

## TERRIFIC TIMERS!

### Purpose

- Assisting with smoother transitions
- Increasing OR decreasing time on task!
- Reducing anxiety and confusion
- Communication (understanding and more)
- Increasing Independence
- Attention and Concentration



### Materials

- Your (child's) preferred timer - be it a 'time timer', sand timer, liquid motion timer, digital timer, wind up timer, or other

### Description

Transition times can be notoriously difficult for many children with DIFFerent abilities. This means that moving from one activity to the next can be troublesome and anxiety provoking not just for them, but also for those supporting them. A child may have trouble moving on from an activity, meaning that they want to stick with it when they need to do something different (using the iPad is a good example for many!). Conversely, they may flit from one activity to the next, rarely spending enough time to complete or master the task (writing and hand washing are good examples!). Timers are a very helpful visual support that can be used to support with transition times. As time is a very abstract concept, representing it visually can help to reduce anxiety, confusion and frustration, while helping to encourage independence.

### Quick tips for using timers

Timers are a very versatile resource and can be used in many ways. Here are some of our favourites:

- Set the timer for the time the child has left at a task. For example, you may want them to brush their teeth for 1 minute (rather than 1 second!). Use the timer to help them understand what 1 minute means. Start small and increase the time in order to make it achievable and help the child to experience success.
- On the flip side, if you would like them to finish a task sooner, set the timer to show them how long they have left before it is time to finish. For example, you may set it for five minutes and say "ok it's time to finish in 5 minutes".
- Similarly, timers can be used to help a child understand how long they have to complete a daily routine such as getting dressed for school. Showing them that they have 10 minutes rather than having to provide constant verbal reminders can be more effective and less effortful for all.
- Please remember that, like any new strategy, this will take some practice so do not lose faith if it takes a little while for the child to understand what is happening. If you are consistent and give them the opportunity to learn what timers mean they can be a very effective strategy.
- Some timers such as the sand and liquid motion timers can also be handy stress relievers as they are visually appealing and help children to 'zone out' during times of high anxiety.

For some of the timers we love, check out the Timers & Schedules page at [www.mydiffability.com.au](http://www.mydiffability.com.au)