

Essential Considerations When Using Prompts with Learners

Prompting is the "verbal, gestural, or physical assistance given to learners to support them in acquiring or engaging in a targeted behavior or skill." The overall goal of using prompts is for the learner to independently perform the desired behavior or skill.

COMPLIANCE VS. COOPERATION

- Cooperation is working together to achieve a mutual goal within a trusting relationship.
- Obeying an order, rule, or request is not the goal.
- Teaching and interacting from a place of cooperation promotes engagement, self-advocacy, and greater independence.



LEARNER ASSENT/CONSENT

- Assent (under age 18) and consent (over age 18) mean a learner agrees or approves of something.
- Gaining assent/consent honors the learner by asking and waiting for clear agreement to be touched.
- Learners can remove assent/consent at any time.
- Assent/consent and withdrawal look different for each learner.



DECISION MAKING FOR PROMPTING

- Decisions made by teams are based on many variables, including the goal, task being taught, learner's skill and experience, safety, and data.
- Prompts must be intentionally planned to minimize prompt dependency and promote independence and engagement.



FADING PROMPTS

- Before using prompting, a systematic plan to fade prompts as quickly as possible should be developed.
- The plan should include: criteria and process to fade prompts, staff training, collection and review of data.



AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION (AAC)/ COMMUNICATION

- For individuals with complex communication needs, autonomous communication is the goal.
- Prompts should not interfere with the right of the individual to communicate in different ways, and to refuse to say something.



DEVELOPMENT AND DOCUMENTATION OF THE PLAN

- Decisions made by the team should be carefully documented and shared with all applicable stakeholders.
- Prompting plans should be individualized and include data identifying specific skills requiring prompting, the plan to fade prompts, and a description of what assent/consent looks like for each learner.
- Reference prompting plans in the IEP or Section 504 Plan.



For additional information, review the [Prompting Statement Supplemental Materials](#). If you have questions about prompting, consult your local special education administrators or contact [START](#), [Alt+Shift](#), or [Michigan Alliance for Families](#) for further information.