

Chatter Pack

Attention & Listening

Now-Next, Now-Next-Then,
Now-Next-Then-Reward boards

This ChatterPack includes: a **Now-Next board**, a **Now-Next-Then board**, a **Now-Next-Then-Reward board**. Plus **Reward, Surprise and Blank Cards**. It also contains simple step-by-step instructions, suggestions and tips to individualise and try when using the boards. These are aimed at supporting children to develop attention, focus and engagement skills during adult-led tasks for increasing periods of time. It is not always appropriate to move from Now-Next boards to visual timetables and this resource can help to bridge that gap.

There are countless reasons why some visuals simply don't work. It could be because the child doesn't yet have the skills to understand exactly what is expected of them, or, perhaps, they need to be explicitly taught how, when, and where to use them. Identifying an individual child's needs and skills, and then personalising an approach can be key to success. Therefore, always keep in mind the child's developmental age as well as their chronological age when using these strategies.

If you suspect that a child's difficulties could be the result of an underlying mental health, developmental or sensory issue, or if you need support to adapt the following suggestions, speak to the child's parents, educational and/or medical professionals and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)

Should I use a visual timetable or a Now-Next board?

Visual timetables are extremely popular and many young people draw great benefit from them. They can offer an effective means of helping them focus, remain calm, and know what is expected. However, using a Now-Next board alongside or in place of a visual timetable can help support children in a more focused way and this approach might be more suited to the needs of some children. Often, the key to success, as with most things, is to use motivation.

How to use the boards

Always keeping progress in mind, you can support the child to keep developing skills using the boards. Once they demonstrate consistent understanding and success using the Now-Next board, you could try moving them on to using a Now-Next-Then board, and then on again to using a Now-Next-Then-Reward board.

Some children might need real photos of activities/tasks or objects of reference to use with the Now-Next board.

Set a realistic and measurable target for the child to achieve before progressing to the next board. For example, it could be the amount of work completed, or waiting for a set length of time

Images to use with the boards

- If you are able to laminate the ChatterPack blank cards provided, using an erasable pen, try drawing a symbol or writing a word to represent the activity or task. Making them reusable in this way wouldn't require you to provide a range of images - something which might be helpful when moving between environments. It will also allow you to be explicit and specific about what is required in the task.
- Or, using the ChatterPack blank cards, you could create your own personalised images. Try drawing or writing on the cards, and then laminating them so they can be reused. Encouraging the child to become involved in making an image could make the picture more meaningful for them, and, as a result, they will be more likely to benefit from its use. This creative task is also a great opportunity to develop other skills.

If you are unable to laminate the ChatterPack blank cards provided, you could photocopy them in order to have a number of them at hand. Or, you could try using sticky notes. Alternatively, you could use any pre-made images you have with the boards.

- The ChatterPack Reward Cards can be used to symbolise the motivational part of using the boards. For some children, it can be helpful to have one familiar image which reminds them that a reward is coming, but which doesn't distract them from the task at hand.
- The ChatterPack Surprise Card can be used to indicate a change in routine or an activity which the child hasn't tried before. It's important that the child relates this symbol to the event and that it is meaningful. Therefore, some pre-teaching might be necessary.

You might be familiar with the popular hook and loop tape often used to attach images to visuals. This tape could be used with the Now and Next board, too. Alternatively, you could try using a small amount of sticky putty to attach the images to the boards.

Now-Next board

- Place a card on the 'Now' section to indicate an activity. Some children need skills to be built up very slowly. Therefore, try to keep the length of time required for the 'Now' activity short, specific and achievable. You could try, for example, "3 sentences" or "5 minutes waiting".
- In order for the child to engage with the 'Now' activity, especially if it's something they really don't want to do, it's important to make sure that the 'Next' activity or item is motivating, engaging and fun.

Now-Next-Then board

- It's important to make sure that when the 'Now' or the 'Next' activity is something the child doesn't really want to do, the 'Then' activity should be motivating, engaging and fun.
- Add an image to represent the 'Now' activity. If for example the child successfully achieves a target of waiting for 5 minutes when using the Now-Next board, use this same target for the 'Now' activity on the 'Now-Next board.
- Add an image to indicate the 'Next' activity. Try to keep expectations achievable, which might mean making it a very short, specific task.
- Add an image to indicate the motivating, engaging and fun 'Then' activity or item.

Now-Next-Then-Reward board

- As with the other boards, motivation can often be the key to success. Therefore, the 'Reward' must be motivating, engaging and fun.
- Add an image to represent the 'Now' and 'Next' activities. If for example the child successfully achieves a target of waiting for 5 minutes and writing 3 sentences for the 'Now' and Next activities when using the Now-Next-Then

board, use the same targets for the 'Now' and 'Next' activities on the 'Now-Next-Then-Reward' board.

- When a child is achieving, developing skills and building self-confidence, it can also boost motivation to try new things and to engage with less support. To do this, you could keep the 'Then' activity short, specific and achievable.
- Add an image to indicate the motivating, engaging and fun 'Reward' activity or item.

