

How-To

TEMPLATE SERIES

FIRST-THEN BOARD

ADDING STRUCTURE & REDUCING BEHAVIORS



HANDS in Autism®
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& Resource Center

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Some tasks or activities may be particularly challenging or anxiety-provoking for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). In these contexts, a first-then board can help provide added structure and motivation in the progression from a less preferred to a more preferred activity or task.

First-then boards are a variation of a visual activity or mini-schedule, reflecting the challenging task or activity followed by a preferred one.

FIRST

- ✦ An **activity** that may typically create **anxiety or avoidance** given that it is challenging, boring, or otherwise less preferred.

THEN

- ✦ A **highly preferred activity** that is to follow immediately after the first activity, providing motivation to complete the first activity in order to access the second.

This simple and direct relationship is highlighted to the individual by directing attention to the board and saying simply, "**First** _____, **then** _____" to remind of the progression and provide the motivation to continue.

HOW TO SELECT OPTIONS FOR "THEN"?

The selection of a "Then" activity or item should represent something highly motivating that the individual is willing to work hard to get. This can be anything from a snack to a choice activity but should be something special that is not often available for access. Whatever is used to motivate should not be accessed until completing the first task or activity but accessible immediately once they have.

Here are some ideas:



using
technology



choosing
prize from
prize bucket



reading



drawing



listening to
music



seeing
preferred staff/
student

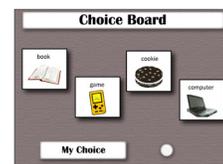


taking a break

TIP



Use a choice board to provide options that can be selected for "THEN". See *How-To: Choice Board* for more information.



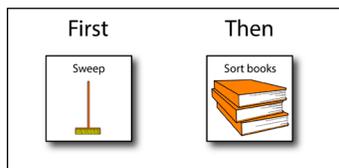
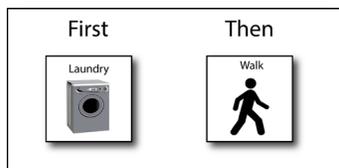
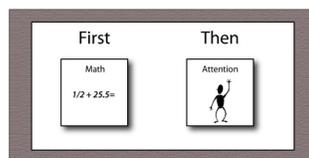
Reminder: This is only one example.

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

IF YOU USE SCHEDULE MAPPING TO DEVELOP SCHEDULE...

Then, the first-then board is merely a repeat of the same sequence already represented on the schedule but replicated on the first-then board for added salience and motivation for the individual to complete.

More about Schedule Mapping at HANDSInAutism.IUPUI.edu



HOW TO RESPOND TO BEHAVIOR WHILE USING A FIRST-THEN BOARD?

If the individual shows signs of upset, anxiety or behavior, redirect his or her attention to the First-Then Board without attending to the behavior by pointing to the board and reminding what is happening, e.g., "First, _____, then _____"

Remember to give regular specific praise while the individual is doing what is expected, e.g., "Awesome waiting!", "Great job working!" paired with other positive attention such as high five, thumbs up, or smile.

As soon as the activity is completed, you can praise saying, "You did it! Great job, [name]" and immediately allow the individual to access the preferred "Then" activity/item on the board.

TIP



When setting up a first-then board, ensure that the individual can be successful and achieve the goal. Use prompting to support the individual to complete the task, but fade them out with time to help the individual reach independence. More about prompting: HANDSInAutism.IUPUI.edu

HOW TO MAKE A FIRST-THEN BOARD?

Materials needed:

- ✘ Board template (may need to print on more durable construction paper)
- ✘ Cards for the first and then options
- ✘ Scissors
- ✘ Hard and soft Velcro dots or spots (cut down to 1" pieces).
- ✘ Laminate and laminator (if available).

TIP



You may want to create a system where all the choice for the first -then board and any other supports use hard Velcro, and all the boards use soft Velcro. This would allow to use icon cards across different schedules, choice boards, and first-then boards.

