

The Power of Visuals

during Circle Time





The Purpose of Circle Time

Circle time fosters children's **social**, **emotional**, and **cognitive development** through interactive group activities. It builds a sense of community and belonging, supports turn-taking, active listening and emotional literacy while promoting inclusive peer interactions.

Through songs, stories and discussions, children strengthen early literacy and language skills while developing self-regulation and readiness for school routines.





Why use Visuals at Circle Time?

Visual supports provide **structure** and **clarity**, making expectations visible for **all children**, not just those with additional needs.

They promote **independence**, reduce anxiety and smooth transitions between circle time activities.

Visuals help children understand abstract concepts by making them **concrete** and **accessible**, boosting comprehension and learning outcomes.





How Visuals Benefit All Children

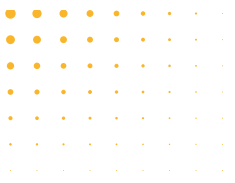
Visuals support **understanding** for English language learners, children with communication difficulties and typically developing peers.

Visuals enable children to **follow routines** with minimal adult prompting.

Visuals increase **engagement** and **participation** while reducing disruptive behaviors.

Overall, visuals promote **inclusion** by providing universal design for learning support in diverse classrooms.





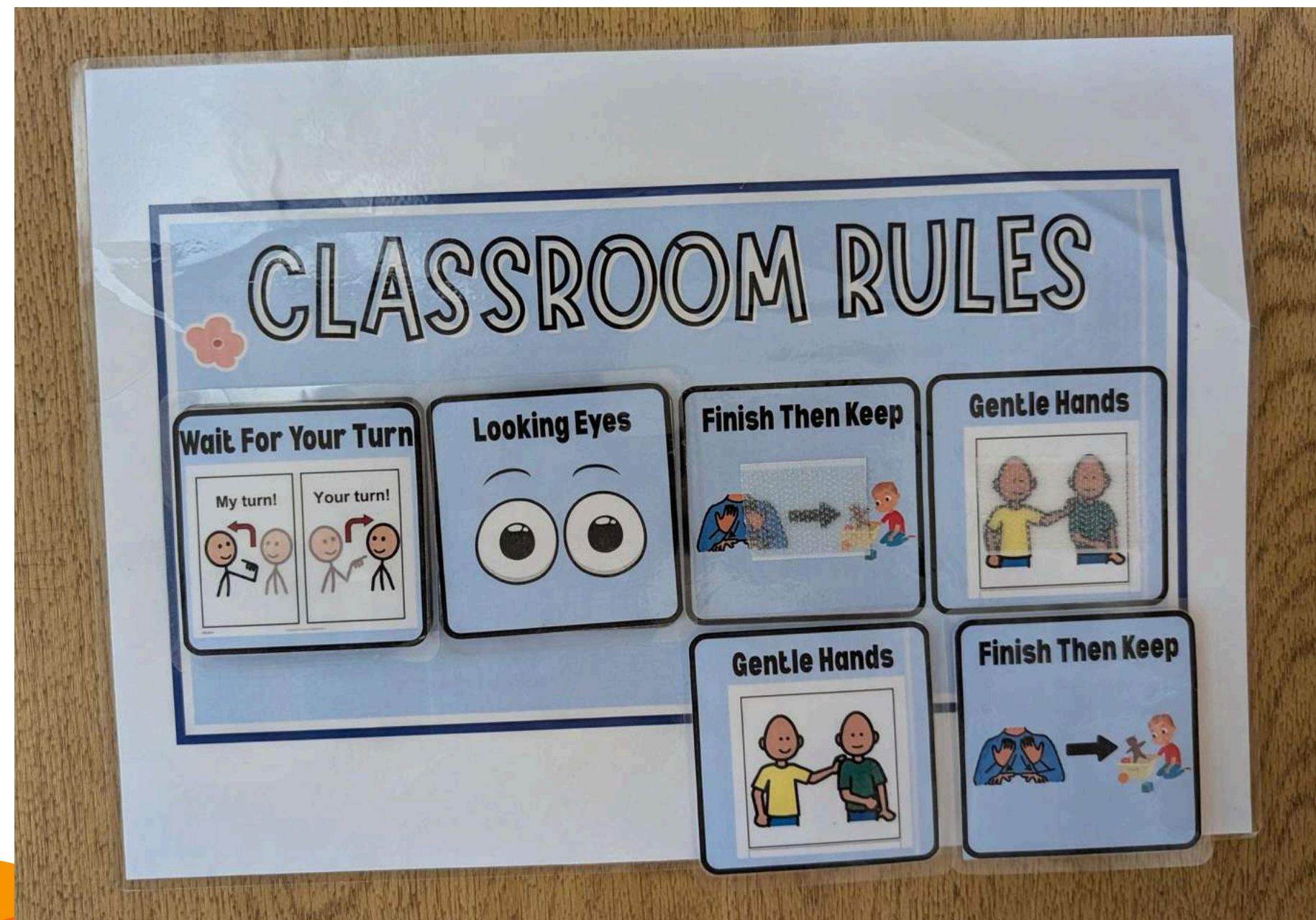
Ideas of Types of Visuals for Circle Time





