

Now and Next Board

A free printable visual support for transitions

A Now and Next board shows a child what is happening now and what comes next — one step at a time. For many autistic children and children with additional needs, being able to see the next step (instead of only being told) reduces the anxiety around transitions and cuts down on repeated prompts.

How to use it

Choose the board that suits your child — Now & Next (two steps) or Now, Next & Then (three steps).

Print the activity cards on the last pages, cut them out, and laminate if you can. Add a small hook-and-loop (Velcro) dot to each card and each box so cards can be swapped.

Put the current activity in “Now” and the next one in “Next”. When “Now” is finished, move “Next” across and add a new card.

Keeep the language simple and consistent: “Now bath, next pyjamas.”

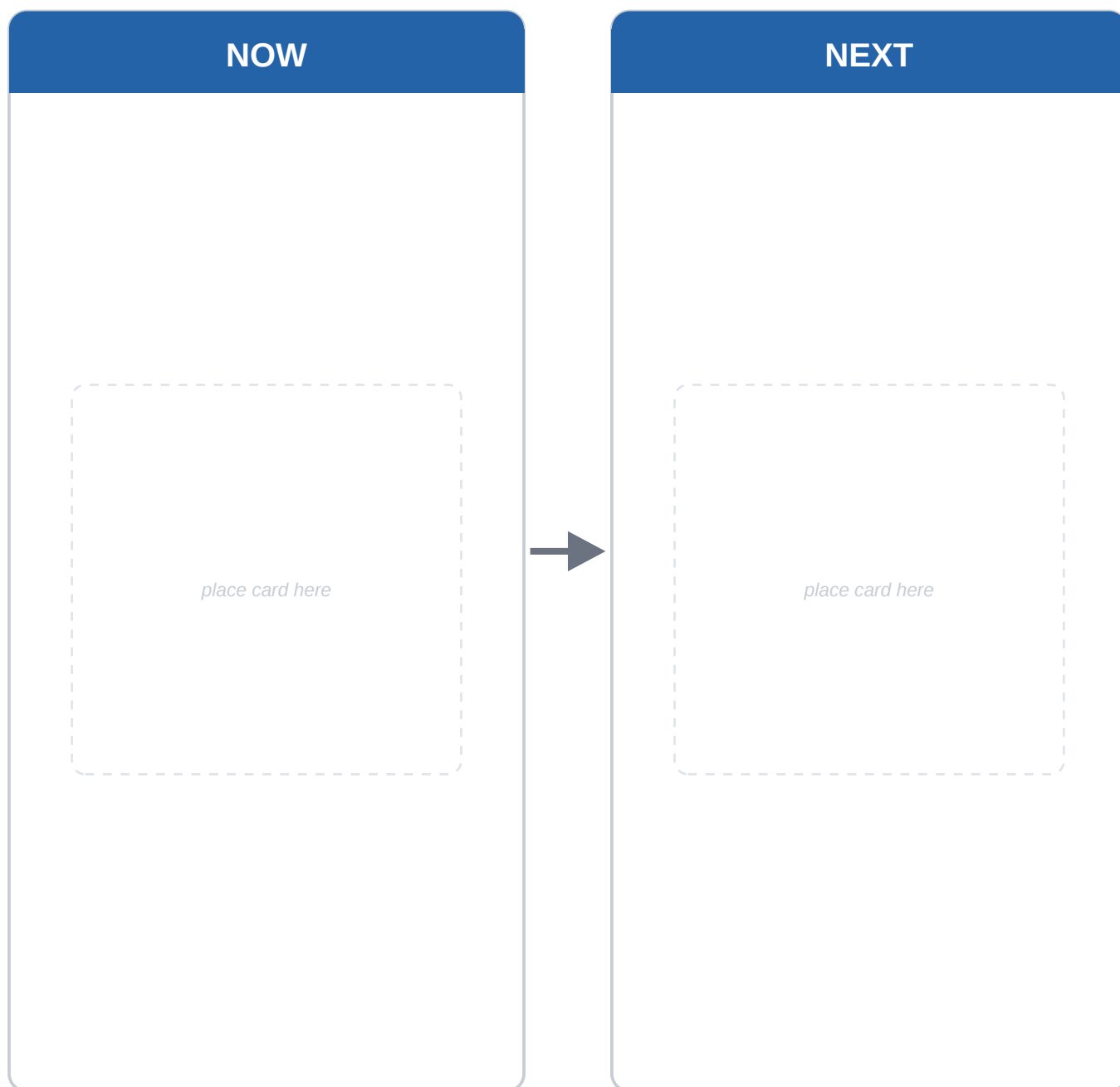
Start with a motivating “next” so the board feels positive, not just a list of demands.

