

Make a Comic Strip Schedule

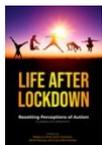
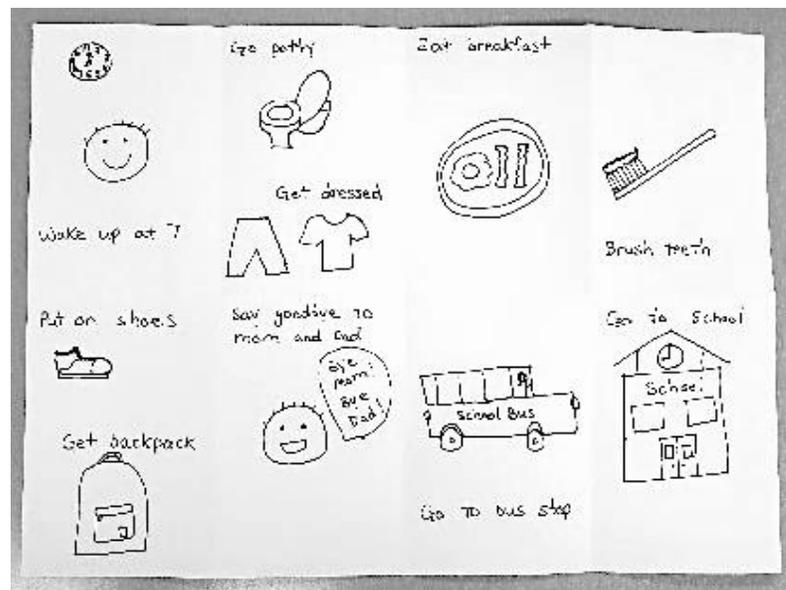
Excerpt from *A Successful Transition to and from School* by Jennifer Cork

Parents, making a schedule of things your child needs to do each morning to get ready for school is a common and effective strategy. Routines not only outline expectations, they are also a source of calming for many people on the autism spectrum. A few weeks before school starts, sit down with your child and make a list of everything they will need to do each morning to be ready for school.

After you have your schedule completed, hang it up where you and your child will see it and then start practicing. You may want to add deadlines for each item to help stay on track. You may want to add a reward at the end that your child can earn. As your child practices their schedule, you may notice that some things need adjusting. Practicing a few weeks before school starts will help you find things that need changing ahead of time so when the big day comes, you will be ready to go.

Remember that this is your child's schedule, so let them help you personalize it. It can be handwritten on paper, written on a whiteboard that can be erased, or printed out on a piece of paper from a document on your computer. The schedule can include pictures that are copied from search engines online, your or your child's own drawings, or just writing alone. The schedule can be as simple or as complex as it needs to be. Examples of visual schedules are available online, so if you need ideas, just type "visual schedule" in a search engine. If your child works with an occupational or behavioral therapist, check in with them to get suggestions or help in completing the schedule.

When working with kids in my office, I like to fold a piece of paper in half three times so that it makes eight rectangles on the page, then I draw a stick figure comic strip to illustrate their morning schedules. This type of schedule is pretty simple, but it can help anxious children rehearse what the morning will bring. You don't have to be a gifted artist to make this type of schedule, so don't worry if you can only draw stick figures.



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