

LEARNING SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Visual Supports Teacher Guide

Purpose

Practical classroom strategies, accommodations, printable learning support ideas, and implementation options for ASL teachers using visual supports to strengthen instruction for all learners.

What are Visual Supports?

Visual supports are tools such as pictures, symbols, schedules, and charts that make language, routines, and expectations concrete and easy to reference. They benefit a wide range of learners, including students with disabilities, English Learners, and any student who processes information more easily through visuals than through language alone.

Who Benefits

- Students with ADHD, ASD, or intellectual disabilities
- English Learners
- Students with anxiety
- Students with language delays
- Early ASL learners
- Every student, as a universal support

Teaching Strategies

- Post a visual daily schedule at the front of the room
- Use picture icons alongside signs for new vocabulary
- Pair spoken/signed directions with visual step cards
- Use color-coding to organize categories or routines
- Keep visuals simple, consistent, and uncluttered
- Review and update visuals regularly so they stay useful

Learning Support Activities

- Visual daily schedule with removable icons
- First-then boards for task sequencing
- Picture-sign vocabulary cards
- Visual behavior/expectation charts
- Color-coded folders or materials by subject

Implementation Tips

- Start with a few high-priority visuals rather than overwhelming the room
- Involve students in choosing or creating their own visuals
- Keep visuals at eye level and within easy reach
- Laminate or use durable materials for repeated daily use

Things to Avoid

- Overcrowding the room with too many competing visuals
- Using visuals inconsistently or letting them go out of date
- Placing visuals out of students' sightline
- Assuming visuals alone replace the need for direct instruction

Remember

Every student is unique. Use these strategies together with each student's IEP, Section 504 Plan, school policies, and professional judgment. The goal is not to lower expectations, but to provide meaningful access to learning.