Tip

The boxes are deliberately blank — write on them, use the cut-out cards, or add your own photos. There's a ready-made bedtime example on the next-but-one page.

Now and Next

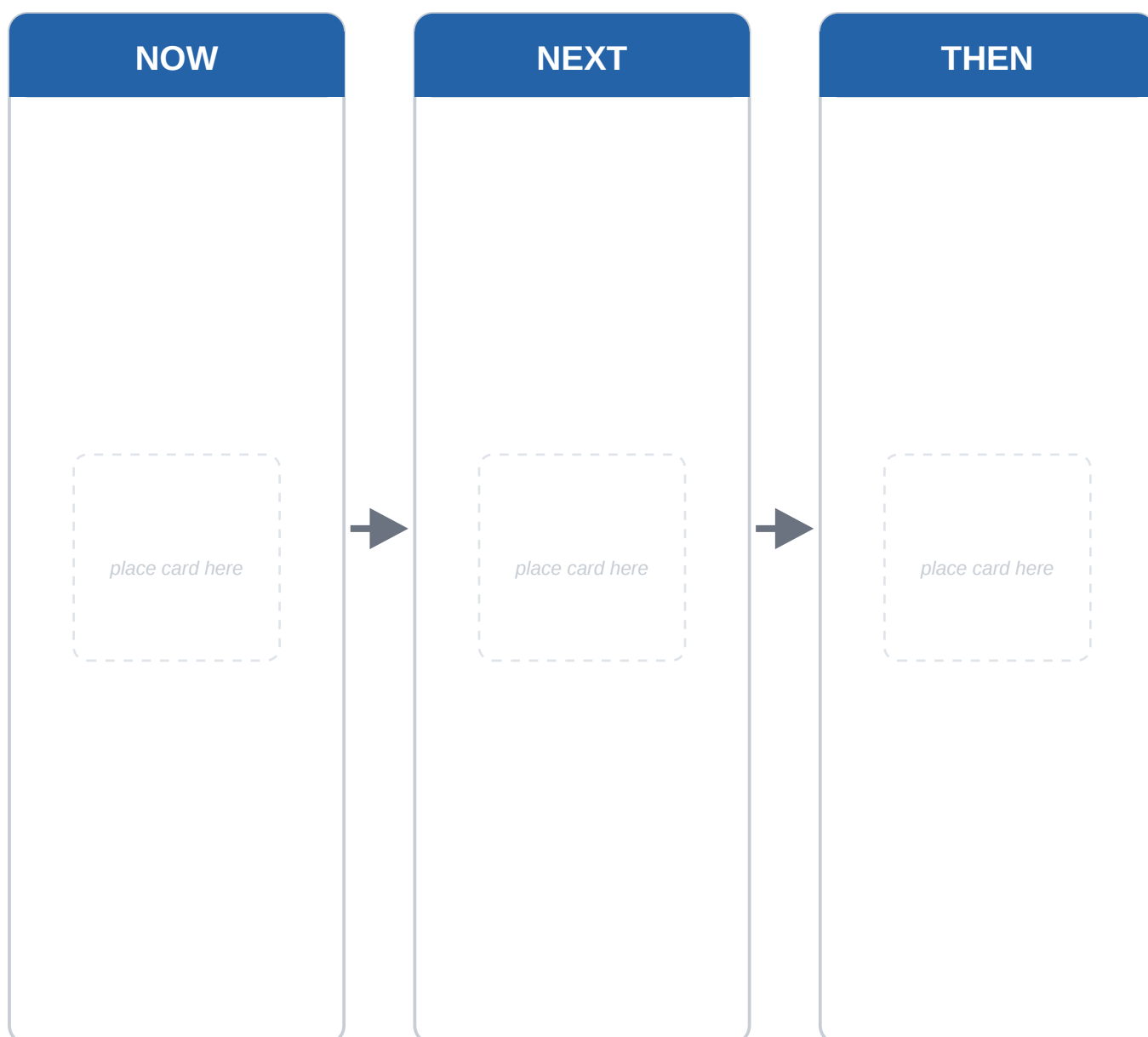
Two steps — what's happening now, and what comes next