Top Tips for using the boards

Rather than using the board as a fixed visual, try encouraging the child to use it interactively. When a task is complete, ask them to remove the corresponding image, saying: "X finished". You could have a 'finished' box to place the images into or perhaps make a slit in the lid and they could post the images. Try to prepare the board again before the reward activity has finished. Then, you could show the child what's happening next by pointing at each image and labelling it.

Ending a motivating activity can be very tricky for some children. So, to support the transition, you could try using timers and/or a verbal countdown. You might also try encouraging the child to choose another motivating activity or item and to add the corresponding image to the updated board. Timers and/or verbal countdowns might also be useful to use with the less motivating activities.

It might be useful to have a box of motivating items prepared for the child to choose from. In this case, using a single image, symbol or word to indicate the 'choosing box' on the board might be less distracting for the child. Also, being able to make a choice is an important skill for children to learn. Having a selection of motivating activities or items for the child to choose from could potentially help to develop these skills.

Some children need expectations and instructions to be explicit and specific in order to achieve. For example, rather than using an image to indicate a writing task, you could try using an image to indicate '3 sentences'. Or, rather than using a generic waiting symbol, you could try using an image to indicate '5 minutes waiting'.

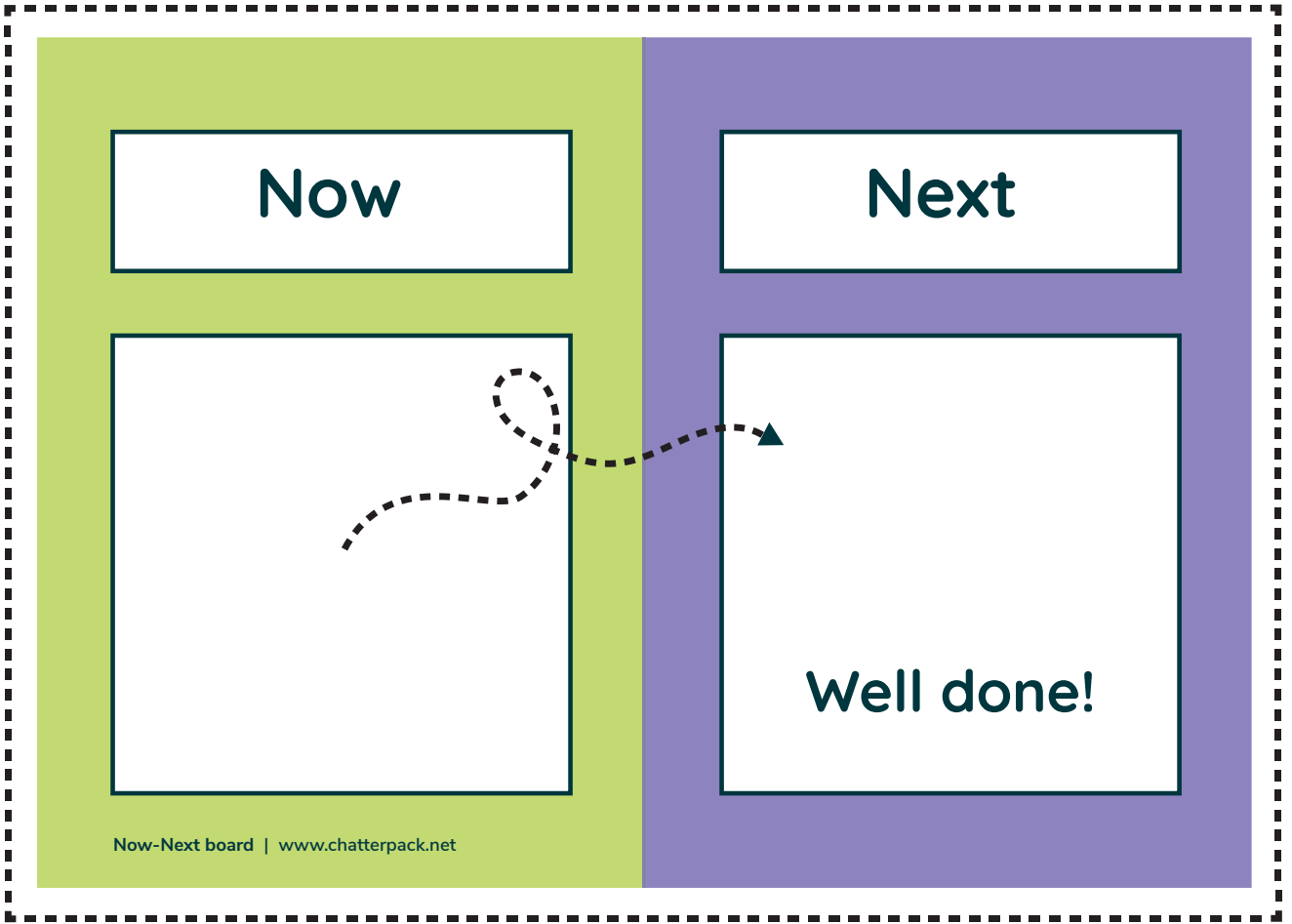
If the child struggles when progressing on to the next board, you could try using a game as one of the additional less motivating tasks. The game might be chosen by the adult and be one which focuses on developing specific skills but is slightly more motivating.

