

Be sure to focus on the student's strengths and abilities as you assist the student to learn new skills.

Facilitate independence and skill acquisition

Your objective is to facilitate independence and skill acquisition. It is trying to strike a balance between providing enough support versus providing too much support. Facilitating involves providing the appropriate amount of instruction or support, as needed by the student to participate in or complete and captivity.

Natural Cues

Natural cues refer to the information that ordinarily exists to let us know when or how to do certain things.

Some students need to be taught to:

- _____ to natural cues
- _____ to them appropriately

Fading Support

Depending on your assignment, you may be asked to implement a plan for fading support, which is the ultimate goal in promoting independence. Allowing the student enough time and decreasing the amount of assistance you provide are essentially different ways of "fading" support.

Prompts

We refer to the different levels of assistance you can give to a student as prompts. The prompts you and the IEP team choose to use will depend on how independent or dependent the student is on others to complete assignments or participate in class activities.

Prompting Hierarchies

An essential tool for teachers and teaching assistants to use are *prompting hierarchies*. Prompting hierarchies provide a systematic method of assisting students to learn and use new skills, as well as, a framework for teachers and TAs to communicate about a student's learning and level of independence.

There are two types of prompting hierarchies: "**most-to-least**" and "**least-to-most**."

"Most-To-Least" Prompting

This is simply using a very high level of support (prompting) when teaching a new skill, and then systematically fading down to lower level prompts as the student masters the skill. Thus, the prompting sequence is:

- Full Physical Assistance
- Partial Physical
- Modeling
- Gesture
- Verbal
- Independent

"Least-To-Most" Prompting

This is just the opposite of "most-to-least" prompting.

- Independent
- Verbal
- Gesturing
- Modeling
- Partial Physical
- Full Physical Assistance

"Least-to-Most" prompting is used after the student learns the skill and is working towards mastery and independent use. Following is a description of each of these prompt.

Levels of Prompts

Full Physical Assistance (FPA): Hand-over-hand assistance to complete the task (respond correctly). This level of prompt is usually used to teach a motor response; for example, when teaching how to purposely use a new toy or object; how to complete a task and put in a finished box, etc...

Partial Physical Assistance (PPA): This is a less intrusive physical prompt. Partial physical assistance may involve touching the student's hand to initiate the response and providing minimal physical guidance to get the desired response.

Modeling (M): Showing the student what you want him/her to do without physically touching. This type of prompt requires that the student have good imitation skills, typically not true of students with autism.

Gesturing (G): Pointing, facial expression, mouthing words silently or indicating the physical movement you want the student to do.

Verbal Prompt (V): There are two types of verbal prompts: 1-is a direct statement of what to do or say. For example, "come here." "put it in the trash." Use of this level of prompt requires that the student understand the direction. 2-is an indirect statement that tells the student something about what is expected, but not exactly. For example, "What next?" "Where does it go?"

Independent (I): The student is able to perform the task on his/her own, with no prompts or assistance. **THIS IS THE GOAL!**

Self-Guided Orientation for Special Education Assistants
Section 5: Instructional Strategies

Fading can involve:

- actively assisting _____
- _____ to run an errand
- working more directly with _____
- providing other _____ support

TIPS

Teach the student to respond to _____

Allow the student time to _____ before “jumping in”

Show _____ how to prompt the student

Don't _____, only provide as much help as the student actually needs

Be sure to divide your time among _____