

## HOW TO USE FIRST/THEN BOARDS

For children who struggle to listen and attend, seeing what is going to happen now and then can be really helpful.

Go round your setting and take pictures of all of the activities that the child likes e.g. cars/water play/bubbles etc/snack table – if your pictures look exactly like the real activities, this can help the child’s understanding – cartoon pictures of activities will look very different.

Then stick the pictures on to the board and say “FIRST we are going to do painting (while pointing at the FIRST picture), THEN we are going to bubbles (while pointing at seconds picture).” The child might not understand the words “FIRST” and “THEN” but don’t worry – your tone of voice may help them to understand the situation.

Once the activity has finished, remove the picture.

Try to make the second picture something that the child really enjoys e.g. if bubbles is their favourite, put this last – this may help them focus on the 1<sup>st</sup> activity as they know that they will have a reward of bubbles after.

If you use a board like this a lot, it should help the child to understand the order of events but it can take months or even longer for a child to understand this.

Once a child understands this board, please don’t stop using it – especially if the child struggles with a change of routine.

If you feel that the child understands different terminology more e.g. now/then, first/next – feel free to use this terminology instead of first/then.

**First**



**Then**

