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SUPPORTING PEER INTERACTIONS: INTRODUCTION & PRACTICE

WHAT ARE SUPPORTING PEER INTERACTIONS?

Supporting Peer Interactions is a focused practice that is used with other evidence-based practices (reinforcement, prompting, and visual cues). Supporting peer interactions is a critical component for learners on the spectrum to engage socially with peers.

Supporting Peer Interactions can be used to address many different skills and target behaviors for elementary students. Research supports the use of Supporting Peer Interactions for target skills and behaviors in the following domains: social, communication, joint attention, school readiness, play, and academic.

Reinforcement is a foundational practice often used in combination with other evidence-based practices (such as prompting, visual supports) that applies a consequence following a learner's use of a response or skills that increases the likelihood that the learner will use the response/skills in the future.

Prompting is a foundational practice that is used with other evidence-based practices (such as, Time Delay and Reinforcement) and as part of the protocols for evidence-based practices (such as Discrete Trial Training, Naturalistic Interventions, and Video Modeling). Prompting includes any help given to a learner that assists the learner in using a specific skill or behavior. Sometimes referred to as an errorless learning method, prompting reduces incorrect responding as learners acquire new skills. Prompts can be verbal, gestural, physical, visual, or a model.

Visual Cues is a foundational practice that is used with other evidence-based practices (prompting and reinforcement). Visual Cues are concrete objects, pictures, symbols, or text that provide a student with information about a routine, activity, behavioral expectation, or skill. Visual cues must be appropriate for both the task and the learner's skill level and work to support a student's independence.

TARGET SETTING EXAMPLES

The strategies of reinforcement, prompting, and visual cues can be combined to address target skills and behaviors related to **Supporting Peer Interactions** for elementary students. Since this reflects a combination of practices used to support peer interactions, the goals below are separated by different settings and times that you might support peer interactions. For the goals below, consider verbal and non-speaking forms of communication. For example, asking for help could be just giving an object to a peer and signing for help.

Academic

- Participate in assigned group tasks by making contributions or asking questions
- Engaging with peers during peer editing activities
- Give compliments to peers during group work or independent work times
- Ask for help, if needed, from peers during group assignments

Specials or Enrichment Instruction

- Engage in a back and forth or turn-taking activity with peers (e.g., ball during PE, taking turns with instrument in music)
- Request materials from peers
- Respond to requests of materials from peers
- Communicate to share attention with a peer about an action or object (e.g., Point to or show their own completed art project, ask a peer to watch them during a PE activity)

Transition

- Initiate or respond to or peer greetings
- Initiate or respond to short conversations
- Transition with a "buddy" down the hall
- Give/respond to social praise to/from peers (e.g., high fives) after completing a task

Classroom Leisure or Downtime

- Initiate play with peers
- Take turns when playing a game
- Give compliments to peers during activities
- Engage in cooperative play with peers

Meal or Snack Times

- Respond to peers' questions
- Tell/share jokes with peers
- Ask a peer for help or help a peer (e.g., to open a snack)
- Engage in "small talk" with peers

Recess

- Verbally request to play a game at recess
- Play a simple game with peers (e.g., tag, follow-the-leader)
- Engage in pretend play with peers
- Stay in proximity to peers for longer durations of time

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PLANNING GUIDE

General Planning:

WHO:

WHEN:
DATE:
TIME:

WHERE:

WHAT (TARGET SKILL):

HOW TO USE:

Visual Cue (If Needed):

Type:
- ❏ Behavior cues
- ❏ Choice boards
- ❏ Communication cues
- ❏ Instructional cues
- ❏ Labels/Environmental visuals
- ❏ Visual directions
- ❏ Other:

Form:
- ❏ Object
- ❏ Photograph
- ❏ Picture/Symbol
- ❏ Text/Written
- ❏ Other:

Additional description:

Types of Prompts:

Check off the types of prompts to use. Consider both task and student characteristics as well as the time available to work on the task.

- ❏ Gestural
- ❏ Verbal   ☐ Less restrictive   ☐ More restrictive
- ❏ Visual
- ❏ Model   ☐ Partial model   ☐ Full model
- ❏ Physical   ☐ Partial physical   ☐ Full physical

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Choose Order of Prompts:

Sequence prompts from least-to-most assistance.	Describe how the prompt will be used.
Level 1: Independent	
Level 2:	
Level 3:	
Level 4:	

Reinforcers to Use with Student:

Select reinforcers that will increase the student's use of the target skill or behavior in the future.