Rules Poster

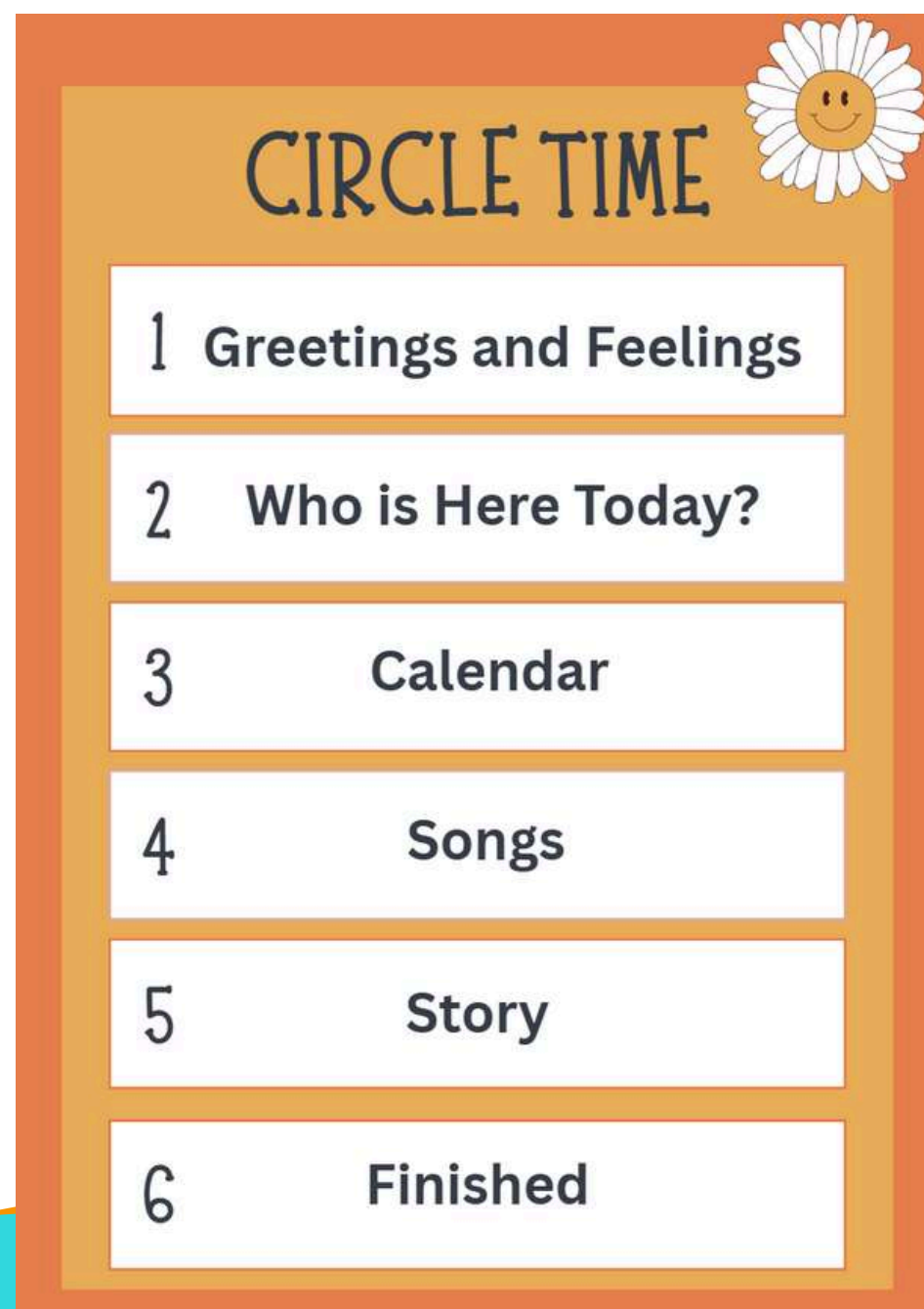
Simple visuals representing circle time rules
(e.g. listening ears, quiet mouth, hands in lap).

