



# USING SCHEDULES

- Schedules can be made to use in any environment: home, school, therapeutic settings, and later vocational or higher education settings.
- Schedules help build independence and time management skills.
- They help establish routines and consistency which helps smooth transitions and set clear expectations.

## HOW TO DESIGN AN EFFECTIVE SCHEDULE

### INCLUDE MOTIVATIONAL ELEMENTS

It is essential to provide time allotted for preferred activities. Preferred activities should always follow difficult or less preferred activities. Checkmarks, stars, and other celebrations of achievement should mark the completion of each activity on the schedule to visually display accomplishments and progress. Encourage children and learners to participate in making the schedule.

### KEEP IT SIMPLE AND DESIGNED FOR THE INDIVIDUAL USING IT

Schedules should be easy to read and follow and should always work toward a goal. Find a schedule that is designed most effectively for individual learning styles and age appropriateness by using colors, words, pictures, and/or photos.

### BREAK IT DOWN

Some children and individuals new to activity schedules will benefit when activities and tasks are broken down into many small tasks and smaller increments of time. As children grow and become more familiar with the activities and tasks, they may work with broader time and activity parameters. For example, individuals who need more structure to stay on task may have several tasks listed to reach the goal of getting dressed for school, and another list for getting to the school bus. Individuals needing less structure who are working on time management may have a portion of their day, such as after school time, broken down into hourly chunks of time to commit to broader tasks like leisure/free time, to add structure to their day.

### USE IT CONSISTENTLY

Schedules must be used regularly to be effective. Stick to the schedule everyone agrees upon and continually acknowledge accomplishments within the schedule, no matter how small!