Visual Supports for People with Autism: A Guide for Parents and Professionals (Topics in Autism)

Marlene J. Cohen, Donna L. Sloan

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(2008 IPPY Awards: Bronze Medalist, Education/Academic/Testing)

Most of us use visual supports in our daily lives--for example, a shopping list, calendar, or a roadmap. Visual supports are particularly beneficial to people with autism because they help make abstract concepts concrete and capitalize on the user's inherent visual learning strengths.

VISUAL SUPPORTS FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM shows parents and educators how incorporating these aids while teaching can improve academic performance, behavior, interaction with others, and self-help skills. In a friendly, conversational-style, the authors, both certified behavior analysts, describe the deficits typical of autism--language, memory, temporal sequential skills, attention, motivation, and social skills--and present strategies to use visual supports to address those issues at school and home.

This guide presents an abundance of examples, illustrated by dozens of black & white and color photos, including: activity schedules; calendars; charts; checklists; color coding; flip books; graphic organizers; mnemonics; nametags; photo boards; Power Cards; scripts; Social Stories; to-do lists; and video modeling.

VISUAL SUPPORTS also explains considerations such as portability, durability, preferences, age appropriateness, and effectiveness. While visual supports can enhance learning, they should, however, eventually be eliminated to avoid over-dependence on them. An entire chapter describes different ways to fade visual supports.

With this book, there's no limit to what can be taught, from fostering social interaction by using a graphic organizer of conversational talking points to learning to put away toys from video modeling. Most of the visual supports presented in this book are low-tech and easy-to-use, making it simple for parents and professionals to create their own, suited to the needs of their students. Inspiring success stories will further motivate parents and professionals to get started.

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