

Visual Supports: Visual Task Analysis

What is a visual task analysis?

Visual task analyses promote independence by using pictures and words to break down complex tasks into more manageable steps (Rutherford et al., 2020).

Why use a visual task analysis?

- They make multi-step jobs or activities easier to understand and follow.
- They can be used to teach a variety of skills in many different settings.

Examples of visual task analyses

- Photographs of a person washing their hands.
- Written instructions of the steps of a deep breathing routine.
- Words & line drawings of how to unload a dishwasher.
- Crossing the street.
- Taking public transportation.
- Grocery shopping.

How do I use a visual task analysis?

Identity tasks

Choose activities, tasks, or routines with multiple steps that might be confusing to the person.

Determine visual presentation

Decide if you will use photographs, pictures, and/or words.

Break down tasks

Divide tasks into ordered steps and decide the image and/or phrase to represent each step.

Plan

Choose where to put the visual task analysis so it is easy to reference.

Teach and model

Show the visual task analysis and model how to use it in clear, simple words. If needed, teach one step at a time.

Prompt

If needed, remind the person to go to the next step in the task analysis by pointing to the next picture.

Reinforce

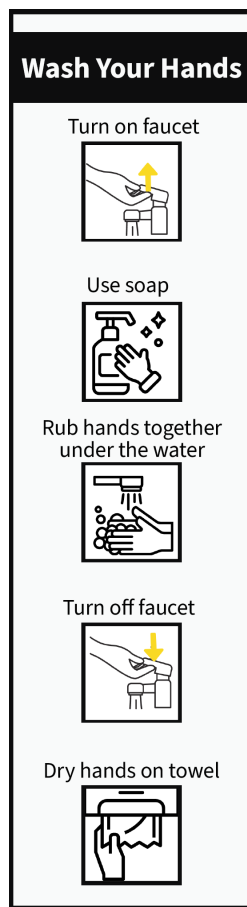
When the person completes a step, give positive feedback (like praise) to encourage the use of the visual task analysis.

Increase independence

As the person follows steps on their own, reduce the help given for each step.

Use in different places

Try using the visual task analysis strip in different places and with different people.



Additional resource guides at <https://www.delawareautismnetwork.org/>.

Reference: Rutherford, M., Baxter, J., Grayson, Z., Johnston, L., & O'Hare, A. (2020). Visual supports at home and in the community for individuals with autism spectrum disorders: A scoping review. *Autism: The International Journal of Research and Practice*, 24(2), 447–469. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361319871756>

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