

How To Use A “First-Then” Board

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Why Use A First-Then Board?

- **The “First-Then” board concept is mentioned as an effective strategy in a variety of educational research and autism-related articles.**
- **The “First-Then” board is a visual support strategy.**

In What Settings?

- **“First-Then” boards are used in any setting in which a “rule” or “sequence” of activities needs to be communicated in a visual format. For example:**
 - Home
 - School
 - Church

What Can You Use A First-Then Board For?

- The “First-Then” board is a visual strategy that is used to convey a rule:
 - “First you need to sit down, and then you can eat your snack.”
- It can also be used to convey a short sequence of activities:
 - “First we’re going to Grandma’s, and then we’ll go to the playground.”
- It can be used for transitions.

What Makes It Work?

- **The “First-Then” board when used to convey rules is based on the Premack Principle which states:**
 - **More probable behaviors will reinforce less probable behaviors.**
 - Or:**
 - **More preferred activities will reinforce less preferred activities.**

The Premack Principle

- You've used it. Your parents used it on you. It sounds something like this:
 - “First you need to eat your vegetables (less preferred) and then you can have dessert (more preferred).”
 - “First you need to do your homework (less preferred) and then you can go outside (more preferred).”
- The idea is to get your learner to do something less preferred by following it with something more preferred.

“First-Then” Board

- **It is a visual depiction of the Premack Principle.**
 - **You would use one picture to depict what your learner needs to do.**
 - **You would use a second picture to depict what will happen as a result of doing the activity depicted in the first picture.**

First-Then Board Example

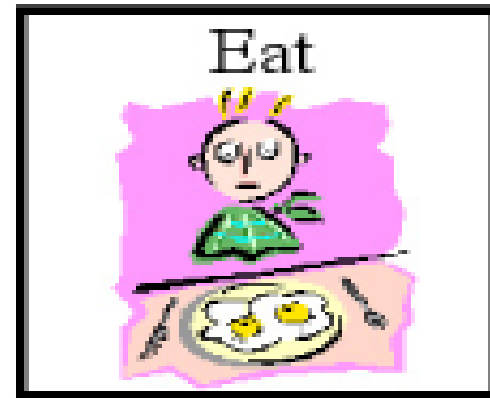
You would say, "First you need to wash your hands."

First



Next you would say, "Then you can eat your snack."

Then



First-Then Board Example

In this example, the learner has to do 3 things “First” and “Then” she gets to do Center Time.



How To Use A First-Then Board

- **Step 1: Make sure that your learner is able to understand what the objects or pictures on your First-Then board represent.**
 - If not, your learner will not know what to do. You must first help your learner to understand that an object or picture that represents “eat” means “eat.”**

How To Use A First-Then Board

- **Step 2: During the routine or activity in which it's needed, show your learner the First-Then board and say, "First _____, and Then _____."**
 - **Point to the appropriate object or picture that corresponds to your words (i.e., point to the first picture when saying, "First _____"**

How To Use A First-Then Board

- **Step 3: Follow through on what you are asking your learner to do!**
 - **It is critical that you require your learner to complete the “First” activity before allowing him to do the “Then” activity.**
 - **The better you are able to select a highly preferred “Then” activity the more successful Step 3 will be!**

How To Use A First-Then Board

- **Step 4: When your learner completes the “First” activity ensure that you allow him to do the “Then” activity.**
 - **It’s important that your learner understand that you “say what you mean and mean what you say.”**
 - **By following through your learner develops behavioral trust.**