

WVATC TIP SHEET:

Using First/Then Boards

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WHAT IT IS...

A First-Then Board is a visual display of something an individual prefers that will happen *after* completing a task that is less preferred.

A FIRST/THEN Board structures an individual's time into beginning steps that are manageable and clear. The two-step board teaches the individual where and how to look for information on what he or she will be doing right now. It's important to remember when you introduce the board to an individual, you're teaching him or her how to use a very important tool that will grow into a schedule and calendar as they get older and can better track activities. The information below is provided by theautismproject.org.

HOW TO USE IT...



Begin by using his or her preferred interests. "FIRST video/THEN tablet". Use of preferred interests will engage the individual in the process and will reduce resistance to it. The goal is for the individual to "see" the tool as a source of information and to trust what's presented on it will happen.



As the individual begins to trust and understand the tool, you can begin to use it for less preferred activities too. "FIRST brush teeth/THEN free time". **Always put the more preferred item second so that the individual sees it and stays motivated through the less preferred activity.**



It's important to remember you are teaching the individual to look to the FIRST/THEN board for information. When the individual trusts you will do what is put on the board, it will help with transitions, with getting through some tough situations (FIRST doctor/THEN playground), and will give the individual an important basic skill to expand to a longer schedule (i.e. First/Next/Then).



NOTE: This is a **FIRST/THEN** tool, **NOT** an **IF/THEN**. The "THEN" **MUST ALWAYS** be honored or the individual will not trust the tool. For example, if the individual struggles at the doctor's appointment and the behaviors cause the appointment to be 15 minutes longer, the individual still gets to go to the playground because the preferred activity was not contingent on behavior during the first, just on it's completion.



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