Visual Supports and Schedules

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- Visual supports are those things we see that enhance the communication process. They include:
  - Body Language
  - Natural Environmental Cues
  - Traditional Tools for Organization and Giving Information
  - Specifically Designed Tools to Meet Specific Needs

- Visual supports enhance effective receiving, processing, action and expression of communication

- Individuals with autism experience difficulty attending to, modulating or understanding auditory input

- Using visual schedules within any environment can help improve an individuals understanding and cooperation. Visual schedules help clarify routine and increase consistency of an individuals performance

- There are 8 steps involved in creating a visual schedule
  - Divide the day into segments (segments are times that are noticeably different to the individual or are difficult)
  - Give each segment a name (Lunch, bathroom, break, music, etc.)
  - Select a representation system (words, photographs, signs, etc.)
  - Select a format
  - Decide how the individual will participate in the schedule preparation at the beginning of the day
  - Decide how the schedule will be used throughout the day (develop an activity or verbal routine)
  - How to use the schedule-integrating the schedule into the daily routine will increase its effectiveness!!!
  - Use the schedule to communicate with others; it will help to create more opportunities for communication in the individuals environment

Websites and Useful Resources

Hodgdon, Linda. (1995) *Visual Strategies for Improving Communication: Practical Supports for Home and School Environment.* Troy, Michigan: Quirk Roberts Publishing.

www.autismspeaks.org
http://autism.healingthresholds.com/
http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer
http://www.autism.org/
http://www.polyxo.com/visualsupport/makingpecs.html