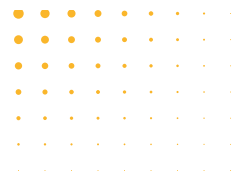




Visual Schedules

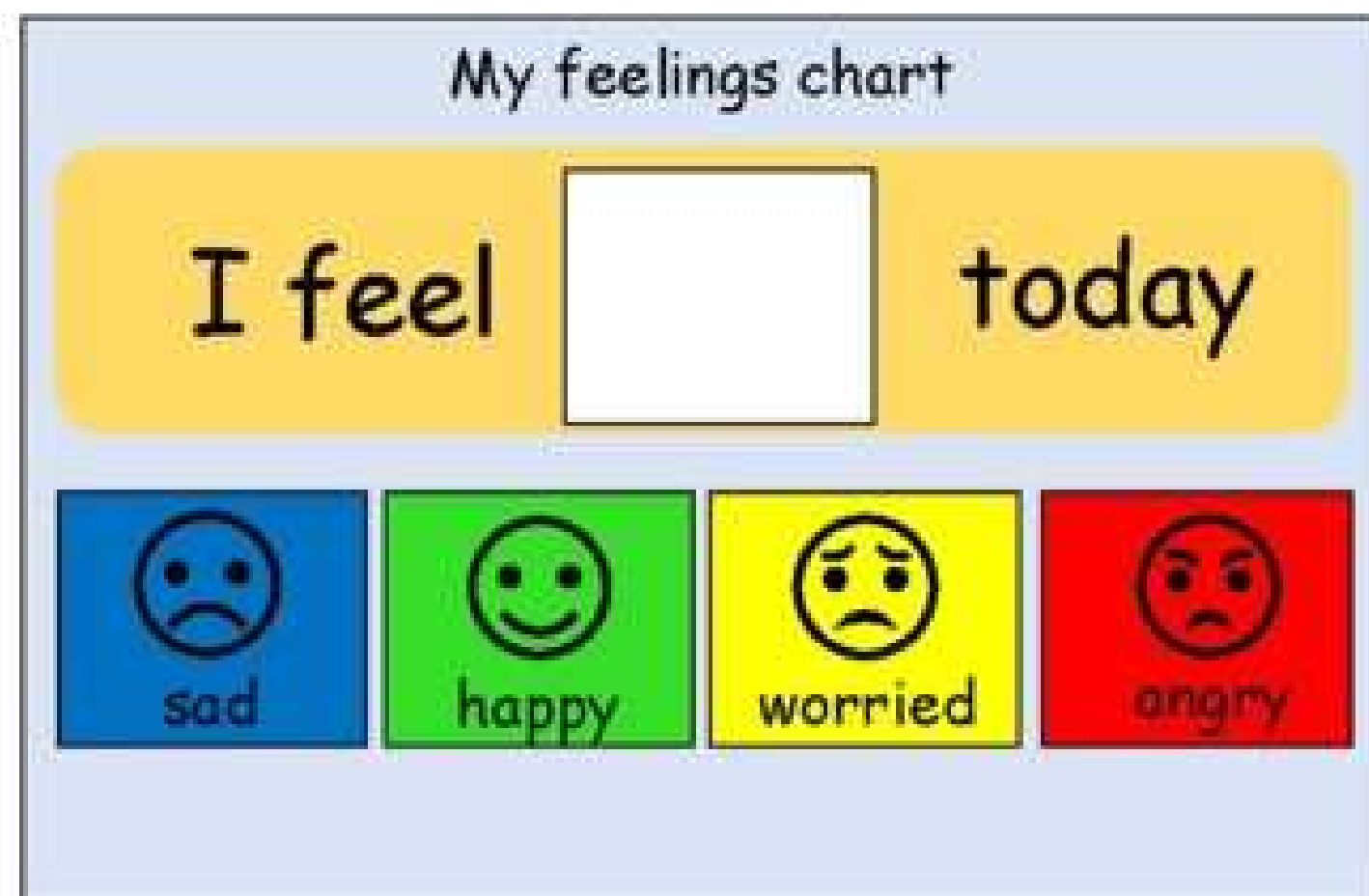
Picture boards showing the sequence of circle time activities / songs to be sung.





