

Timers

Timers can be beneficial to support an individual to know what to expect and help them manage transitions. The timer template shown below works by sticking the numbers onto the timer in descending order (5 down to 1). A parent/carer can take off the numbers gradually, showing an individual that they are moving closer to finishing an activity and moving on. Once all the numbers are removed, the current activity is 'all done' or 'finished', and the individual can move onto another task.

The time for each number to be removed can be adapted depending on the age and stage of individual. For example, they may be 1-minute gaps or may just be a few seconds between each number. It can also be used to show how many turns you have left of a particular activity, if appropriate

The timer can be useful both for finishing preferred or non-preferred activities. For example:

- Using the timer to show that I-pad time is coming to an end as dinner is ready will help the individual to process the communication, prepare for that transition and get ready to finish. When it is time to turn the i-Pad off, this preparation may make the transition easier for everyone.
- If an individual is completing a task they do not like or enjoy, such as brushing their teeth or completing a reading activity, the timer can help to structure and motivate the individual. Being able to visually see that you are progressing in this task and getting closer to being finished can be motivating.

Other styles of timers can also be used, depending on what suits the individual and the situation best. This includes stopwatches on a phone/tablet, sand timers, specific timer apps and other colour-based timers that can be bought specifically to support autistic individuals.

A timer can be used alongside a schedule or to-do list to help further manage this structure.

