

CHORES CHART



(Also known as Duty Rosters, Job Sheets)

For people who can recognise photos and pictures and who need visual supports to remember information.

Why do we need Chores Charts?

There are many jobs that need to be done at home or at work. Some are simple tasks like putting out the rubbish or bringing in the mail. Some are more involved tasks like doing the laundry or washing the floors. Different jobs need different skills. One of the dilemmas of working with people with disabilities is developing an individual's independence skills when it may be quicker and easier to do the job yourself. Unfortunately, people with disabilities are often excluded from daily activities for this very reason. It is important for people with disabilities to be involved in daily chores and tasks around the house because it allows people to:

- Learn new skills
- Feel valued and useful
- Participate in daily activities
- Communicate about different things
- Understand about independence and responsibility

What is a chores chart?

A chores chart displays a range of household or work activities and the person responsible for doing them.

In Jeannie's house, tasks are discussed and allocated at the weekly house meeting. Some members of the household are more able than others to do some jobs but everyone is expected to pull their weight. People keep the same job for a week. The Chores Chart is a laminated piece of cardboard (approximately 30cm x 45 cm) set up on the wall in the kitchen/dining area. It has 2 vertical rows of Velcro™ dots – the spaces on the right-hand side are for the tasks and the spaces on the left-hand side are for the photographs. Photos have been taken of all staff and residents. Each photo has self-adhesive Velcro™ on the back. The regular household tasks are represented by 6cm x 9cm PCS (Picture Communication Symbols). The photos and line drawings are stored in a small plastic tidy bin next to the chart. The household tasks are listed down the side of the chart and a photo of the person responsible for the task is placed next to it.

Who benefits from Chores Charts?

Everyone benefits when there is clear information about a person's roles and responsibilities. There are many tasks that take place in a household. Some of these can be represented by pictures or photos so that people who cannot read can remind themselves of the jobs to do.

When to use a Chores Chart?

Chores charts can be used daily or weekly. At night you can check what needs doing the following day. You could have a weekly meeting to discuss what needs to be done and who will do it. Charts must be regularly updated with line drawings and/or photos of people and/or activities.

How to make a Chores Chart.

1. List the tasks that need to be done.
2. Decide on how to represent tasks: pictures, photos, line drawings (e.g. PCS Picture Communication Symbols, COMPIC)
3. Label each item. The pictures or line-drawings are not always self-explanatory. The item must make sense visually to the person and relate to his or her experience of the activity.
4. Decide on the size of individual items. Items need to be large enough to be clearly seen by someone who may have a visual problem. Items need to be easy to handle for someone who has poor hand skills.
5. Decide whether the Chores Chart will be used by an individual or with a group of people. If used by an individual, an A4 folder may be suitable to use for the storage and display of items. If used by a group, consider the size and shape of the display and where the chart will be positioned.
6. Decide how to represent people: If the Chores Chart is to be used by an individual, a photo of the person engaged in the task may be a useful cue. If, however, the Chores Chart is to be used by a group of people, take photos of all the people involved with the household or work chores. Multiple photos will be needed if people are allocated more than one task. Always label the photo with the person's name.
7. Consider how each item will be attached to the chart, for example, Blu Tack, Velcro or magnets. The individual items may need to be laminated to make them more durable.
8. Consider the layout of the chart. Will the chart be designed for daily, weekly or fortnightly chores? Will people be allocated more than one chore a week?
9. Determine how the chores chart will be updated and maintained. It is important to incorporate updating the chores chart into the household routine, for example, as an agenda item at house meetings.
Allocate a person to take responsibility for photos of new staff or house members or for finding pictures/line drawings (e.g. PCS) of any new tasks that are identified.

How to introduce the Chores Chart

1. Hold a meeting to introduce the idea of a Chores Chart. Explain how the chart works with people having different jobs to do.

2. Show how a photograph or a line drawing represents the jobs. Pair the task with a photo of the person who will be doing the task.
3. Talk about how people want to allocate the different tasks.
 - how many tasks will people do
 - how often will the task be done
 - how long will people keep the same task
4. Point out the photograph of the person and the task they have been allocated before beginning the task.

Storage

The Chores Chart needs to be positioned where it can be easily seen as a reminder of the jobs that need doing. Careful consideration also needs to be given to the storage of the photographs and line drawings. They need to be readily available so that it easy to quickly update the chart.

How to adapt the displays for people with different levels of communication

People who communicate at a symbolic (basic) level

- May recognise photographs, pictures or line drawings of preferred or frequent household activities
- May cope with a display of up to 5 items

People who communicate at a symbolic (established) level

- Will recognise photographs, pictures or line drawings of preferred or frequent household activities
- Will cope with a multi-item display.