

How-To

TEMPLATE SERIES

STOPLIGHT & COUNTDOWN BOARD

VISUAL TIMERS & TRANSITION SUPPORTS



HANDS in Autism®
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Undetermined periods of time that an individual with ASD may need to spend waiting or working through an activity (e.g., doctor's office, traveling, or participating in a non-preferred activity) can be challenging. If individuals are unclear in regards to how long an activity will last, what the next activity may be, or what the expectations are, he or she may look for ways to gain attention, escape or avoid the activity, gain access to items, or get sensory input. The use of visual supports, like the boards described in this template, can help structure such times, add expectations, and facilitate these experiences.

STOPLIGHTS:

Stoplights may come in different sizes based on the needs of the individual and convenience of use. Individual stoplights can be about 1/3 page in size and can be stationary (e.g., placed on a table or wall next to an individual) or be moved with an individual. Smaller boards can be put in a set on a pulley for easier access and mobility (see p.2 for more information).

Each of the three cards (i.e., *Start*, *Almost Done*, and *Finished*) indicates the passing of time. To begin, the board should have only a green card present as an indication of the start of an activity. When the activity is about halfway through, a yellow one can be placed on the board. When the activity or waiting is over (e.g., a nurse calls the individual's name), the *Finished* card is placed on the board. Please note that only providers or caregivers should manipulate the board. Remember to verbally cue at each point (e.g., "*We are starting!*") and to provide positive praise for appropriate behaviors (e.g., "*I like how you are reading so nicely in your seat.*")



SCENARIOS FOR USING STOPLIGHTS:



One of the most frequent uses of stoplights is during unstructured and undetermined waiting periods (e.g., doctor's office). Before starting the activity, place all the cards on the back. Once you have checked in with the receptionist, place the *Start* card on the board. Direct the individual's attention to the board by pointing and saying "*We are starting!*" After some period of time, when you think that the activity is half way through, place the yellow *Almost Done* card on the board. Draw the individual's attention to the board by pointing at the board and saying "*Almost done waiting!*" Finally, when a nurse calls the individual's name, place the *Finished* card on the board, point at it and say that "*We are done waiting!*"

Stoplights can also be used for activities where duration may fluctuate. For example, they can be used in a layered learning activity, during transitions, or for reward activities during a busy school day.

Remember to praise the individual for good behaviors or engaging in appropriate activities, while waiting (e.g., "*Nice sitting!*" or "*Great job coloring!*").

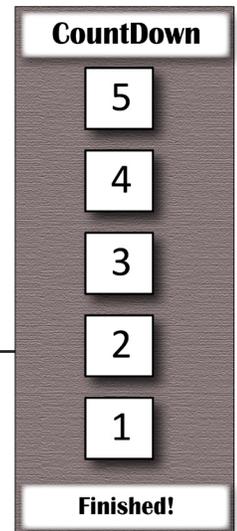
Reminder: This is only one example.

This template may need to be individualized to meet the particular needs of a person with ASD!

COUNTDOWN BOARDS:

Countdown boards can also vary in sizes and placement, similar to stoplights. They can be paired with spotlights on a pulley and be used dependent on the need and preference.

Each of the cards indicates the passage of time. However, unlike stoplights, a provider/ caregiver removes cards one after the other from the board with the passing of time or as the activities are completed. Note, that while there are five cards on the board, the number of cards can be smaller (e.g., use 3 through 1 only). In such cases, place the unused cards on the back on the board.



SCENARIO FOR USING COUNTDOWN BOARDS:

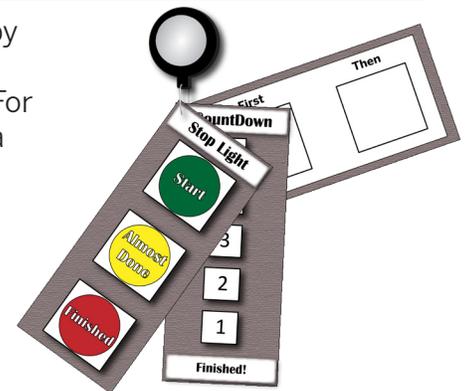
Similar to the stoplights, countdown boards can be used to indicate the passage of time or completion of steps or activities. Place the desired number of cards on the board in reverse order. Once the time to wait or activity has started, remove the top card and indicate to the individual by pointing and saying "We are starting!" With the progression of time, remove the cards successively, while drawing the individual's attention to the board. You can point to the board and say "We are waiting!" if an individual starts showing behaviors.

The countdown board can also be used directly to count down the number of activities an individual needs to complete. In this case, each of the cards indicates a task or activity. The process for use is the same as for waiting.

Remember to praise the individual for good behaviors or engaging in appropriate activities, while waiting or working on their task (e.g., "Nice waiting quietly!" or "Great job working on _____!").