Print the cards, cut out, and add a hook-and-loop (Velcro) dot to swap them in and out.

Now, Next and Then

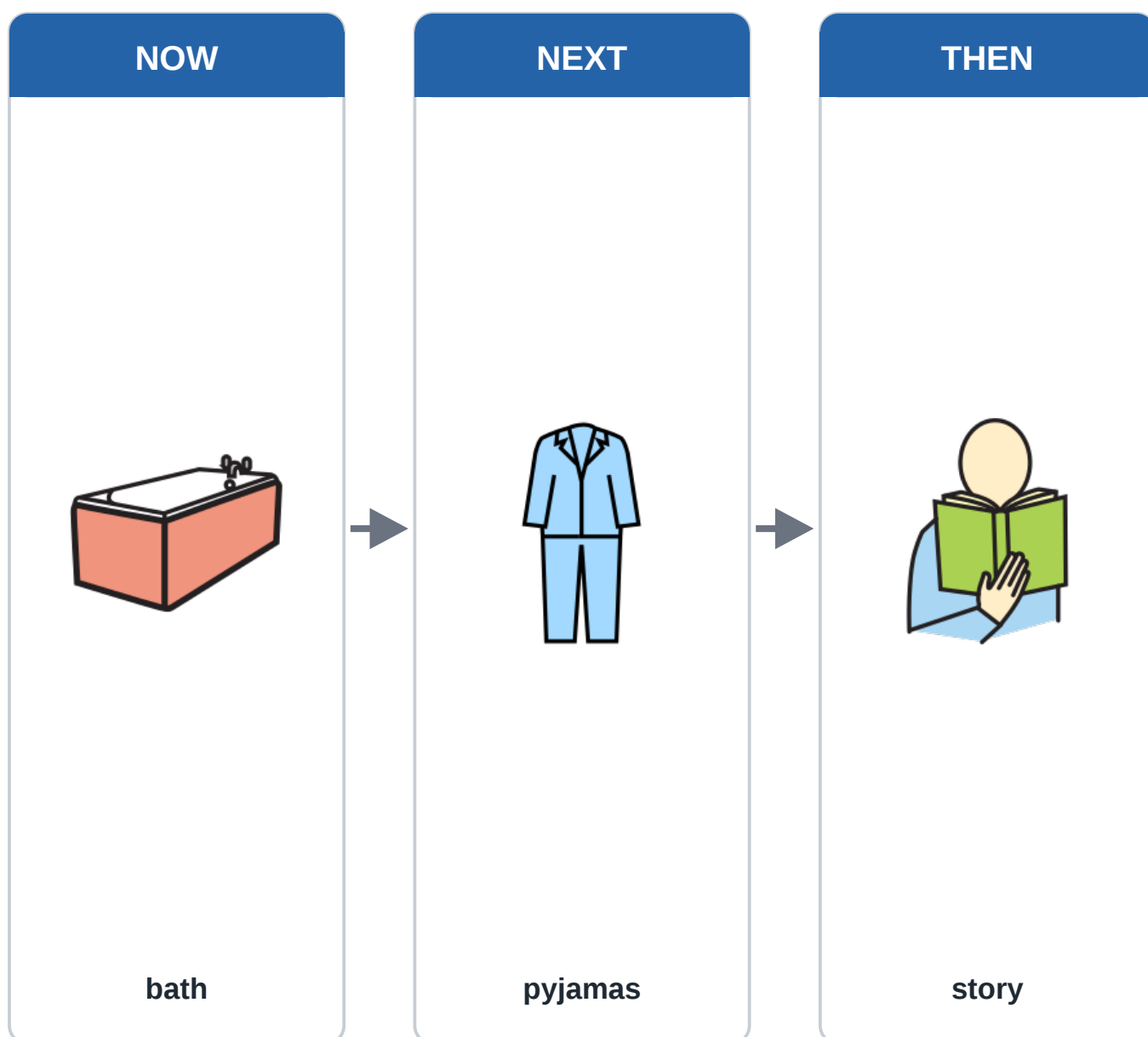
Three steps — for slightly longer sequences



