

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!**