

# THE FOLD UP

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The “Fold-Up” is an easy to use, highly portable teaching tool. It consists of 6 different visual supports. Each visual support was chosen because of its effectiveness in clarifying information for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other special learning needs. Because all six supports are grouped together in a consolidated format, educators and family members can keep these important teaching tools handy for use in many different settings. Following is a description of each visual support and suggestions for its use:

## The Wait Card



### Function(s):

- To help student understand that he/she must temporarily discontinue an activity but can return to it later.

### How to Use:

- The Wait card must be pre-taught in order to optimize its use with a students.
  - In a one to one situation, the student is engaged in a neutral, object based activity (one that he/she is usually willing to do, but is not a favorite activity).
  - Shortly after beginning the activity. i.e. within approximately 5 to 10 seconds, the adult places the Wait Card on top of the object(s) and says “Wait” or, if needed, “Hands down. Need to wait.” The student is rewarded for removing his hands from the object.
  - Additional prompting may be necessary to help the student learn that his/her hands should remain away from the object until the adult takes the Wait Card away.

- **At first the student should have to wait only a few seconds before the adult removes the Wait Card. Eventually, however, the student should be cued to wait for longer and longer periods of time before the Wait Card has been removed.**
- **Practice with the Wait Card should be extended to situations in which the student actually leaves the room during the waiting interval, e.g. the Wait card is placed on a puzzle that the student is completing. While waiting for the card to be removed, the student transitions to the school library. Eventually the student returns to the classroom and the teacher removes the Wait Card from the puzzle.**
- **Very gradually, the importance of the waiting object should be increased. When a student is able to wait for an extended period before the Wait Card is removed from the object, the adult should begin to target objects that are more likely to be student favorites.**
- **After the student has learned the expected behavior associated with the adult's use of the Wait card, the adult is encouraged to use the card creatively across a variety of settings.**

**For example, one student tended to quickly overstuff his mouth with forkfuls of food at lunch. A paraprofessional admonished the student to "chew and swallow", but the advice was too abstract for the young student to fully understand – even though the para demonstrated the desired behavior several times. Finally the paraprofessional used her "Wait Card" to cover the student's fork as soon as it was returned to the plate to spear the next piece of food.**

**How long did the para leave the Wait Card on the student's plate? You guessed it . . . until he had chewed and swallowed the food in his mouth. Using this technique she was able to bypass the language barriers of the situation and was able to gradually teach the student to better pace his eating patterns.**

# The Count Down Card



## Function(s):

- **The Count Down Card is one of a group of pre-transition strategies that are designed to answer the question of “How much longer?” an activity will last and to assist a student in making a smooth transition for the next activity or routine.**

## How to use:

- **The Count Down Card must be pre-taught in order to optimize its use with a students.**
  - **The velcroed numbers are placed in descending order on the Velcro strip. The adult arbitrarily assigns equal time increments to each of the five velcroed numbers. Each number might represent 5 minutes or 3 minutes or 1 minute, etc. It is suggested that the increments be kept constant, i.e. each number represents the same increment such as 1 minute.**
  - **At the beginning of a work or leisure activity, the adult places the Count Down Card near the student and within his/her view. The adult asks, “How long do you have?” and points to the topmost number. The adult says the number aloud, e.g. “5” and encourages the student to also say the number.**
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  - **The adult moves away, but returns at the end of the time interval, e.g. one minute, silently removes the topmost number and asks “How much longer do you have?”. The student is encouraged to point to the new topmost number and, if possible to say it aloud, e.g. “4” or “4 more”.**
  - **The adult returns at the designated time intervals and repeats this process as the remaining time for the activity decreases.**
  - **When the last number has been removed from the Count Down strip, the adult points to the bottom symbol on the trip, “finished”, and reads it aloud or has the student read it aloud.**

If necessary, the adult assists the student in putting activity items away and/or indicates a “finished” container for the student to use. The student is then transitioned to the next activity or routine.

- There may be occasions when the adult uses a number that is less than “5” to begin the count down process.
- For example, Matt was reluctant to relinquish a small drum that had been passed out to each student at the beginning of music class. Verbal prompts by the paraprofessional to “pass the drum back” were ineffective and actually seemed to intensify Matt’s resistance to giving up the drum.

The paraprofessional reached for her Count Down Card, put the numbers “2” and “1” on it, asked Matt “How much longer do you have with the drum”. After Matt responded “2”, the paraprofessional waited 10 seconds, removed the “2” and again asked Matt, “How much longer?” When both numbers had finally been removed (20 seconds had passed) and Matt was asked “How much longer?”, he replied “Finished” and relinquished the drum willingly.

We can only assume that Matt’s “behavior problem” involving the drum was anxiety based and reflected his difficulty relinquishing favored items unless he is forewarned that an activity is coming to an end. In Matt’s case, the warning signal needs to be concrete in nature and systematically taught well ahead of time. The Count Down card meets both of these criteria.

## The Bumper Sticker



### Function(s):

- The “Bumper Sticker” is a small group of positive behavioral directives that can serve to remind a student of what he/she is to do versus what not to do.

### **How to Use:**

- **The Bumper Sticker must be pre-taught in order to optimize its use with a student.**
- **Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other significant communication challenges can have significant difficulty processing spoken information. This is especially true during times of increased stress or anxiety. It can be very helpful to show the student what you mean and to emphasize what you want him to do rather than bombarding him with directives that contain words such as “stop” and “don’t”.**
- **Assess the student’s comprehension of each of the bumper sticker directives and systematically teach any that he does not already understand.**
- **When a student is beginning to experience behavioral difficulty, show him the bumper sticker and touch and say the name of a picture that will redirect him/her to a more appropriate behavior. For example, Tim is trying to grab the pencil of the person sitting beside him. Tim’s teacher approaches Tim with the bumper sticker, says “Hands down” and touches the picture of “Hands down”.**
- **Bumper Sticker directives will probably have the most impact when a student is beginning to experience behavioral difficulty. It is a strategy that will grow less effective as a student’s behavior escalates. The Bumper Sticker is not intended for use with the out of control student experiencing a full blown temper tantrum.**
- **The 5 pictures featured on the bumper sticker were chosen because they represent the directives most often used to manage behavior in classroom and therapy situations. Should you wish to substitute a directive more appropriate for a particular student, consider velcroing the new directive on top of one of the directives you tend to use less often.**

**Barbara C. Bloomfield, 2005  
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