

AIMS

- To help pupils know what is happening and what is expected of them.
- To help pupils focus appropriately.
- To support pupils to predict what will happen next.
- To help pupils prepare to move on.
- To minimise anxiety and potential distress associated with engaging with adult-directed activities.

WHAT IS IT?

A Now and Next board is a very simple visual aid. It is a board with 'now' on the left and 'next' on the right and space below for a picture of what is happening now and next. It should contain visual cues that can be removed when an activity is completed. All you need is two picture cues next to each other, with one saying now (the activity you are about to do) and the other saying next (the activity that will follow). This works best if the 'now' activity is something adult directed (i.e., something that the pupil may need more convincing to do) followed by an activity of the pupil's choice. When the 'now' activity is finished and the pupil moves on to the 'next' activity, and the visual cue is moved to the 'now' side so that the pupil can be pre-warned of what is coming afterwards.



HOW OFTEN SHOULD IT BE USED?

Now/Next boards should be used when a pupil needs more structure than a visual timetable in order to navigate their way through a lesson. It helps them predict what is coming next in a shorter timeframe from a visual timetable. Some pupils need their learning to be chunked and can only sustain adult-directed activity if it is followed (relatively) shortly by an activity of choice. Now/Next boards can support the transition back again. They are also useful for preparing the child for any imminent transition, when used alongside the visual timetable.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Create visual cues (5cm x 5cm) of all the lessons/activities that happen throughout the day. Communicate in Print is a useful tool for creating visual cues, but Twinkl is also a good resource. It is important that pupils understand what the visual cues mean. Depending on the age and stage of the pupils, photographs or their own drawings may be preferable. Cut a piece of Velcro (the hook side) into approximately 1cm squares and adhere to the back of each visual cue. Where a pupil does not yet have symbolic understanding, consider using photographs or objects of reference in the same way.
2. Create a board that has 2 sections using an A4 or A3 sheet of paper. Write 'now' on one side and 'next' on the other. Include visual cues that support the pupil's understanding of the words 'now' and 'next'. Laminate the sheet and place a small piece of Velcro in the middle of each section (the loop side). Template at the end of this document.
3. Before the start of an activity, show the board to the pupil. Point to the activity on the 'now' side and say, "Now drawing". Then point to the 'next' activity and say, "Next snack". Use simple, clear language and only repeat if necessary, using the same vocabulary. Emphasise the words 'now' and 'next'. This will make it clear and easier to follow, over time the pupil will understand what 'now' and 'next' mean, if they do not know already.
4. Once the 'now' activity has been completed, either remove the visual cue or cross it out whilst saying, "Drawing finished, now snack". The key is to be very clear, using simple language and visuals cues. Consistent use of the Now/Next board will help the pupil become familiar with the routine.
5. If making a board and associated visual cues is not practicable, use a similar technique on paper or on a whiteboard.



 Now	 Next