

What is a first-then board?

- A first-then board is a visual tool that is based on the principle that a person's motivation to complete a less preferred (unwanted) activity is increased when it is followed by a more preferred activity.
- Using a first-then board will provide the child with a visual means of introducing new tasks, activities, or events in a manner that the child understands and may be more motivated to complete. This tool assists with creating a structured and predictable environment for children.

A first-then board may be used to:

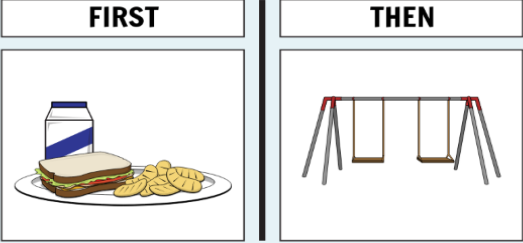
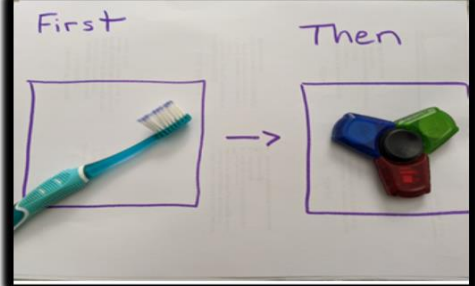
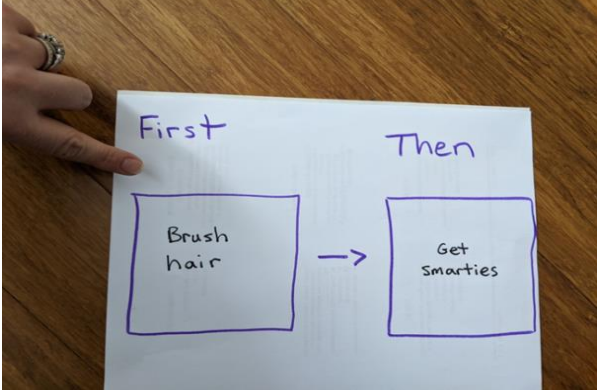

- increase independence
- provide predictable environments/activities
- clarify expectations while providing sequencing of events
- support transitions (activity to activity or between locations)
- reduce verbal information (prompts) provided to child
- increase motivation for completing an adult directed task/activity
- prepare the child for using a visual schedule.

How to use a first-then board:

1. Decide which activities/items your child is interested in. Involve your child in this process by providing choices of commonly enjoyed activities.
2. Ensure the task/activity the child is required to complete matches their ability. If your child can not complete the task independently, prepare to assist them in completing it.
3. Set your child up for success. When first introducing this strategy, your child may require assistance to learn and engage in the order of the tasks presented.
4. Present the task sequence on the first-then board. This can be done using a combination of pointing at the board while labelling/providing the instruction to your child. (e.g., "first brush hair, then smarties")
5. Provide immediate access to the child's chosen activity/item as soon as they complete the initial task.

***Note:** Do not allow access to the child's chosen activity if the child has not completed the first task/activity

Variations of first-then boards:

Pictures	Objects
	
Words	Technology
	

Tips/Troubleshooting:

- Ensure you have child's attention
- Avoid repeating verbal instruction
- Work towards increasing independence
- Keep the board visible at all times
- If behaviours occur, reassess your child's motivation

References:

- Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2007). *Applied behavior analysis. (2nd ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Lentini, R., Vaughn, B.J., & Fox, L. (2005). *Teaching tools for young children with challenging behavior*. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Early Intervention Positive.