

Types of Calendar Systems

Anticipation Calendars

Anticipation Calendars are beginning calendar systems, used to teach concepts surrounding activities in the immediate future or immediate past. Typically an anticipation calendar uses baskets/boxes (typically lined up from left to right, but can be top to bottom as well), containing objects that serve as a direct representation of an activity. It is recommended that you select objects that the student can best understand and are used in the activity (for example using a spoon to indicate "time to eat"). When this is not possible, then it may be necessary to develop partial object cues (i.e. piece of rope/chain to indicate "swing"). The relationship may not be clear at first, but when presented together over time the student learns the correlation. It is recommended that you select activities that are reinforcing for the student and/or occur routinely and you start out with one or two objects. You would gradually increase the number, but have no more baskets than what can be grasped within the student's arm reach. As the student learns the routine you would want to place the object on an object symbol card. The written/brailled word can also be placed on the card for two reasons:

- To ensure staff consistency in what is said.
- To begin to expose the student to abstract symbols.

A finished basket (that looks and feels different than the others) is placed at the end, and the object/object symbol is placed in the finished basket when the activity is completed. Touch cues, actions, and vocal cues can be used to provide additional information to the student to facilitate their understanding.

How do I know if my student is ready for an anticipation calendar system?

➤ **Primary Considerations:**

- Recognizes some of the people, locations, sounds, scents and actions associated with a couple of familiar activities.
- Acts appropriately with one or two objects when engaged in a familiar routine.
- Anticipates the onset of a routine based on cues (based on memory).
- Anticipates a few steps while doing a familiar routine.
- Understands the routine is finished.

➤ **Secondary Considerations:**

- Demonstrates early stage of building representation.

- Demonstrates a lack of organized means to request a preferred activity, or to reject non-preferred activities.
- Needs maximum support in attending to things outside of their body.
- Engages in brief interactions with others.
- Distinguishes between a few caregivers.

What particular skill(s) might I address in an IEP goal for a student using an anticipation calendar system?

- Comprehends signals (i.e. objects, vocalization, and touch cues).
- Requests or reject interactions, people, or objects.
- Develops the skill of anticipation.
- Acts on objects.
- Establishes topics for interaction.
- Maintains joint attention.
- Takes a turn in an interaction by acting on objects.
- Develops a trust/bonding relationship.



Daily Calendars

Daily calendars are used to teach concepts for several activities that occur in the expanded future, in the sequence of which they occur. There are a wide variety of daily calendar systems, which should be designed to match the students learning style as well as the setting they are in. Objects/parts of objects, pictures, or tactual symbols are used to represent activities. Typically, the symbols selected are more abstract than those used for the anticipation calendar. If the student uses speech or sign language, be careful in selecting the vocabulary you use with the student, ensuring the same vocabulary is used all the time (or it will be too confusing for the student). Movement to a daily calendar system should not be considered until you are sure the student fully understands and has learned all they can from their anticipation calendar.

How do I know if my student is ready for a weekly calendar system?

- Recognizes some of the people, locations, sounds, scents and actions associated with three or more familiar activities.
- Begins to show object permanence.
- Anticipates upcoming events from object cues (searches the table after the spoon is put in their hand).
- Understands which familiar activity will take place once the student has learned the association of a particular room/place in a room.
- Acts appropriately on several objects in a familiar routine.
- Makes an association between the object symbol and the activity (despite time and distance).
- Anticipates several steps within a routine.
- Understands when the activity has ended.
- Is ready to extend the future beyond one or two symbols (i.e. begins walking to playground after lunchtime).
- Understands the time pieces (i.e. finish basket) used to depict past, present, and future.

What particular skill(s) might I address in an IEP goal for a student using a weekly calendar system?

- Understands and uses symbolic forms.
- Develops an early vocabulary of objects, people, and activity names.
- Expands upon the topics for interaction.

- Sequences early time concepts (finished, now, waiting).
- Maintains joint attention for longer periods of time.
- Imitates turn taking through pantomimes.
- Responds to questions by naming or pointing to objects.
- Makes choices.
- Comments/labels.
- Rejects.



Expanded Calendars

Expanded calendars can be used to represent a week, month or year and can include use of a traditional calendar format. They can be used to support conversations on a variety of topics. These types of calendar systems allow the student to have conversations about activities that will take place in the future and recall things that happened in the distant past. A symbol or picture can be used to represent each day of the week. The designated item can then be removed at the end of the day to show it is over. Expanded calendars should include a representation of the weekend event even though the student is not in school at the time. Ask the family for ideas regarding an activity that occurs at home on the weekend. At the very least a symbol or photo of home could be used. After the student is able to use a three weeks of a calendar, add the remaining time to build a month. Schedule the calendar to begin the first day of the month. It is helpful to number the days so that the student begins using dates as a way of tracking time. Students should learn the name of the current month as well. Monthly calendars can be posted on the wall. Calendar conversations typically include the weather, current events and the day's activities. At this level a true conversational interaction take place with the student initiating some of the conversation and engages in more turn taking conversation. Note: It is recommended that you use daily calendars in conjunction with weekly calendars so the student continues to know what to expect during their day.

How do I know if my student is ready for an expanded schedule?

- Anticipates events that occur bi-weekly or monthly.
- Associates several activities with the days of the week when they are typically held. Demonstrated understanding and ability to use a weekly calendar.
- Recognizes and reproduces the names of the weekdays (via print, speech or sign).
- Understands the weekly format and systematically searches the calendar to locate events.
- Uses and responds to current calendar material that represent past, present, and future.
- Requests activities held in the future.
- Understands time vocabulary for finished, past future, wait, etc.

- Moves from left to right on the weekly calendar.
- Initiates use of a calendar to gain information or make request.
- Uses a variety of communicative forms.
- Understands and participates in discussions of events before and after they occur.
- Maintains joint attention for 10-15 minutes.
- Demonstrates an emotional need to know about things in the future.
- Understands and discusses monthly calendar.

What particular skill (s) might I address in an IEP goal for a student using an expanded calendar system?

- Expands upon vocabulary across meaning categories.
- Combines words in new ways to convey novel meanings.
- Expands upon topics for conversation.
- Responds to specific questions forms (who, when, where, what).
- Interacts with peers.
- Initiates more frequently.
- Expands communication functions.
- Participates in conversation by providing new information.
- Expands upon time concepts.



Resource: Calendars for Students with Multiple Impairments Including Deafblindness, by Robbie Blaha available at:

<http://www.tsbvi.edu/curriculum-a-publications/1024-calendars-for-students-with-multiple-impairments-including-deafblindness>

Avoid Common Errors!

- Limiting the student's communication to calendar activities.
- Doing calendar activities without communication.