MINI-BOARDS ON PULLEYS:

Smaller stoplights and countdown boards can be worn together on a pulley by the people working with an individual with ASD or those with similar social, communication, sensory or behavioral challenges and accessed as needed. For mini-pulleys, we also recommend adding a first-then board that will provide a visual cue of an incentive for tasks or activities that are not motivational for individuals with ASD. For example, if an individual is not excited about going to the dentist's office, but really enjoys a walk in the park, place the card for a dentist's office under *First* and a picture of a park under *Then* to serve as a reminder that there will be a walk in the park after the visit. For more information on *First-Then Boards* see the relevant How-To Template.



HOW TO ASSEMBLE STOPLIGHTS AND COUNTDOWN BOARDS:

Individual boards:

- ✕ Large stoplight boards and colored circle card sets
- ✕ Large countdown boards and number sets

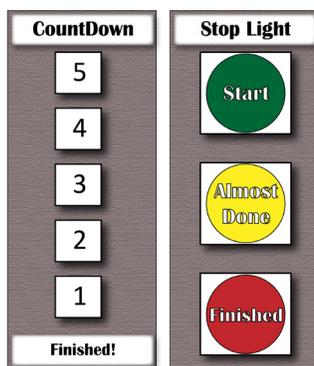
Boards on a pulley:

- ✕ Smaller size stoplights and countdown boards with card sets
- ✕ Smaller size first-then board (see First-Then How-To Template)

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- ✕ Template
- ✕ Optional: HANDS in Autism® Pulleys (for pulley boards)
- ✕ Construction paper (preferred for boards)
- ✕ Template materials
- ✕ Scissors
- ✕ Hard and soft velcro dots or spools (cut down to 1" pieces)
- ✕ Laminate & laminator
- ✕ Hole punch (for pulley sets)

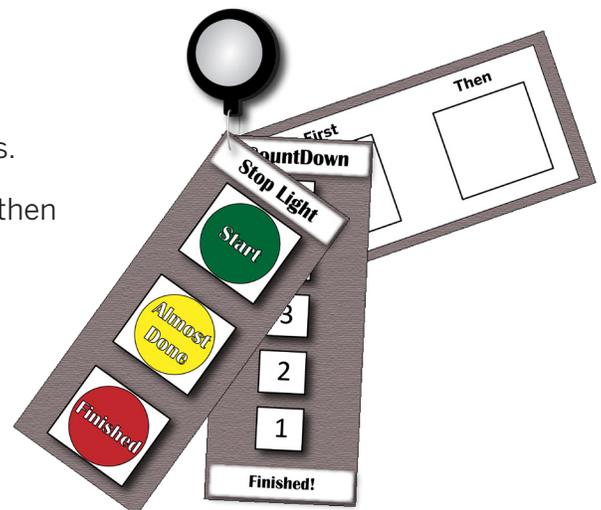
STEPS TO MAKE BOARDS:



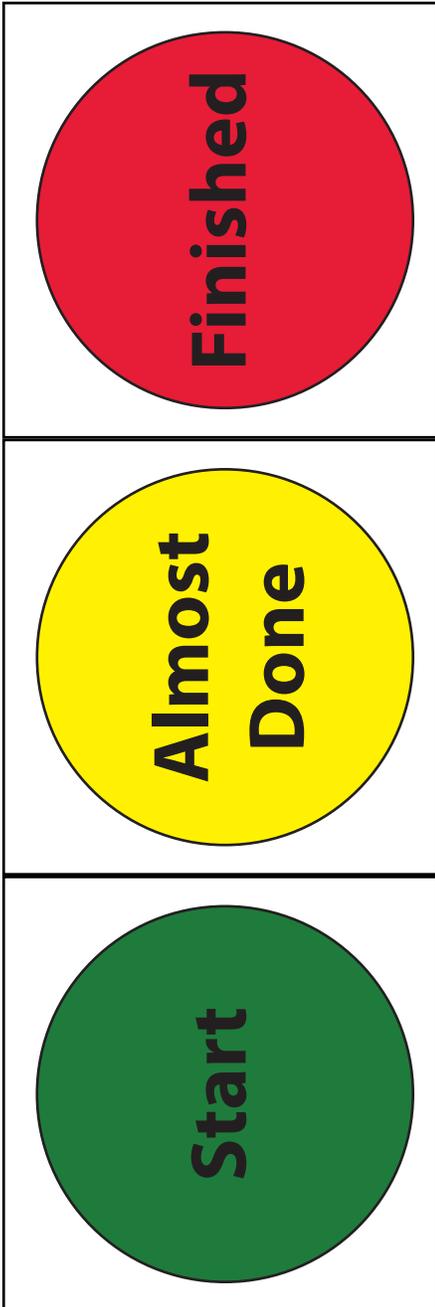
- 1.** Print the templates (consider using construction paper for boards)
- 2.** Laminate materials.
- 3.** Cut out board(s) and cards
- 4.** Place soft velcro on the front and back of the boards and hard velcro on the back of cards.
- 5.** Place cards on the board front as shown on the image to the left

Continue for pulleys:

- 6.** Hole punch the upper left corner as marked on the boards.
- 7.** Use a pulley to attach the stoplight, countdown, and first-then boards together.
- 8.** Repeat with the next set.



TEMPLATE: STOPLIGHT



Stoplight



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