Print the cards, cut out, and add a hook-and-loop (Velcro) dot to swap them in and out.

Bedtime — an example

Now, Next and Then, filled in for a bath-time routine



Print the cards, cut out, and add a hook-and-loop (Velcro) dot to swap them in and out.

What's inside this free printable

Everything you need to start using a simple visual routine at home, school or when you are out and about.

1

Blank Now & Next board

A simple two-step board for showing what is happening now and what comes next.

2

Blank Now, Next & Then board

A three-step board for slightly longer routines.

3

Ready-made routine example

Bath → Pyjamas → Story is already filled in to show how a routine can look.

4

100+ cut-out activity cards

Food, routines, school, play, places, people, feelings and more.

5

Extra routine ideas

Morning, leaving the house and school or homework examples are included on the next pages.

6

Make-your-own cards

Use the blank cards to add activities, people or places that are personal to your child.

Quick tip: Start with a short routine and keep the language consistent. For example: “Now get dressed, next breakfast.” When the first activity is finished, move the next card across.

Use the ready-made examples as ideas only. Change the order, wording or activities to suit your child.

Morning routine — example

A simple Now, Next & Then sequence to make the morning more predictable

NOW	NEXT	THEN
GET DRESSED	BREAKFAST	SCHOOL

Try it: Start with only two steps if three feels like too much. A Now & Next board can be easier for younger children or when a routine is difficult.

You can copy this sequence using the blank board and cut-out cards later in this pack, or make your own personalised version.

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Leaving the house — example

Break a transition into a few clear, visible steps

NOW	NEXT	THEN
SHOES	CAR	PARK

Try it: Replace “park” with the real destination — school, shops, dentist or another place. Showing the destination can make the transition easier to understand.

You can copy this sequence using the blank board and cut-out cards later in this pack, or make your own personalised version.

School or homework — example

Use a visual sequence to show that an activity has an end point

NOW	NEXT	THEN
WORK	SNACK	PLAY

Try it: Putting something positive in the final box can help make a difficult task feel more manageable. Keep the promised activity realistic and follow through where possible.

You can copy this sequence using the blank board and cut-out cards later in this pack, or make your own personalised version.

Make your own activity cards

Write, draw or stick on a photo for activities that are personal to your child.

MY ACTIVITY	MY ACTIVITY	MY ACTIVITY
MY ACTIVITY	MY ACTIVITY	MY ACTIVITY
MY ACTIVITY	MY ACTIVITY	MY ACTIVITY
MY ACTIVITY	MY ACTIVITY	MY ACTIVITY

Tip: You can draw a simple picture, write a word, or stick on a photo of a person, place or activity. Cut out the cards when you are ready to use them.

Print extra copies of this page if you need more custom cards.

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breakfast



lunch



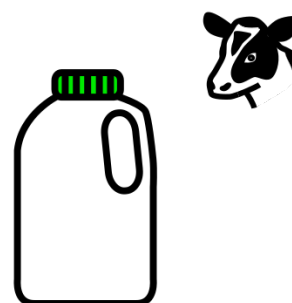
dinner



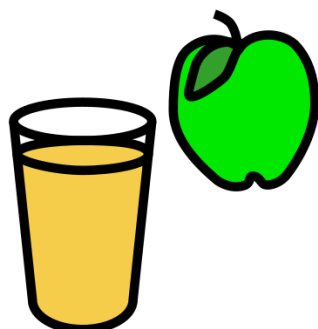
drink



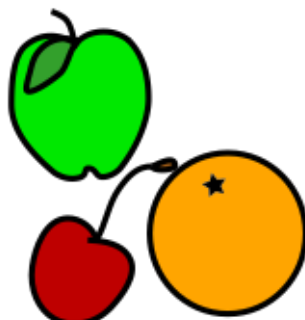
water



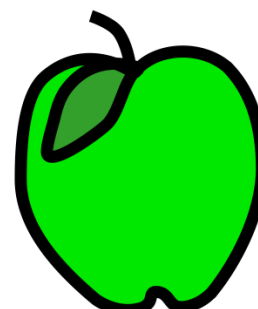
milk



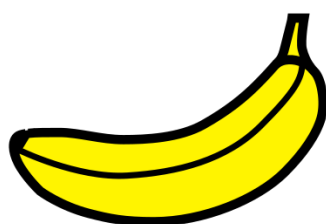
juice



fruit



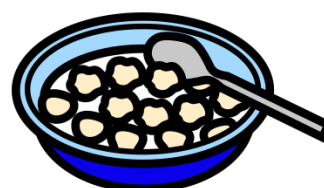
apple



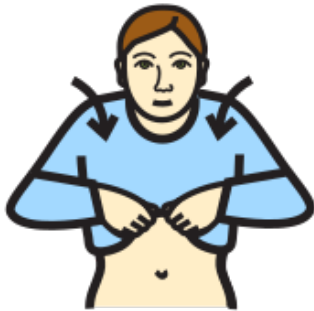
banana



toast



cereal



get dressed



brush teeth



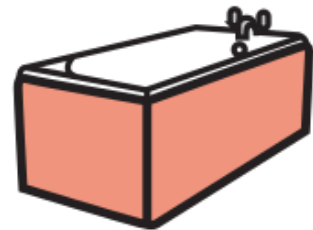
wash hands



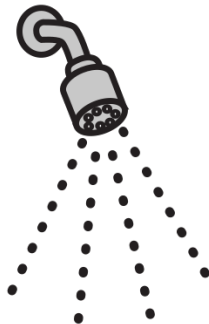
wash face



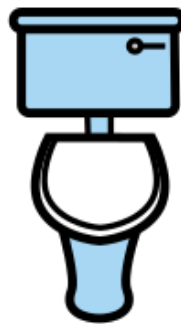
brush hair



bath



shower



toilet



potty



pyjamas



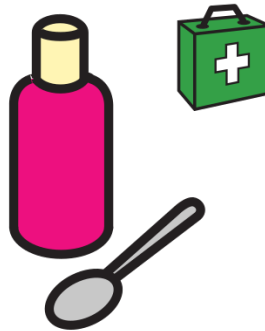
coat



shoes



socks



medicine



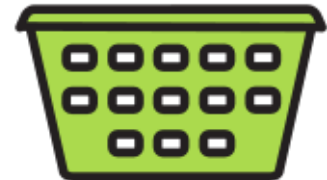
tidy up



make bed



wash up



laundry



hoover



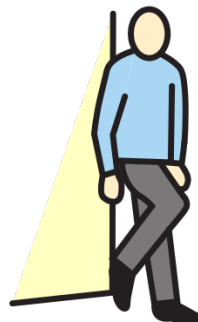
feed the dog



cooking



help



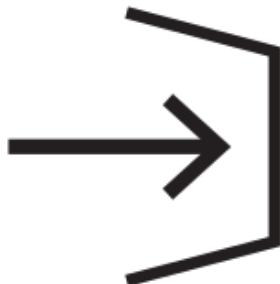
wait



sit down



stand up



finished



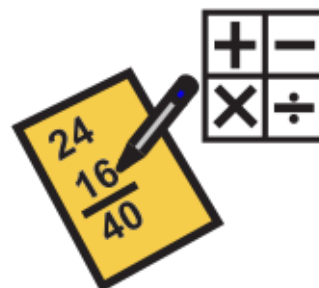
school



writing



reading



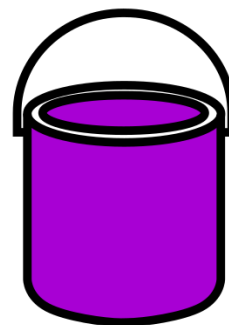
maths

1 2 3 4

counting



drawing



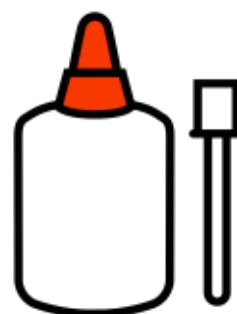
painting



colouring



cutting



glue



exercise



assembly



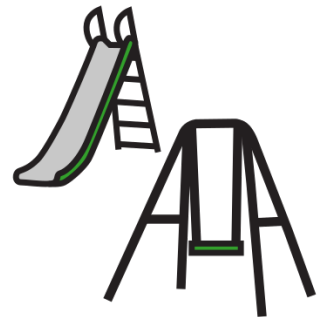
music



computer



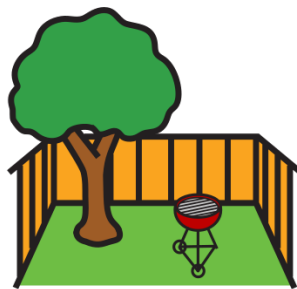
play



playground



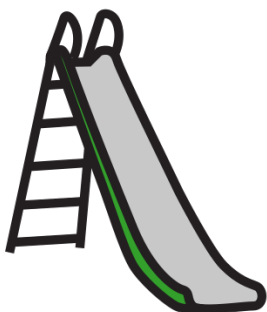
outside



garden



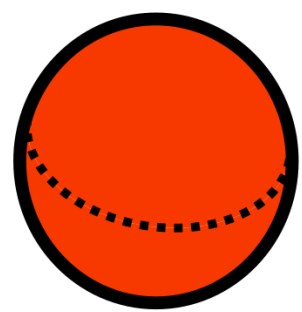
swing



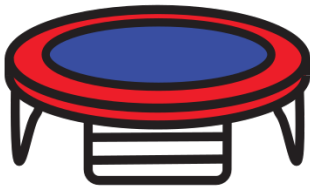
slide



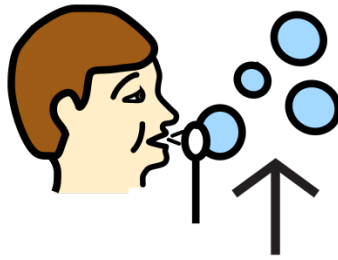
bike



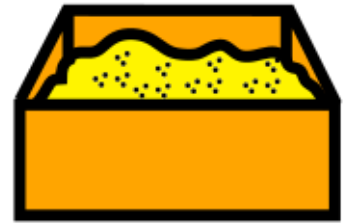
ball



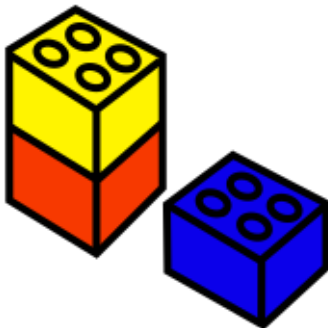
trampoline



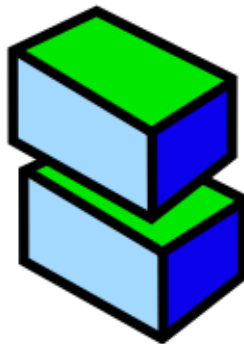
bubbles



sand pit



lego



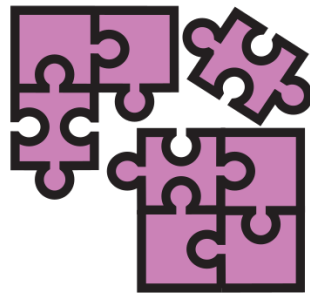
blocks



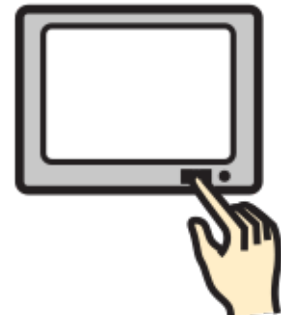
dancing



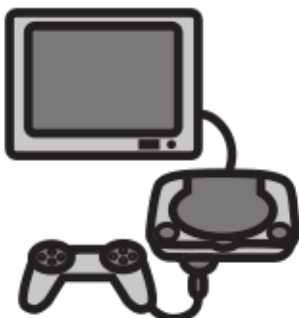
singing



puzzle



TV



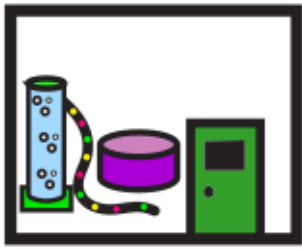
game



quiet



relax



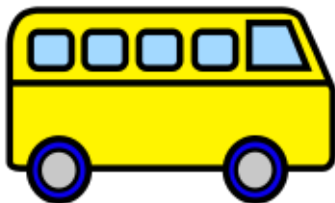
sensory room



hug



car



bus



train



walk



shop



swimming



cafe



doctor



dentist



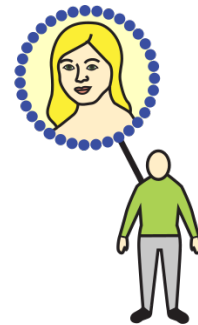
jump



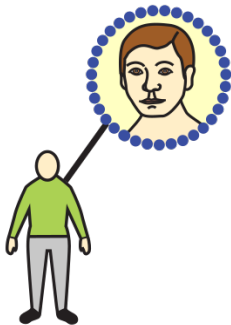
run



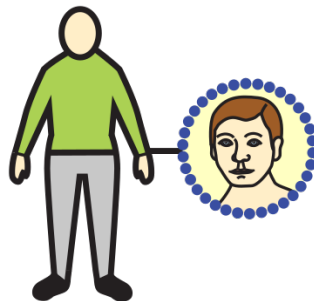
clap



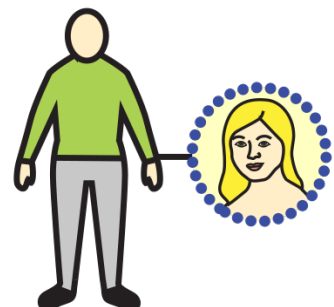
mum



dad



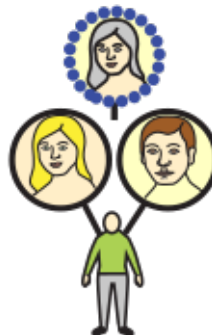
brother



sister



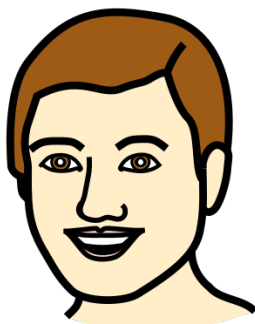
baby



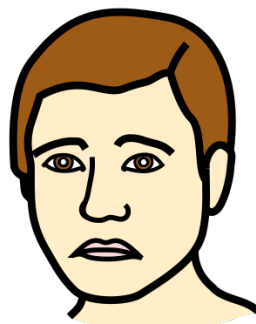
grandma



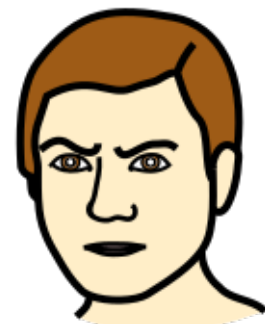
teacher



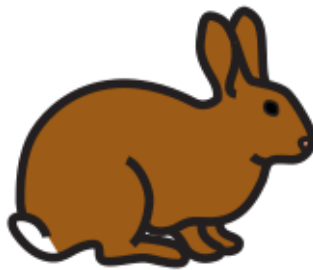
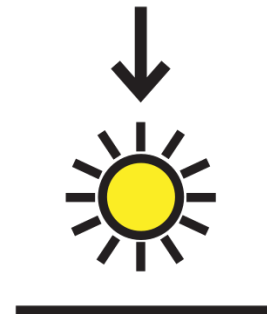
happy



sad



angry

**worried****tired****dog****cat****rabbit****fish****morning****night****today****bed****sleep**