Know the Reinforcement Schedule

☐ Continuous schedule of reinforcement
☐ Intermittent schedule of reinforcement, Variable

Materials Needed:

How to Measure:

Use the area below for data collection or use a provided form in AFIRM Resources.

PLANNING GUIDE: JACKSON

General Planning:

WHO:
Jackson

WHEN:
DATE:
TIME: 9:45AM

WHERE:
Recess

WHAT (TARGET SKILL):
Taking turns

HOW TO USE:
Reinforcement,
Prompting, Visual Cues

Visual Cue (If Needed):

Type:
- ☐ Behavior cues
- ☐ Choice boards
- ☑ Communication cues
- ☐ Instructional cues
- ☐ Labels/Environmental visuals
- ☐ Visual directions
- ☐ Other:

Form:
- ☐ Object
- ☐ Photograph
- ☑ Picture/Symbol/Icon
- ☐ Text/Written
- ☐ Other:

Additional description:
Picture with a reminder for taking turns and a visual for how Jackson will know when it is his turn (for a board game students might play in a clockwise rotation)

Types of Prompts:

Check off the types of prompts to use. Consider both task and student characteristics as well as the time available to work on the task.

- ☑ Gestural
- ☑ Verbal   ☑ Less restrictive   ☑ More restrictive
- ☐ Visual
- ☐ Model   ☐ Partial model   ☐ Full model
- ☐ Physical   ☐ Partial physical   ☐ Full physical

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Choose Order of Prompts:

Sequence prompts from least-to-most assistance.	Describe how the prompt will be used.
Level 1: Independent	Jackson will take his turn without prompts
Level 2: Gestural	Point to picture card of taking turn
Level 3: Less Verbal	Say, "Jackson, who's turn is it?"
Level 4: More Verbal	Say, "Jackson, it is NAME's turn. Your turn is next."

Reinforcers to Use with Student:

- High fives
- Sticker for chart
- Verbal social praise
- Preferred item

Know the Reinforcement Schedule

Social praise: continuous
Sticker for chart after two turns and 2 min. break for preferred item after 4 stickers earned

Materials Needed:

- Game or equipment for an outside game
- visual cue card
- data collection sheet
- reinforcers (including stickers and sticker chart)

How to Measure:

Date/Trial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Notes

PLANNING GUIDE: MIGUEL

General Planning:

WHO:
Miguel

WHEN:
DATE:
TIME: 1:15PM

WHERE:
Extended curriculum reading class

WHAT (TARGET SKILL):
Greeting peers

HOW TO USE:
Reinforcement, Prompting, Visual Cues

Visual Cue (If Needed):

Type:
- ☐ Behavior cues
- ☐ Choice boards
- ☐ Communication cues
- ☐ Instructional cues
- ☐ Labels/Environmental visuals
- ☐ Visual directions
- ☐ Other:

Form:
- ☐ Object
- ☐ Photograph
- ☐ Picture/Symbol/Icon
- ☑ Text/Written
- ☐ Other:

Additional description:
Miguel will have a visual reminder card with text with a greeting prompt

Types of Prompts:

Check off the types of prompts to use. Consider both task and student characteristics as well as the time available to work on the task.

- ☑ Gestural
- ☑ Verbal   ☑ Less restrictive   ☐ More restrictive
- ☐ Visual
- ☐ Model   ☐ Partial model   ☐ Full model
- ☐ Physical   ☐ Partial physical   ☐ Full physical

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Choose Order of Prompts:

Sequence prompts from least-to-most assistance.	Describe how the prompt will be used.
Level 1: Independent	Miguel will greet peers without prompts
Level 2: Gestural	Point to visual cue card
Level 3: Less Verbal	Say, "Miguel, tell NAME 'Hello'."
Level 4:	

Reinforcers to Use with Student:

- High fives
- Sticker for chart
- Thumbs up
- Verbal social praise

Know the Reinforcement Schedule

Miguel will receive a reinforcer when he greets a peer

Materials Needed:

- visual cue card
- data collection sheet
- reinforcers (including stickers and sticker chart)

How to Measure:

Date	Level 1: Independent	Level 2: Gestural	Level 3: Less Verbal

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PLANNING GUIDE: NOLAN

General Planning:

WHO:
Nolan

WHEN:
DATE:
TIME: 1:30PM

WHERE:
General Ed science class

WHAT (TARGET SKILL):
Group work participation

HOW TO USE:
Reinforcement, Prompting

Visual Cue (If Needed):

Type:
☐ Behavior cues
☐ Choice boards
☐ Communication cues
☐ Instructional cues
☐ Labels/Environmental visuals
☐ Visual directions
☐ Other:

Form:
☐ Object
☐ Photograph
☐ Picture/Symbol/Icon
☐ Text/Written
☐ Other:

Additional description:

Types of Prompts:

Check off the types of prompts to use. Consider both task and student characteristics as well as the time available to work on the task.

☑ Gestural

☑ Verbal   ☑ Less restrictive   ☐ More restrictive

☐ Visual

☐ Model   ☐ Partial model   ☐ Full model

☐ Physical   ☐ Partial physical   ☐ Full physical

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Choose Order of Prompts:

Sequence prompts from least-to-most assistance.	Describe how the prompt will be used.
Level 1: Independent	Nolan will participate in group work (listen to peers, ask questions, and make on-topic comments)
Level 2: Gestural	Point to science task and peer
Level 3: Less Verbal	Say, "Nolan, listen to your partner." "Nolan, ask your partner a question." "Nolan, make a comment to your partner."

Reinforcers to Use with Student:

- High fives
- Thumbs up
- Verbal social praise

Know the Reinforcement Schedule

social praise: various social praise for listening to peers, asking questions, making comments during science group work

Materials Needed:

- Materials and specific instructions for science group work
- data collection sheet

How to Measure:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Notes
Listen								
Ask								
Comment								

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CLASSROOM PLANNING GUIDE

WHO	WHEN	WHERE	WHAT	PROMPT HIERARCHY
				❑ Independent: _____ ❑ Level 2: _____ ❑ Level 3: _____ ❑ Level 4: _____

VISUAL CUES TYPE	VISUAL CUES FORM	REINFORCEMENT SCHEDULE & REINFORCERS	NOTES
❑ Behavior cues ❑ Choice boards ❑ Communication cues ❑ Instructional cues ❑ Labels/Environmental visuals ❑ Visual directions ❑ Other:	❑ Object ❑ Photograph ❑ Picture/Symbol ❑ Text ❑ Other:		

WHO	WHEN	WHERE	WHAT	PROMPT HIERARCHY
				❑ Independent: _____ ❑ Level 2: _____ ❑ Level 3: _____ ❑ Level 4: _____

VISUAL CUES TYPE	VISUAL CUES FORM	REINFORCEMENT SCHEDULE & REINFORCERS	NOTES
❑ Behavior cues ❑ Choice boards ❑ Communication cues ❑ Instructional cues ❑ Labels/Environmental visuals ❑ Visual directions ❑ Other:	❑ Object ❑ Photograph ❑ Picture/Symbol ❑ Text ❑ Other:		

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STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

This step-by-step practice guide outlines how to plan for, use, and monitor Supporting Peer Interactions.

Supporting Peer Interactions can be used to address many different skills and target behaviors for elementary students. Research supports the use of Supporting Peer Interactions for target skills and behaviors in the following domains: social, communication, joint attention, school readiness, play, and academic

