



Establishing the New Routine

Everyone is experiencing significant changes to daily life and to normal routines.

These changes are challenging most of us, but for many autistic children, change brings even greater anxiety.

Children and young people with autism want predictability and regular routines, but school closures and confinement in the home have removed these predictable routines.

When their world feels out of control, they may engage in behaviours which can seem challenging, but are often their way of trying to re-establish control and predictability.

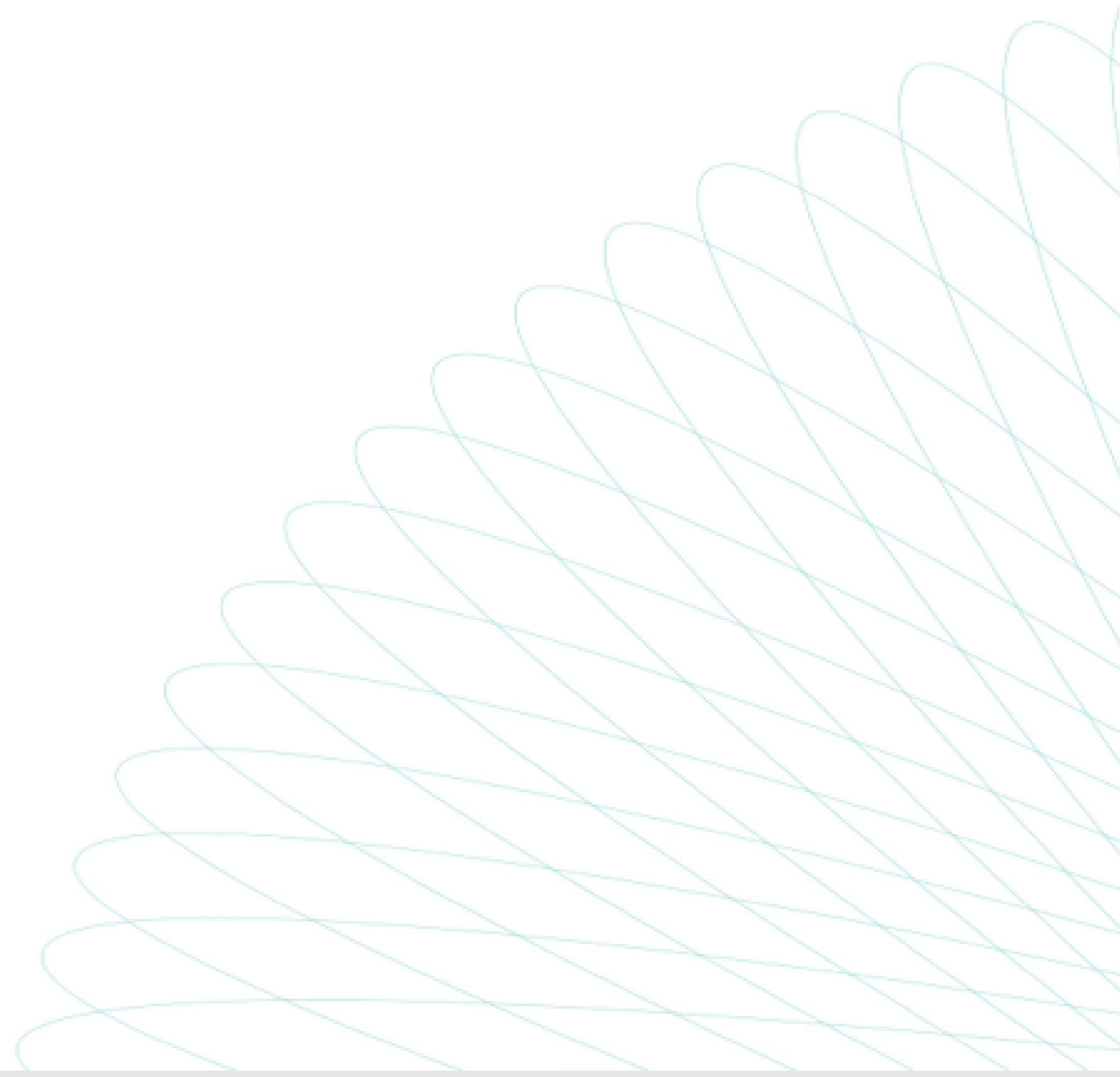
Providing your child with a visual schedule can be an effective way to manage their anxiety around the changes and provide a predictable but flexible routine. A visual schedule clarifies the new daily and weekly routine for them. It serves the same purpose as a calendars and mobile phones for all of us.

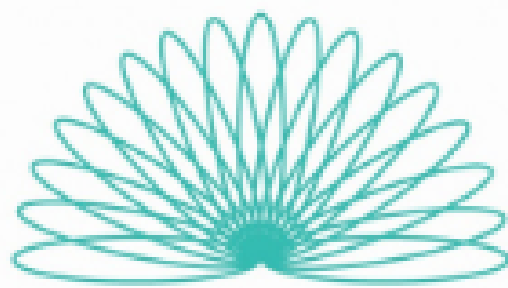
When establishing a visual schedule, it is important to remember the following:

- Consider what type of schedule your child already uses at home or at school. Use the same format and the same type of visual supports e.g. word, symbol, photo.
- If introducing a visual schedule for the first time, consider what type of visual support your child can easily understand on their most stressful day e.g. if your child does not seem to consistently understand a line drawing or symbol, use photographs.
- You do not need a computer and printer to make a schedule.
- Write or draw the schedule using paper and pen.
- Write or draw the schedule on a small whiteboard or chalk board.
- Download a schedule app to your smart phone or tablet e.g.: Choice Works or Boop.
- If do have a printer at home, you can print out the schedule.

The following websites may be useful:

- Do2Learn
- Boardmaker online
- Google images
- Twinkl
- Pinterest





CENTRE FOR AUTISM
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For more information on setting up a visual schedule, please visit the online resources on the Middletown Centre for Autism website:

<https://best-practice.middletownautism.com/approaches-of-intervention/the-teach-autism-programme/>

Here are some examples of schedules for children and young people of different ages and abilities which may help you in setting up your own:

