Many students find information easier to process and directions, therefore, easier to follow when they are presented visually as well as verbally (Arwood & Kaulitz, 2007; Faherty, 2000). For these learners, a set of cue cards can make life in the classroom easier. Cue cards are simply small, palm-sized visual aids that reinforce what a teacher (or student) is trying to communicate to a learner with a disability. Each card typically consists of a simple phrase and a picture.

**Materials**

- Book rings—preferably 1½ inches in size
- Hole punch
- Computer with graphics program and printer or premade flash cards or index cards

**Description**

Create your cue cards using any computer graphics program, magazine pictures, photographs, or illustrations. Then, print, laminate, and punch each of the cards in one of the top corners. To make the task easier and so that all the holes line up, use a “punched-hole” card as a guide for punching holes in the remaining cards. Then slide all of the cards onto a book ring. Finally, clasp the book ring shut tight.

Give the student the ring and demonstrate—across situations and environments—how to use the cards. You can show him or her how to use them to supplement communication (e.g., “I’m really hungry”), or they can be used to reinforce directions or messages for the student (e.g., “I think the bus is late”).

If you have extra cards that the student does not need on a regular basis, those can be kept (pre-punched) in a box or on a separate ring and then added as needed.

**Example**

Brecken, a young man on the autism spectrum, often struggles to understand or process his teacher’s spoken directions; therefore, the teacher created a ring of cue cards to help him navigate the classroom and the school day. Messages range from “line up for band” to “take out your portfolio” to “clean off your desk.”
References/
Recommended Reading


Vendor

**AutismShop.com**
Several sets of visual cue cards appropriate for different situations (e.g., school, home, birthday parties)

Web Sites

**Polyxo.com (Let’s Get Visual)**
http://www.polyxo.com/visualsupport/letsgetvisual.html
An article about visual supports, written by Brian S. Friedlander

**Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children**
http://challengingbehavior.org/do/resources/teaching_tools/tyc_toc.htm
This site contains a PowerPoint presentation detailing how to assemble a set of cue cards. The presentation contains several pages of cue cards that can be used as is or adapted to fit your needs. Even if the types of prompts provided are not appropriate for your students, watching the presentation will help any teacher see and understand the variety of ways cards can be used.
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