



Spot timer

What is it?

Spot timers are a visual way to help support a person to understand how long they have left before a task finishes. A spot timer is a unique way to encourage children to stay focused on an activity. The adult is in control and decides when a spot is removed. If the child is struggling to stay focused, then the adult can remove the spots quickly or remove slowly to encourage the child to stay focused for longer. The spot timer adds a visual element to the verbal language you are already using to manage how the task is being carried out.

How to use it?

You will need:

- 2 contrasting colours of paper or card
- Laminator
- Velcro loops and hooks

To make the spot timer:

1. Cut out a circle approximately 15-20cm diameter and laminate this.
2. Cut out 5 smaller circles and laminate them.
3. Stick 5 piece of Velcro loops spaced evenly around the edge of the circle.
4. Stick 5 pieces of Velcro hooks on the back of the small circles.



To use the spot timer:

- At the start of the activity, attach the spots to the circle and place it so the child can see it. Explain to the child the activity they are carrying out and that this will be finished when all the spots have gone.
- As the child completes the activity, gradually remove the spots. You can change how quickly or slowly you remove the spots depending on how the child is responding the activity.
- As you take the spots off, use verbal language used alongside this, e.g. 'another spot gone'.
- When you get to the last spot, verbally acknowledge this, e.g. 'nearly finished.' When you remove the last spot, verbally acknowledge this and what is happening next, e.g. 'maths finished, now choosing time'.

Outstanding care for all

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Top tips for success-

- The adult should always be the one to remove the spots, not the child.
- Spot timers can be used alongside other visual support methods such as visual timetables and now/next boards.



