

Now and next boards are a clear and simple visual strategy to support encouraging a child to complete necessary tasks, such as putting on their shoes, having a bath, playing with something or even getting in the car. The simple language of what we are doing now followed by what we will do next helps a child to recognise stages in a routine and feel like they have some understanding and control over what is happening. The “next” task can be something you know the child enjoys and so will motivate them to complete the “now” task in order to get to the one they really want to do. This supports children to understand that some tasks have to happen but that does not take away from the enjoyable tasks that might help them feel calm or happy.

Making a now and next board can be very simple, you will need the following resources:

- A piece of card or cardboard
- A pen to draw two squares with now and next written above Velcro
- Pictures or photographs to represent different now and next tasks

Alternatively:

- Laminate a piece of paper or get a small whiteboard
- Wipeable pens to draw what is happening now and next

Remember to:

- Use the board regularly, especially for the same challenging tasks. This will develop your child’s understanding of how it works and what is expected of them.
- Be consistent with language eg “We are doing (x) now and we will do (y) next”.
- Be realistic with time, your child may engage with the now activity for 30 seconds initially before moving onto the next. This is ok, you can increased the time gradually. A visual timer may help to support with increasing the length of time your child can spend on the now task.

Create your board which ever way works for you; if you child is attending an early years setting it would be good to use the same design in both environments so that this is familiar to the child wherever they are.