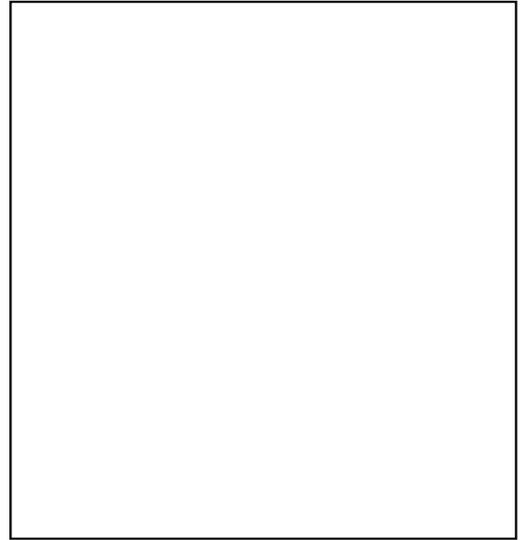
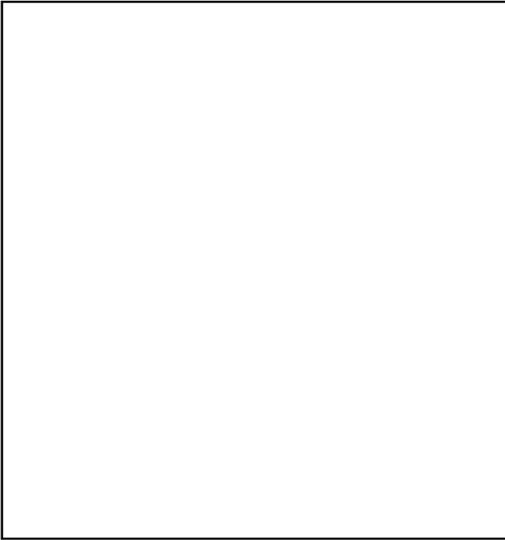
Steps to make a first-then board:

1. Brainstorm options for preferred activities/items based on the motivation and interests of the individual as well as availability. Involve the individual in the brainstorming of preferred options whenever possible
2. Print the board template and cards
3. Laminate the board and cards
4. Cut out board and cards
5. Place soft Velcro on the board. Place hard Velcro on the back of the icon/choice cards.
6. Place soft Velcro on the board to place choices. Place hard Velcro on the back of the cards.

TEMPLATES

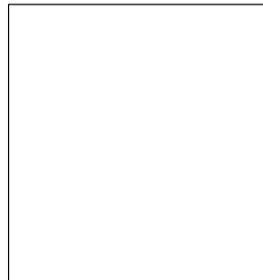
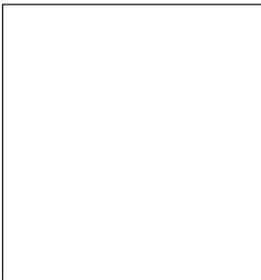
First

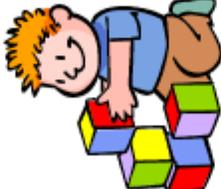
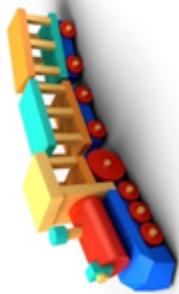
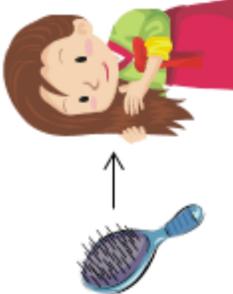
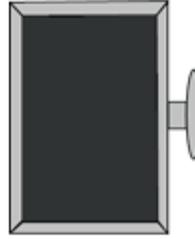
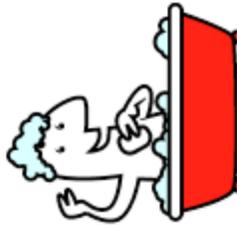
Then



First

Then



<p>work</p> 	<p>brush teeth</p> 	<p>doctor</p> 	<p>sports</p> 	<p>clean</p> 	<p>play</p> 	<p>therapy</p> 	<p>trains</p> 	<p>get dressed</p> 	<p>puzzle</p> 	<p>bathroom</p> 	<p>read</p> 	<p>eat</p> 	<p>listen to music</p> 	<p>game</p> 	<p>homework</p> 	<p>brush hair</p> 	<p>break time</p> 	<p>watch TV</p> 	<p>bath</p> 
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