



A GUIDE TO...

VISUAL SUPPORTS

Cultivate and encourage ALL young children (0-5; with and without disabilities) to explore STEM concepts through activities as independently as possible with adaptations in their natural environments.

Here is a checklist for selecting the best format for visual supports for the child's development and needs:

3D/Real Objects:

- Is the object safe (not a choking hazard; not sharp)?
- Is the object child-sized (the child can easily hold it if they choose to)?
- Is the object something the child already knows and uses often?
- Does the object have a clear connection to the routine or activity?

Quick Tip: Be consistent

Always use the same object/photo/icon and language for the same purpose. You can pair it with gesture or sign language to help the child understand.



Photos/Icons:

- Is it simple and uncluttered (only one main item or idea)?
- For children with significant vision needs, is it high-contrast or easy to see for the child?
- Does the photo/icon have a clear connection to the routine or activity?
- Is it the right size for where and how it will be used?
 - In-hand:** 2" x 2" to 3" x 3" usually works best for choice boards, "First/Then" cards, or individual prompts the child can hold or carry.
 - On-wall:** 4" x 4" to 6" x 6" usually works best for visual schedules or labels posted on walls.
- Does it have a simple word beneath to support early literacy and language?

First



Then



Quick Tip:

Use a photo of the child doing the activity. This makes the visual support more personal, easier to understand, and more meaningful for the child.

