



## Practice Brief: Practice 4

**To help plan when and how many learning opportunities to embed it is useful to...**

Consider different factors including how trials can be embedded (massed, spaced, distributed) and the child's phase of learning.

### **Practice description:**

Embedded instruction learning trials can be distributed, massed, or spaced within or across activities to provide a “sufficient” number of learning trials. A sufficient number of learning trials is the number it takes to help a child learn and make progress. The total number of trials will relate to which formats (distributed, massed, spaced) you plan to use and how you use these formats across your activities. Of course, you won't know the magic number or the optimal combination of formats, but several sources of information can help guide decisions. First, think about the type of skill or behavior (communication, motor, adaptive, social, pre-academic or other type of skill or behavior) you want to teach and consider how often and where this skill is used throughout the day. Next, think about the child's stage of learning (acquisition, fluency, maintenance, generalization, or adaptation) and consider what will support the child to make progress. Finally, consider what is feasible to implement in your classroom (e.g., you might consider your adult-to-child ratios within activities).

### **Why is it important for embedded instruction?**

Having a plan for which and how many instructional learning trials helps you think about the frequency, intensity, and duration of instruction that will support a child to learn and make progress. Once you have a plan in place you can adjust it as you learn about what's working and what's not. Planning, implementing and then evaluating will help you find the “right” number and type of learning trials.

### **Tips for using this practice:**

- *Distributed Learning Trials* - opportunities to practice one skill in multiple activities, routines, and transitions. Helpful to support the maintenance or generalization of a learned skill or paired with massed or spaced trials to support the child becoming fluent with the skill across activities.
- *Massed Learning Trials* - opportunities to practice the skill repeatedly without pauses between trials. Helpful when child is acquiring a skill or becoming fluent in using the skill.
- *Spaced Learning Trials* - opportunities to practice the skill interspersed with other skills or behaviors within an activity, routine, or transition. Helpful when child is acquiring a skill, becoming fluent in using the skill, or to support the maintenance or generalization of a learned skill.
- There is no magic formula for determining how many, when, and which ways to deliver complete learning trials – use the information you have to get started and monitor implementation and child progress.