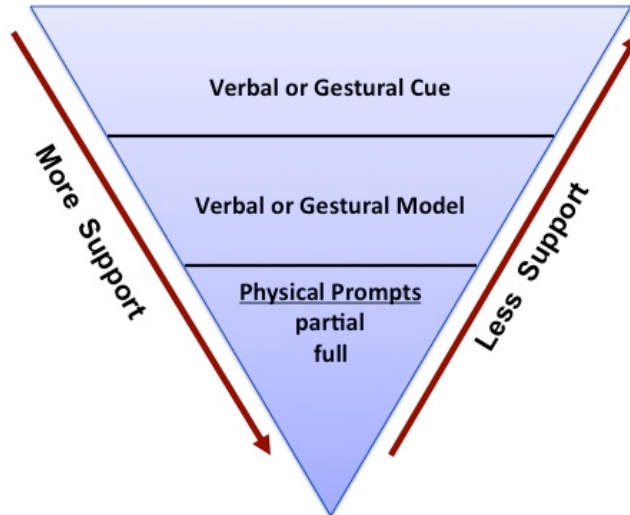


Prompts

Prompts can be thought of as a hierarchy ranging from the least supportive to the most supportive. Some or all levels of prompts may be needed to support a child in the process of learning or mastering a target behavior.



Examples:

Verbal or gestural cues

Asking a question: Asking Davion, “Where are the other toy cars?” while he sorts cars and blocks onto the correct shelves during clean-up time.

Giving a direction: Saying to Davion, “Put the small cars in the basket” during clean-up time.

Gestural cue: Pointing to the shelf for toy cars while Davion is putting away toy cars and blocks during clean-up time.

Verbal or gestural model

Verbal model: Model counting three objects for Davion by touching each one and saying a number as you do – “one, two, three.”

Gestural model: Demonstrating for Davion how a car is placed on the correct shelf during clean-up time.

Physical Prompts

Partial physical prompt: A light touch or nudge on Davion’s elbow when assisting Davion, who is putting cars on a shelf during clean-up time.

Full Physical Prompt: Hand over hand assistance given to Davion, who is putting cars on a shelf during clean-up time.

Selecting Prompts

Prompts are useful when natural cues do not provide the support children need to produce target behaviors. In addition, there may be cultural considerations in selecting which prompt or prompts to use. You will want to select the prompt that will help to elicit the desired behavior for the particular child, but is also the least intrusive.

Verbal or gestural cues provide the least amount of support and are generally the most frequently used prompts. Providing a verbal or gestural model for a child to imitate provides a little more information for the child, making it more likely that the child will produce the desired behavior (that is, if the child can imitate).

It is also important to remember that in the prompt hierarchy physical prompts are listed in order of support provided. A full physical prompt provides more support than a partial physical prompt.



Fading Prompts

Prompts might be necessary to elicit a desired behavior and can be part of a complete learning trial. It is important to remember that when you use prompts, you should be careful to fade them out so that the child is eventually using the target skill independently.

When fading, prompts are gradually diminished until behaviors occur with the natural cues. This is called transferring stimulus control from adult to a naturally occurring cue or stimulus in the environment. The instructional strategies of least-to-most prompting and most-to-least prompting are strategies for fading prompts, as they both lead to the child producing the desired behavior without any prompts.

Through fading, prompts are gradually diminished until behaviors occur without any prompts.

Strategies for fading prompts include:

- decreasing the number of prompts by implementing some complete learning trials that don't include a prompt.
- decreasing the intensity with which you give a prompt: a verbal prompt might be spoken more softly over time or a physical prompt may be less controlling over time.
- increasing the time between a naturally occurring antecedent and the delivery of a prompt. This procedure is called "**time delay**" because you pause to see if the target behavior will occur in response to the antecedent before you provide a prompt.

Examples of fading prompts:

- To help Davion learn to climb down stairs without falling, you might fade from a full physical prompt (most intrusive), to partial physical assistance, to possibly a verbal reminder to hold the rail, and then eventually independent use of the skill.
- To help Davion use language to request desired objects, you could use time delay to gradually lengthen the amount of time between the antecedent and the prompt until he could produce the behavior without your prompt.

