

*So, what actually are visual supports?*

Visual supports are anything that we see that help us to understand what is happening around us, they can be real objects, photos, symbols, line drawings or even written words. Visual supports provide a means of supporting both receptive and expressive communication for all children but in particular, children who have difficulty processing verbal information or using verbal language to communicate.

*How do visual supports help?*

Visual supports help children to cope with everyday functioning at home, education and care settings, school and the wider community and enhance communication, augment language, facilitate learning, support behaviour, aid memory and promote independence.

Adults use visual strategies throughout each day, without even realising they rely on them for day to day support, for example, road signs, entry and exit signs, to do lists, shopping lists etc.



**KEEP THEM HANDY** - Visuals must be accessible to all educators throughout each day.

**WAIT** - Like all communication children need time to process the information.

**STICK AT IT** - Some children may need many trials before they make the connection.

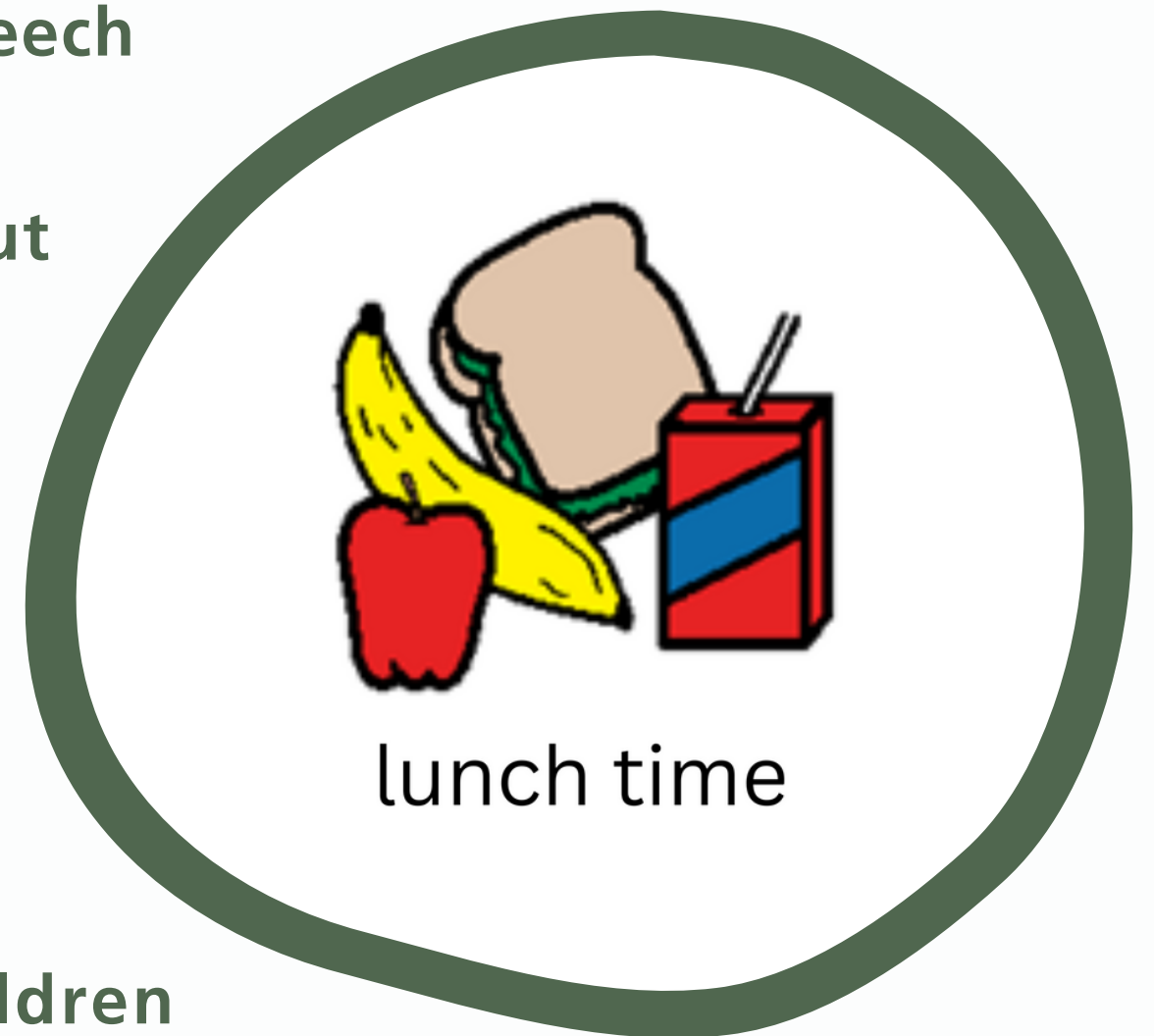
### *What makes visual supports so effective?*

Visual supports are effective in augmenting communication without hindering the development of natural speech and even perhaps enhancing it.

Visual supports are not used to replace speech but to support communication and understanding.

Visual supports help to clarify communication, help children understand what is expected of them, provide structure to the day, and are useful when teaching new skills.

Visual supports assist children to cope with change and transition from one experience to another, and from place to place. They help children organise their thoughts and can reduce frustration by providing children with a means of communicating simple wants and needs.



### *Where can I access visual supports to use at my service?*

Reach out to your Inclusion Professional for support in accessing a set of visual supports.

Alternatively, if your service is supporting a child who has a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, chat to their family, as many families use visual supports within their home environment and may be willing to provide your service with a copy of relevant visuals to maintain consistency.

