

“VISITING THE DENTIST” PICTURE SCHEDULE

Individuals on the autism spectrum often benefit from the use of picture schedules and visual cues. Picture schedules utilize the individual’s visual strengths and lets them know what is going to happen next. This often reduces anxiety and improves outcomes.

Picture schedules contain a series of pictures that depict the elements of an activity in chronological order. Some individuals find photographs easier to recognize while others do better with line drawings. Photographs from the Pediatric Dentistry Clinic at the Center for Disabilities and Development are included in this section. Families are welcome to print the pictures and create a schedule for their child. The photographs can be cut out, laminated and Velcro can be used to attach each picture to a schedule board.

Included at the end, are optional photographs which some individuals may find over stimulating. A papoose board photograph is included for individuals who may feel more comfortable and relaxed in that position. Tailor the picture schedule for the individual’s needs.

Steps in Using a Picture Schedule

- Place the pictures in order on the board for the immediate routine (4 to 6 pictures).
- Tell the individual that there are lots of things to do, see and understand at the dentist.
- Review the schedule by pointing to all the sequenced pictures, quickly describing the activity ending with “*then* we are **done.**”
- Before beginning the procedure, point with the individual and focus on the first picture saying “**first** we are doing this.”
- Put the picture board down within close reach and complete the activity.
- Bring the board back to the individual and have them take off the picture, place it in the finished box and say “**done.**”
- Point to the “next” picture and repeat the steps above.
- Consider giving a reward or trinket for completing the procedure.

