Ten Tips for First/Then Success

1. Always keep the goal in mind. Are you working on transition, dressing, eating, etc.?

2. Always make sure you have preferred items available before offering them as options. This will build user trust in the system and decrease frustration.

3. The THEN step should typically be a preferred item/activity.

4. Allow the child to help identify the item/activity for the THEN step. You can use a choice board to let the child pick from available options.

5. Draw pictures on sticky notes and attach them to the first/then board. They can work just as well as printed-out pictures.

6. Keep the first/then board visible for the child to reference while engaged in the activity.

7. Avoid repeating verbal directions over and over, use simple language, and point to pictures on the first/then board to reinforce steps.

8. Make sure the THEN step immediately follows the completion of the FIRST step.

9. First then boards can be drawn on scrap paper, notebooks, whiteboards or even napkins.

10. For durability, use packing tape or lamination to cover frequently used pictures and boards.