

Weekly Schedule

Many adults use a diary or planner to organise their lives, allowing them to plan and give structure to their days. For autistic individuals, these planning and organisation skills can be challenging, so having visual reminders and prompts can really support them in their routine.

There are a range of schedules or planners that can be used, depending on how much information and support the individual needs. This can include part day or full day schedules or for some people, a weekly schedule. Many autistic individuals can thrive on a weekly schedule, to give them an outline of their week, reduce stress from not knowing what is coming, and by giving them a chance to prepare for what they will be doing in the coming days. The weekly schedule may not have every task detailed on it (things like free time when at home) but may have the main events/outings/activities shown (school, going to shop, dentist etc).

You may find that using a weekly schedule reduces questions from an individual about what is happening next, or repeated questions such as “What day is swimming?”. Using a weekly schedule can reduce ‘meltdowns’ or anxiety as the individual has a chance to prepare for the task/event.

A weekly schedule can also be useful to give structure when something changes (e.g. from weekdays to weekend, sharing custody, school holidays). Structure may help your child to feel more in control, help with transition from one task to another, and increase productivity in days which lack external structure.

A schedule like this can also increase independence- for example on swimming days an older individual can be responsible for packing swim clothes, if they check their schedule.

You can use the visuals appropriate for the age and stage of the individual (photos, symbols, written word, or a combination of these). You may find the whole family wants one, as it makes life easier, so could colour code entries or have different coloured charts for different people.

The sample below demonstrates a simple layout for a weekly schedule and includes some sample symbols. A weekly diary or a large calendar could also be used for this purpose.



Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday