

The title of the e-book, 'School holiday support: Visual daily planners', is centered in white text. It is framed by two large, black, L-shaped corner brackets, one in the top-left and one in the bottom-right. The background is a warm, orange-toned image of a child's hands and arms raised in a gesture of excitement or joy.

## School holiday support: Visual daily planners

“

*An e-Book for parents and carers who are looking for ideas to keep children, especially neurodivergent children, in a routine during the school holidays.*

# Contents

Why is routine important for children?.....	<b>3</b>
What are visual daily planners?.....	<b>4</b>
Examples.....	<b>5</b>
Benefits of daily planners.....	<b>6</b>
Tips for implementation.....	<b>10</b>
Contact us.....	<b>11</b>

# Why is routine important for children?

Having a consistent and predictable home environment helps children feel safe, secure, and cared for. Routine promotes wellbeing, and a positive, trusting relationship with a parent / carer.

When a child knows when they will eat, sleep, play, and learn, they can focus on the best parts of childhood - having fun, building positive relationships, understanding the world, and developing new skills. Having a structure and sense of purpose in their day builds trust with their parent or carer, and lets a child know that their parent is thinking about how best to meet their needs, and making them feel like a valuable part of home life.

Routine can also reduce challenging behaviour. Children often exhibit challenging behaviour or make poor choices when they are tired, hungry, or under / overstimulated. Establishing a daily routine helps a children prepare for the next task and know what is expected of them.

## Did you know?

For a neurodivergent child, the world can feel noisy, unpredictable, and overwhelming. Having a daily routine can reduce anxiety and uncertainty, and ease the transition from school (a very structured environment) to home.

# What are visual daily planners?

A visual daily planner helps a family organise their day, and sets a schedule for daily activities - such as mealtimes, naps, care routines (i.e. brushing teeth and baths), play, physical activity, etc. Special occasions, holidays, playdates, and outings can also be added to the daily planners, but children should know about these ahead of time so they can prepare, feel included in the planning, and be able to ask questions and be reassured about how it will affect their daily routine.

It is a good idea to make the planner interactive so children are included and it's fun for them. You might want to make peel and stick tiles with different tasks on for children to place next to times on their planner. This might be a good task to do before bed so children know exactly what is happening the next day and go to bed feeling calm. You could also make it a checklist so children can tick off each task and feel a sense of accomplishment every day.



# Examples

KATE'S DAY ROUTINE							DONE	
Morning	Wake up	Go Potty	Make bed	Exercise	Get dressed	Breakfast	Brush teeth	
	Brush hair	Pack backpack	Get coat	Get in car	Play outside	Get in car		
Afternoon	Lunch	Play time	Read book	Go Potty	Nap time	Screen time	Snack	
	Active game	Care for pet	Play outside	Talk with Grandparents	Hug and Kiss			
Evening	Dinner	Family time	Quiet game	Pick up toys	Bath time	Brush teeth	Change diaper	
	Pajamas	Read book	Lights out					

**Today's Activities**

TODAY IS **Tuesday** WEATHER TODAY sunny

**MORNING**

shower get dressed coat on shoes on

**AFTERNOON / EVENING**

homework dinner story time

home circle time

**Morning AM** **Evening PM**

wake up dinner

brush teeth quiet time/study

wash face video games

brush hair playing toys

get dressed behavior check

breakfast bath

shoes on sleep

taking out the trash

video beach vacuum the house car

# Benefits of daily planners

## **Enhanced understanding of routine:**

Visual planners help children understand and anticipate daily routines, providing a sense of security and reducing anxiety.

They offer a clear, structured outline of the day, which is especially beneficial for children who thrive on routine and consistency.

## **Improved communication:**

Visual aids can bridge communication gaps, particularly for children who have difficulty with verbal communication.

Children can independently refer to the planner, reducing their reliance on adults for instructions and reminders.

## **Cognitive and social development:**

Repeated exposure to daily routines through visual planners strengthens memory retention.

Visual schedules can include social activities, helping children understand and prepare for social interactions.

# Benefits of daily planners

## Support for executive functioning:

Visual planners help in breaking down tasks into manageable steps, making it easier for children to complete activities.

They assist children in understanding the concept of time and sequencing, fostering better time management skills.

You can remove / wipe off each task or activity as it is completed, which helps manage expectations and break down what can seem like a long, or perhaps overly busy, day.

## Behavioural benefits:

Knowing what to expect next can significantly decrease frustration and meltdowns caused by unexpected changes. Planners can include reward systems, encouraging positive behaviour through visual reinforcement.



# Benefits of daily planners

## **Enhanced learning:**

Many neurodivergent children are strong visual learners; planners cater to this strength by presenting information in an easily digestible format.

Visuals help in the clear presentation of abstract concepts, making learning more accessible and understandable.

## **Emotional regulation:**

Visual planners can include strategies for self-regulation, helping children manage their emotions throughout the day.

A child might have the option to stick in a picture or clue card for when and where they might need a break, possibly adding it in during the day when they feel overwhelmed.

Clear expectations and structured routines help in reducing overall stress and anxiety.

### **Remember**

Establishing a routine takes time and patience so at first, the daily planner may seem like another chore - over time though, using the planner will become a habit and hopefully, a fun activity with your child that you both look forward to.

# Benefits of daily planners

## **Parental and caregiver support:**

Visual planners ensure consistency in routines across different environments (home, school, grandma's house, etc.), which is crucial for neurodivergent children.

Parents can ensure that a child always asking for snacks or screen time, for example, has a clear guide as to when these will be permitted.

In hot weather, you might want to put several pictures of a water bottle that the child can move to a positive points / achieved area when they have had a drink. This will encourage them and remind them to have that much needed hydration top up.

## **Customisation and flexibility:**

Planners can be customized to suit individual needs, preferences, and developmental levels.

They can be easily adjusted to incorporate changes in routine, helping children adapt to new situations.

# Tips for implementation

- Use clear and simple images and ensure that images and symbols are easily recognisable
- Use themes and characters that the child likes to increase engagement. Ensure plenty of tasks on the timetable allow them to make choices and changes. Giving them control increase self-worth and decision-making skills.
- Allow the child to participate in creating the planner, fostering a sense of ownership. It can be a first day activity, and gives families an opportunity to be creative in art, craft, and design.
- Regularly review and update the planner to keep it relevant and effective
- Visual daily planners can be a powerful tool in fostering independence, enhancing learning, and improving the overall well-being of young and neurodivergent children
- Always remember - it is a tool to support, and not a set of rules and rigid plans that overwhelm you or the child

If you enjoyed this e-Book and would like to find more advice and guidance for parents and carers on keeping children busy and active during the school holidays, you might be interested in our Short Courses on:

- Outdoor play
- I made a unicorn
- A magical place to learn
- Creating a home learning environment
- Forest Schools and outdoor learning
- Play is fun-damental to learning and development

Find out more here:

[www.lasershortcourses.co.uk/courseList.php](http://www.lasershortcourses.co.uk/courseList.php)

**Contact us** for more information:

[www.laserlearning.co.uk](http://www.laserlearning.co.uk)

[www.lasershortcourses.co.uk](http://www.lasershortcourses.co.uk)