



## **Practice Brief: Practice 4**

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

Consider the frequency, intensity, and duration of instruction needed to address the child's phase and pace of learning.

### **Practice description:**

The child's phase of learning typically refers to how the child performs the skill or behavior before you start embedded instruction. For any skill or behavior, the child might be acquiring a new skill; learning to do the skill with more fluency (increasing proficiency); learning to generalize (use across different settings, people, times, activities, or materials); maintain (use over time), or adapt (use elements to meet new demands) the skill. There is typically a logical progression from acquisition, to fluency, to generalization or adaptation; while maintenance can occur for the proficient use of the skill or any generalization or adaptation. The child's pace of learning refers to how quickly the child progresses through the learning phases. Knowing the child's phase and pace of learning informs the frequency (how often), intensity (how much on any occasion), and duration (how long) of instruction to ensure child learning, progress, and ongoing use of a skill. When a child is first learning a new skill you might increase the frequency of instruction to support acquisition. When a child is gaining fluency you might increase the intensity to support doing the skill smoothly and in a proficient way. When a child is maintaining a skill you might decrease frequency and intensity but ensure an occasional practice opportunity to make sure the child still has the target skill or behavior. Phase and pace of learning also inform changes you might make to your instructional plans.

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

Embedded instruction can promote learning and mastery of skills. Instruction becomes more efficient when provided at the optimal frequency, intensity, and duration. There is no magic formula to determine how often, how much, and how long instruction should occur but knowing the child's phase and pace of learning gives you the information you need to make a best guess and make changes as you monitor progress.

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

- You can alter the frequency, intensity, and duration of instruction using different combinations of distributed, massed, and spaced learning trials.
- The instructional decisions you make will be different for each child and priority learning target.
- Embedded instruction maximizes children's motivation by considering their interests and preferences and providing opportunities to learn and practice important skills in meaningful contexts. Always consider the child's preferences as you implement instruction.