If the child is struggling to achieve, regularly refer to the board and use it as a visual and verbal reminder. For example, if you are using the Now-Next-Then board, point to the images and say: "Now waiting, next book", followed by, and using a more excited tone, "Then X!" This involves giving a lot of verbal information; however, by referring to the board as you speak, the information will be supported visually.

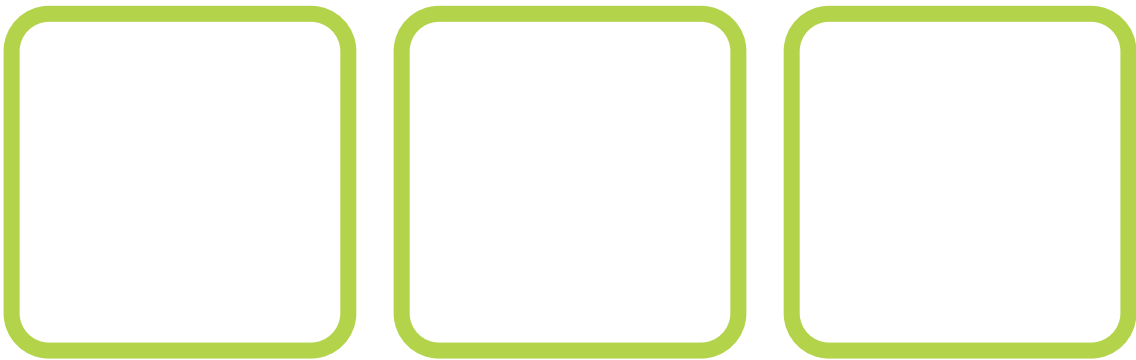
Build up new or increased expectations within tasks slowly. For example, if you want to increase the length of time the activity lasts when using the Now-Next-Then board, increase it during either the 'Now' or the 'Next' task to begin with, rather than increasing the length of both tasks at the same time.

This resource is designed to be used as a part of a wider approach rather than in isolation. For more resources, information tips and advice, you can find us at

www.ChatterPack.net



Blank cards

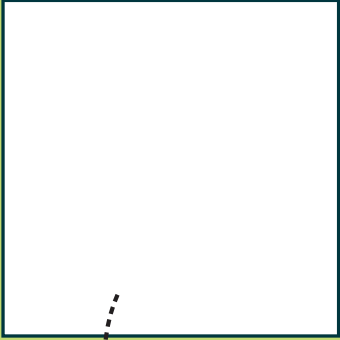


Reward card

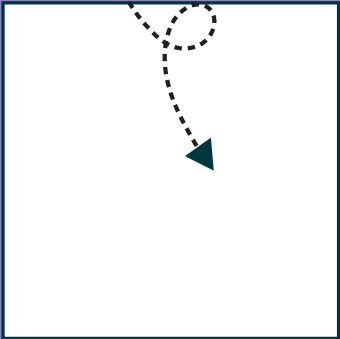
Surprise card



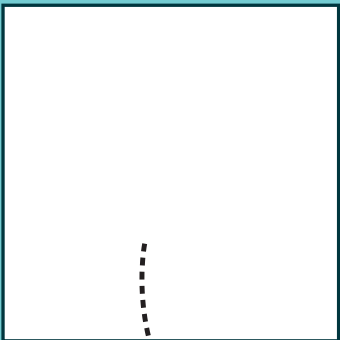
Now-Next-Then- Reward board | www.chatterpack.net



Now



Next



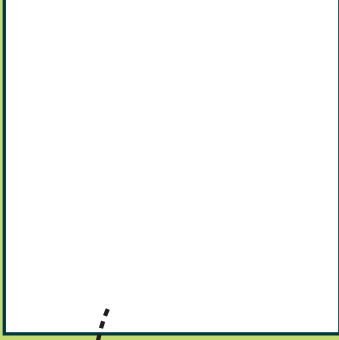
Then



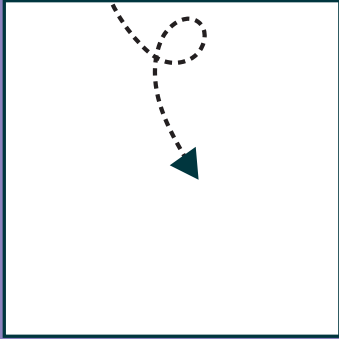
Well done!

Reward

Now-Next-Then board | www.chatterpack.net



Now



Next



Well done!

Then



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