Starting Off On The Right Foot:
Visual Support Strategies for DeafPlus Students
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Points to Remember

✓ DeafPlus students are at risk for developing problem behaviors due to the
unique challenges they face, particularly in terms of communication

✓ Visual Support Strategies can address many of the communication-based
challenges faced by DeafPlus students

✓ The use of Visual Support Strategies does not interfere with language and
communication developing (signed or spoken language)

✓ Aided input strategies support understanding

✓ Aided output strategies support expressive communication

✓ Make sure that you use the ‘right’ symbol(s) for a given student
  ➢ Determine what will work best for your student by conducting a symbol
    assessment
  ➢ Students may use real objects, miniature objects, photographs, line
drawing symbols (i.e. Picture Communication Symbols from the
  Boardmaker software program), and/or text
  ➢ The key is to use a format that the student can easily understand

✓ Aided input strategies include:
  ➢ Environmental supports: Visuals that help organize the environment
  ➢ Visual schedules: Visuals that show the sequence of events over a period
    of time and help the student to predict upcoming events
  ➢ Procedural supports: Visuals that show students the steps necessary to
    complete a specific task; can be used to increase independent functioning
  ➢ Rule supports: Provide a visual explanation of rules and expectations
  ➢ Temporal and Waiting supports: Provide visual information regarding
    when activities will occur and/or how long activities will last
Aided output strategies include:

- **Choice Boards**: An array of symbols showing what is available; students can pick a symbol to indicate a choice.
- **Communication Boards**: A board with relevant vocabulary; students point to symbols to communicate expressively.
- **The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)**: An instructional protocol for teaching interactive, spontaneous, expressive communication. For training opportunities see [www.pecs-canada.com](http://www.pecs-canada.com)
- **Home-School Papers**: Symbols to show what a student did at home or school; brought across environments to support students in communication about past events.

Visual Support Strategies provide access to language and learning for DeafPlus students who experience difficulty understanding signed or spoken languages

- Visual Support Strategies result in less frustration, as students are more able to communicate effectively

- Some students will use visuals for a short time; others may use visuals throughout their lifespan. The important thing is to make sure students are able to understand others and express themselves, regardless of the format