

# How the Children's OT Team Can Improve Their Website on Visual Supports

## 1. Start with a clear, parent-friendly explanation

Families often hear “use visuals” without understanding what that means. Suggest adding:

- A simple definition of visual supports
- Why visuals help children with sensory, communication, or processing differences
- Examples of everyday situations where visuals reduce anxiety and increase independence

This grounds the page in real-life relevance.

## 2. Organise content by key topics families search for

Recommend structuring the page around the most common OT areas, such as:

- Self-care routines (toileting, dressing, brushing teeth)
- Emotional regulation
- Transitions (home → school, activity → activity)
- Sensory strategies
- School readiness
- Community participation (haircuts, medical appointments, shopping)

Each topic can have a short explanation plus downloadable visuals.

## 3. Provide ready-made, downloadable visual resources

Families value resources they can use immediately. Suggest including:

- First-Then boards
- Visual schedules
- Step-by-step sequences
- Choice boards
- Calm-down menus
- Social stories (non-copyrighted or locally created)

These should be printable, simple, and adaptable.

#### 4. Use warm, accessible design

This is where your expertise shines. Recommend:

- High-contrast, uncluttered layouts
- Clear icons or photos
- Consistent colour coding
- Minimal text
- Options for symbol-only, text-only, and mixed formats
- A4 printable versions

This ensures the site works for families with different needs.

#### 5. Include guidance on how to introduce and use visuals

Visuals only work when families know how to embed them.

Suggest adding:

- Tips for introducing visuals gradually
- How to model and reinforce their use
- How to personalise visuals for the child
- Common pitfalls (e.g., too many steps, inconsistent use)

This turns the page from “resources” into “practical support”.

👉 6. Add a section on collaboration with school and home

Families often struggle with consistency across settings.

Recommend:

- Encouraging shared visuals between home, school, and short breaks
- Templates that professionals can adapt
- Examples of how visuals support EHCP outcomes

This aligns with your wider goal of strengthening partnership working.

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7. Offer digital-friendly versions

Many families use phones more than printers. Suggest:

- Phone-friendly schedules
- Visuals that can be saved as images
- Links to trusted free apps for visual timetables

This increases accessibility for families with limited resources.

8. Include lived-experience insights

You can gently encourage them to include:

- Quotes from parent carers
- Real examples of how visuals helped a child

- Short videos demonstrating use (if appropriate)

This makes the content relatable and human.

## 9. Provide signposting to further support

Recommend linking to:

- National charities (e.g., CBF, NAS)
- Local SENDIASS
- Early Help
- Sensory processing resources
- OT referral pathways

This helps families navigate next steps.