Feelings Chart

Visual display faces showing various feelings for children to point to during check-ins.



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Image from: <https://ecdn.teacherspayteachers.com/thumbitem/My-Feelings-Chart-and-Matching-6510649-1638975927/original-6510649-1.jpg>



Who is Here Today? Attendance Visuals

Velcro name/photo cards so that children can state their / their classmates' attendance.

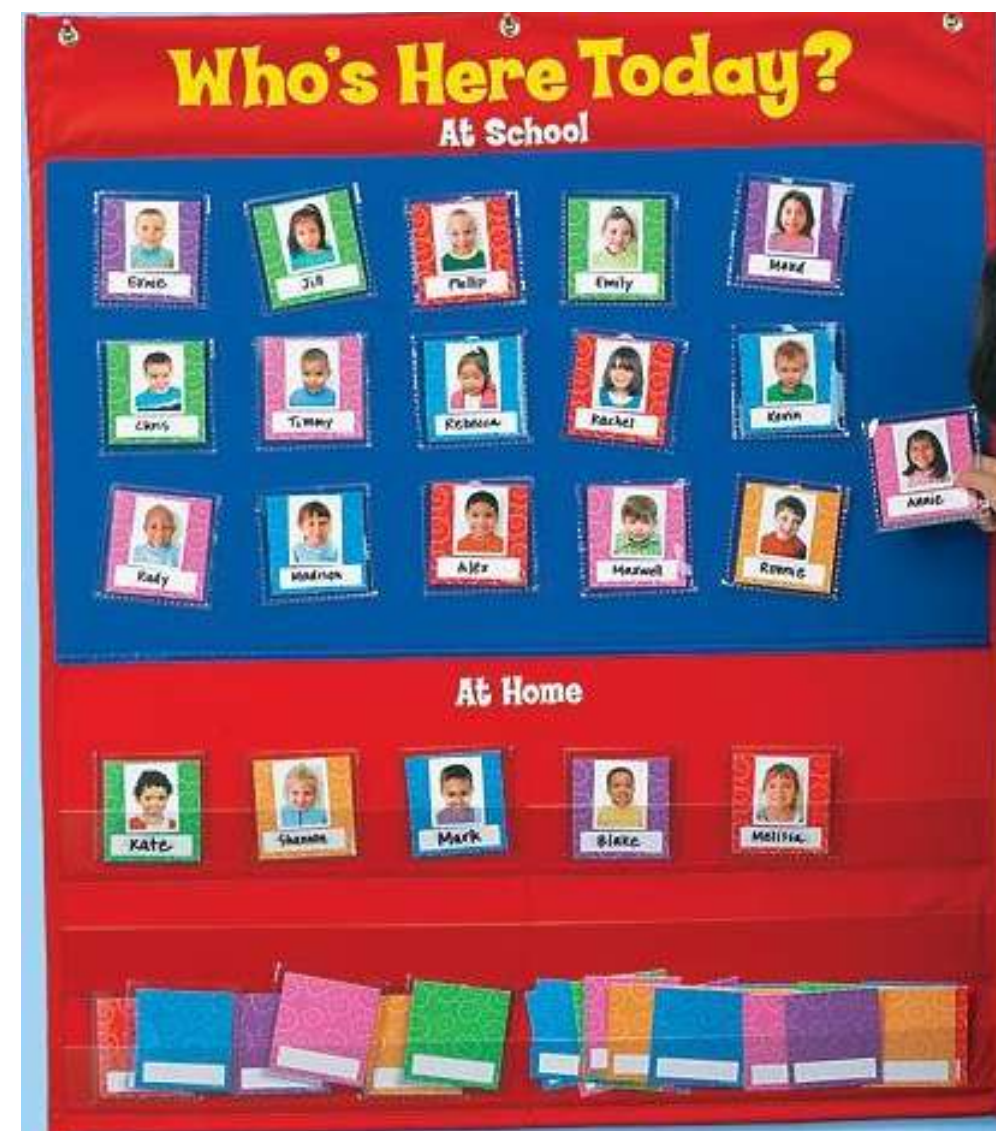
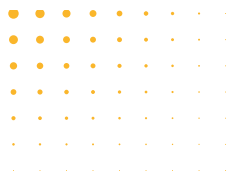
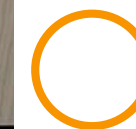
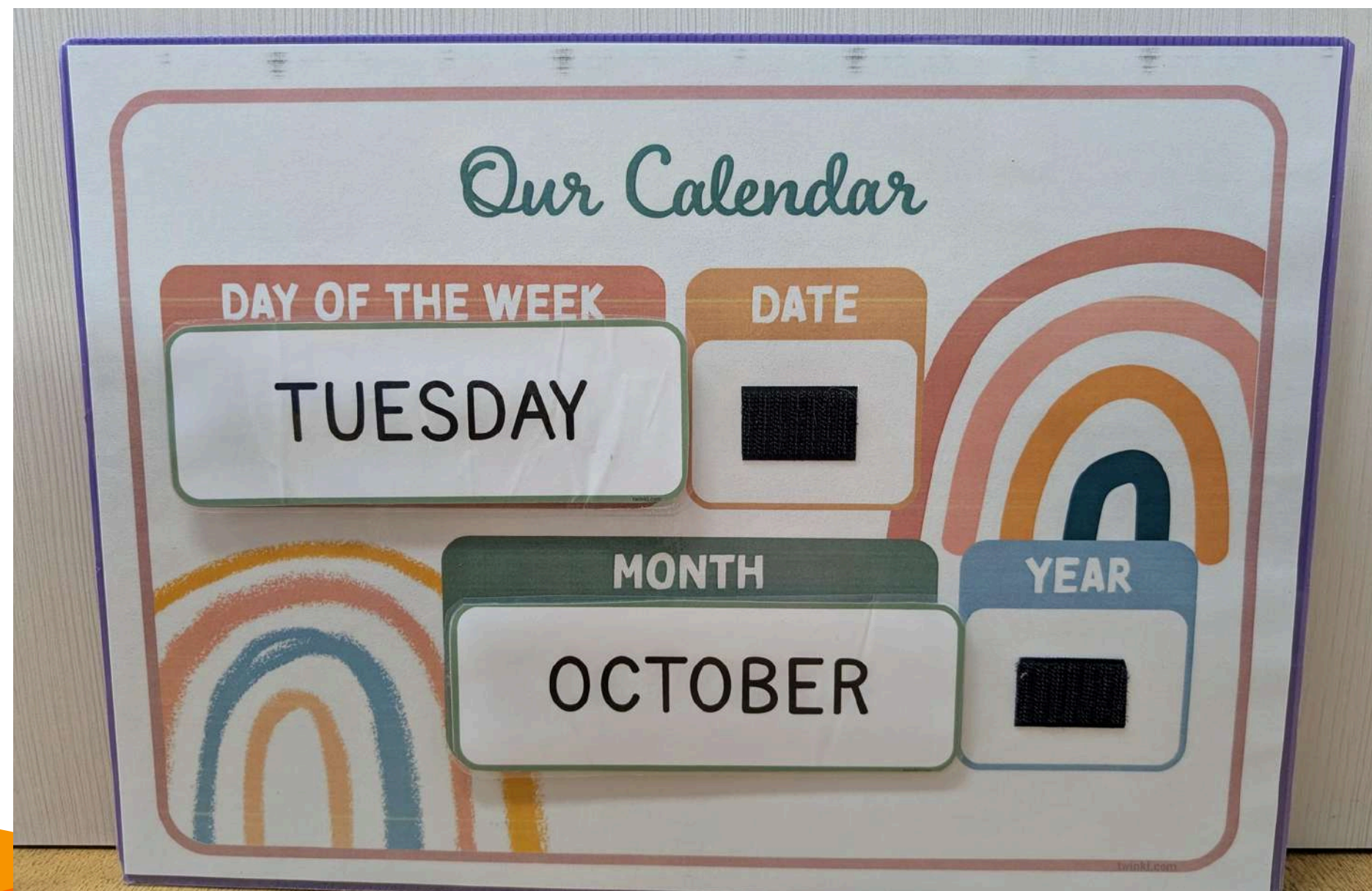


