Tips for Success – Introducing visuals into your department or healthcare practice.

say less, show more

Hospital departments and healthcare settings are experienced with introducing new tools and policies into clinical practice and this can be useful when starting to use visuals. Some suggestions to assist clinical teams and managers:

- **Train a champion.** Health professionals typically have little experience using visuals so will need support as they learn how to use them. The trained champion can assist their colleagues. Speech pathologists and early intervention services, e.g. non–government agencies, can provide first hand experience in using visuals with children.

- **Involve carers who have experience with visuals for their children.** Many carers have seen the benefits of using visuals with their own children and can be powerful motivators for health professionals and healthcare services.

- **Start with these tools (e-learning module, visuals, tip sheets) and then develop your own according to your own local needs.** Using visuals can really improve how we communicate with children, especially those with a disability, and their carers. Generic visuals may be sufficient but some children or professionals prefer to feature their own location, clinicians or procedures.

- **Identify barriers.** These may include lack of familiarity by health professionals, perception that visuals take too much time or practical issues such as where to locate the visuals.

- **Identify enablers.** These include motivation to improve clinical care, health professionals who have used visuals in another role, local health/disability networks, local specialist disability health teams and access to internet/smart phones.

- **A team that wants to make a difference.** With some training, health professionals and other support staff can learn to use visuals. It's worth the effort to help children better understand what will happen when they go to hospital or see a doctor or dentist.

- **Ongoing evaluation and feedback.** As more health professionals include using visuals in their everyday practice, they will find ways which work best for them and the children and carers. Capture the feedback and incorporate into ongoing visual use.