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Activity: **Calendar Boxes**

Routine is so important for our kids! Having a routine can help relieve challenging behaviors, increase vocabulary and joint attention, and gives your child the opportunity to affect change on their environment.

**Activity Name:** Calendar Boxes

**Materials:**

1. Find any open-top box or container that you have at home. Get creative! Bread pans, shoe boxes...Any container that is open and allows your child to either look at or touch the object inside.
2. Large bowl or another container to use as a "finished" container
3. Clear photographs of real items or real items from your routine. I like to use real items such as a spoon for lunch, a carpet circle cut out for circle time, a small book for literacy, a washcloth for cleanup.

**Directions:**

Calendar boxes are an excellent tool for children with visual impairments and deaf blindness. I use them in my classroom to help our kiddos anticipate what's coming up next, encourage choice-making, and developing concepts. It gives our kids a chance to affect change in their environment, which is really empowering! We want to create these emotional memories with our children; emotional memories are likely to be remembered long after the event has taken place and thus children are more motivated to learn and stay engaged.

When I am using the calendar boxes as part of our daily schedule, I like to begin with using two calendar boxes, presented side by side, and I use a flashlight to illuminate the calendar boxes as I am talking about them. I like to use first-then language: "First we are going to have circle time (a carpet circle is our cue) and Then we will have gardening!"(our gardening cue is a toy shovel).

When an activity is finished, I like to use a metal bowl to drop the activity symbols into so that students have an auditory cue that the activity is finished, then I ring a bell and sing Anchor's "We're Finished" song.

The routine for the daily calendar should be done in the same consistent manner each time.

**To keep it consistent:**

- Explore objects in the box tactually together
- Allow for plenty of wait time with your child
- Dialogue about the activity (Calendar: “First we are playing in the ball pit and then we will read a book!” Choice-making: “Would you like to play in the ball pit or read a book?” )
- Travel to the place where activity will take place
- Complete the activity
- Put materials away. Clean up song!
- Carry the symbol back to the calendar
- Discuss the activity that just took place
- Return the calendar symbol to the calendar or finished bowl and designate as finished. We like to sing “We’re finished, We’re finished, We’re finished now”



Daily Schedule: “First we are going to play in ball pit and then we will read our book!”



Choice-making: "Would you like to play in the ball pit or read a book?"



"Finished" Bowl

When using the boxes for choice-making: or use two or three boxes to offer choices of activities (ex. See photo: "Would you like to play in the ball pit or read a book?" one box contains a ball from the ball pit and the other contains a book). Or this can be part of their daily schedule, "First we are playing in the ball pit and then we will read a book!" Remember to give your child plenty of wait time! Allow your child to make choices by touching the object, looking at the object, vocalizing or using their preferred means of communication.

**Target Areas:** Concept development, anticipation of routine and non-routine events, choice-making.