Image from:
<https://i.pinimg.com/736x/f3/77/f4/f377f463dac9ad17aba6e03adee351eb.jpg>



Calendar

Visuals for the day today e.g. the day of the week, the date, month and year.





Turn-Taking Charts and Choice Boards

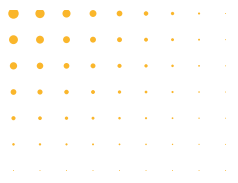
Picture boards showing the visual choices of circle time songs and to ensure everyone has a turn to choose a song.



Song/Movement Cards

Laminated cards with pictures or symbols for each circle time song or action rhyme.

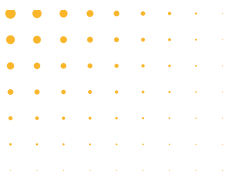




Interactive Storybooks


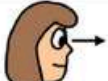















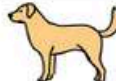




To encourage **participation**, story components can be laminated and given to each child. The children can take turns to come up and **paste the correct Velcro animal/story component** on the Velcro book at its correct page in the book.





Story Communication Boards

Laminated **visual charts** with pictures or symbols of the main story components to encourage responding e.g. "I see a brown bear."

 I	 see	a	 red	 purple	 bear
		 children	 orange / gold	 white	 bird
		 teacher	 yellow	 black	 duck
			 green	 cat	 horse
			 blue	 dog	 frog
			 brown	 sheep	 fish





Tips for Effective Use of Visuals

Place visuals at children's **eye level** and **refer to them** consistently.

Use real photos or familiar icons to increase relevance and comprehension.

Involve children in managing and updating visuals to promote ownership and engagement.





Evidence and References

Rönnerman, K., & Nordberg, A. (2024). Circle time in preschool as a practice for developing language support between teachers and children using the structured ELSA model. Educational Action Research, 1–16.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2024.2421959>

Northwest Center IMPACT™: “Visual Supports to Set Up Your Early Learning Classroom” (2024). Benefits and strategies for classroom visuals.

Vanderbilt IRIS Center: Importance of purposeful use of visual supports for all learners, with practical implementation ideas (2025).

NCSE, Ireland: “Using Visuals to Support Communication” – visuals as aids for independence, expression, and inclusion (2021).

CST Academy: “The Benefits of Circle Time for Children at CST Academy” – emphasizes using visuals to increase participation and engagement (2025).

DoubleCare ABA: Visual supports as memory aids and for non-verbal communication, especially effective for children with autism (2025).

The Wolf School: Visual supports help all children by making routines clear and reducing anxiety (2025).

IRIS Center and NWC Kids: Visuals facilitate skill acquisition, routine understanding, and vocabulary development for all children.

