

SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS WITH VISUAL SUPPORTS

“The Environment is the Third Teacher”
(Loris Malaguzzi)

We should pause and reflect on our environment to ensure it is inclusive of the strengths, interests and needs of all children. It is important that all aspects of the environment, including the curriculum, routine, transitions and interactions are planned and adapted, to ensure inclusive resources and procedures are in place to support the engagement of all children in the environment. Inclusive strategies, such as visuals supports can be implemented in many ways in the Early Learning and care (ELC) setting, and when introduced as part of the environment, all children will benefit from them. Consider the benefit of using visual supports in the indoor and outdoor environment.

Visual Schedule

- A Visual Schedule is a visual representation of what is going to happen during the day.
- They help to provide an environment that is predictable and supports children with the transitions or changes in their environment.
- The pictures used for a visual schedule should be based on the child's individual strengths and needs.
- Ideally, photographs can be used of The ELC settings, generic images tend to be used also.

First and Then Board

- A First and Then Board provides a visual representation of what the child is being asked to do now (first) and what the child will do next (then).
- For example, first we put on our coat, then we go to the garden.
- Specific or generic pictures can be used based on the child's strengths and needs.

Choice Board

- A choice board provides children with a visual display of the opportunities, materials and experiences that are available to them in their early learning and care setting.
- A choice board provides children with the autonomy to decide on an activity that interests them.
- A choice board can be made using pictures of activities in the ELC setting and it can also be created using generic pictures.
- Choice boards are a great strategy which can support children's independence in choosing what they want to do and play with in the setting.

Task analysis

- A Task analysis is the process of breaking a skill/activity/task down into more manageable steps and representing them visually.
- An example of a task analysis could be washing of hands or zipping up a coat.
- A task analysis can be made using specific pictures of each step involved in the task, they can also be created using generic pictures.

