **always** cut rounded corners otherwise, they can be sharp.

Example:



Example:



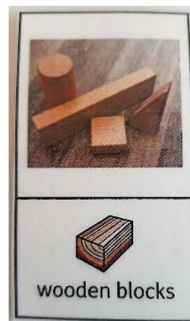
Photographs of Real Objects for Labelling Toys/Equipment/Resources:

Photo Cards can be added to storage boxes, shelves, etc. to show where to find things. This also enables the children (and adults) to know where things belong.

For this example:

The wooden blocks Photo Card would be attached to the relevant storage box using, for example, hook & loop tape.

Example:



Example:

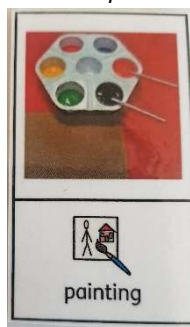


To Label an Activity:

This will support the child to understand what the photo relates to - **always take a photo the real object(s) within the setting.**

For this example: This painting Photo Card is positioned within the painting area - this could be: on the table, painting easel, wall or room divider, etc.

Example:

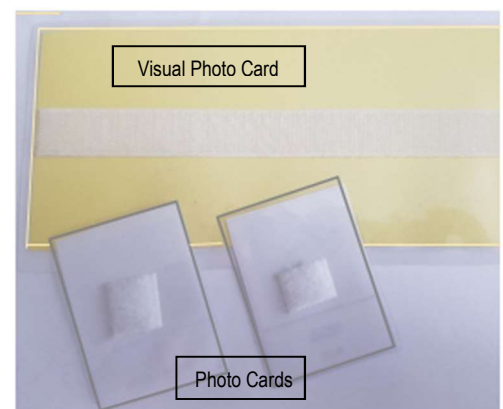


Creating Visual Photo Cards:

A Visual Support Card is used to display one or more photo cards.

The simplest way to create a visual support card is to laminate a piece of card (any colour) and add self-adhesive hook and loop tape - always add the soft part of the hook and loop tape, to the photo.

Remember: When laminated, **always** cut rounded corners.





If you want to find out whether the child can recognise photos - this is a simple game.

Instructions:

1. Take photos of 2 or 3 real objects - remembering to have as little in the background as possible.
2. Print the photos (approximately 15cm x 15cm). Laminate them if you will use them more than once.
3. Place the photos on an empty table or carpet.
Start with just 1 and increase when needed.
4. An adult will give the child one of the real objects for them to match with the photo.
Or you can provide a box or basket to enable the child to choose independently.
5. Support and encourage the child to match each of the real objects with the photos. As the child holds the real object - *for this example*, the train, the adult would repeat the word.
6. The adult may need to model how to match the real object to the photo.

Example:



Example:



For this example:

The adult places the real object, on top of the matching photo.

The adult will point to the real object and say, "train".

The adult will then point to the photo and say, "train".

7. When the child matches the two together, the adult would name the objects.

Depending on the child's development stage, you could add a descriptive word too. Always say the single word first, for this example: "train". Then add the descriptive word, for this example: "green train".

Example:



Personalise

When using a Visual Support Card, include the child’s photo so that the child knows it is for their use.

Without the photo of the child, anyone could use it or walk off with it - this can be upsetting for the child as it is for their use.

Example:



(The photo of Snow White represents a photo of the child)

For this example:

You can clearly see that this Visual Support Card is for Snow White.

Using Visual Support Cards Purposefully:

The amount of language you use will depend on the child’s current stage of development as well as their level of understanding.

Use the same words that you used when using the real object(s) of reference. Refer to the following:

[Visual Supports - 1 Using Real Objects of Reference](#)

[Visual Supports - 2 Using Real Objects to Make Choices](#)

[Visual Supports - 3 Using Real Objects to support “Now & Next”](#)

Refer to the different phrases for nappy changing in [Visual Supports - 1 Using Real Objects of Reference](#) - this shows how important it is to choose the words you will use and then all adults will use the same words with the same photo of the real object.

For this example:

As with other examples, an adult will get down to the child’s level and use the child’s name to get their attention - then pause, briefly. The adult will use the chosen words while showing the child the Photo.

This will be just using the Photo Card, or by adding the Photo Card to the child’s Visual Support Card.

Example:



Example:



(The photo of Snow White represents a photo of the child)

Using Photos of real objects to reassure the child:

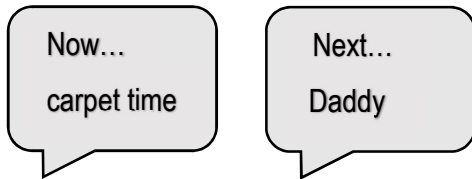
Remember to keep it simple.

Depending on the child’s level of understanding, this can also be used to reassure the child when their parent/carer will arrive to collect them.

You may wish to specify carpet time, e.g. story time.

Example:

For this example:



(The photo of Snow White and her dad, the king - represent a photo of the child and their parent/carer)

When you feel the child has a good understanding of this, you can then introduce another activity and photo card, using backward chaining.

Example:

For this example:



(The photo of Snow White and her dad, the king - represent a photo of the child and their parent/carer)



Remember: Every adult must use the same **word**(s) with the same **photo**(s) of real object(s).

Remember: The amount of language you use will dependent on the child’s current stage of development (not their actual age), as well as their current level of understanding.