PLAN

1. **Know the type of visual cue, if needed**
   - Talk with your supervising teacher about the type of visual cue to use with your student.
   - Review the student planning guide for detailed information on how to use Supporting Peer Interactions for your student.
2. **Know what types of prompts to use with student, if needed**
   - Refer to your student planning guide for the types and order of prompts to use with your student.
   - Consider making a cheat sheet of the prompts you will be using.
3. **Know if reinforcers are needed**
   - Review the planning guide for specific items, activities, or actions that will be used as reinforcers.
   - Remember to update the student planning guide as you and your teacher make any necessary adjustments to the reinforcers for your student.
4. **Have materials accessible/ready to use**
   - Materials should include any materials you need for the activity, visual cues (if part of the plan), reinforcers, and a method for data collection.
5. **Know what data to collect**
   - Review the planning guide to see what data you should collect.
   - Be sure to select your data sheet and have it with you when it is time for the student to use the behavior or target skill. Sample data sheets are in the resources section that can be personalized for data collection.
   - Remember to collect data on the target skill that is identified on the planning guide.
   - If you have any additional questions about data collection, be sure to ask your supervising teacher.
   - **NOTE:** For supporting peer interactions, some activities may occur in activities that make carrying a data sheet around difficult (e.g., recess, gym class). If this is the case, check in with your supervising teacher about other ideas, such as using an app or a manual clicker/counter, using stickers or pieces of tape on your arm to track successes or prompt levels.

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USE

1. **Review the student activity involving social interactions (if appropriate for student)**
   - Remind the student of the target skill or any expectations about the activity.
   - Use communication that is appropriate for the target student – use simple language and include visual cues (e.g., photos, drawings) or gestures if needed.
   - NOTE: This may not be needed every time the student engages in the activity depending on how familiar the student is with the routine/activity.
2. **Allow student to interact with peers with the least amount of support necessary**
   - Give the student and peers space/distance to interact as you are able
   - Provide support if needed but avoid inserting yourself in middle of interactions or being the go-between person.
3. **Assist the student in interacting with peers**
   - **Support student's use of visual cues (as needed)**
     - Get your student's attention and show them the visual cue.
     - Make sure to position yourself in a way that the student's attention is on the visual cue and not you.
   - **Prompt learner and/or peers (as needed)**
     - Provide the student with a prompt if they are having difficulty using the target behavior or skill.
     - Remember to use the prompt hierarchy from the planning guide.
     - Provide the peers with a prompt if needed.
   - **Use appropriate wait time throughout the activity**
     - Try to be consistent with the wait time you allow before providing a prompt to your student or peers.
     - You want to have a balance of giving your student and peers enough wait time enough wait time and prompting to have maximally successful and independent interactions.
4. **Provide reinforcement as appropriate**
   - If you are giving verbal praise, try to pair it with a description of the behavior (if appropriate). For example, "I like how you are taking turns playing with the ball with friends." instead of "Good job." Remember to refer to your student planning guide for potential reinforcers to use with your student's individual behavior or skill.
   - Offer a variety of reinforcers. Remember it is important to use more than one reinforcer.
   - Changing reinforcers and adding new reinforcers to the planning guide can be discussed during the weekly check in with your supervising teacher.
   - NOTE: Don't forget to reinforce the peers too, even though there may not be a reinforcement plan or schedule. Providing social praise with peers can also increase the success of peer interactions.

MONITOR

1. **Take data on target behavior/skill**
   - Collect data on the target skill during the session. Find a data collection system that works well with the activity and for you – it may be post-it notes for a table task, but a clicker or app during a more active task like PE.
   - Make notes about anything that is going well or not going well.
2. **Check in with teacher about next steps at least weekly.**
   - Plan a time to check in with your teacher each week about:
     - Your progress using the practice (review the Supporting Peer Interactions checklist)
     - The student's progress (review the data you collected)
     - Any necessary adjustments to the planning guide (if needed)

IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

General Planning:

WHO:

WHEN:
DATE:
TIME:

WHERE:

WHAT (TARGET SKILL):

HOW TO USE:

HOW TO MEASURE:

		Date:	
		Observer's Initials:	
PLAN			
1.1	Know visual cues to use with student, if needed		
1.2	Know what types of prompts to use with student, if needed		
1.3	Know if reinforcers are needed		
1.4	Have materials accessible/ready to use		
1.5	Know what data to collect		
USE			
2.1	Review with student activity involving social interactions (if appropriate for student)		
2.2	Make sure you, student, and peers are in position to encourage peer interactions (aim for least amount of support)		
2.3 Assist the student in interacting with peers			
2.3A	Support student's use of visual cues (as needed)		
2.3B	Prompt learner and/or peers (as needed)		
2.3C	Use appropriate wait time throughout the task		
2.4	Reinforce the student as appropriate		
MONITOR			
3.1	Collect data on target skill/behavior		
3.2	Check in with teacher about next steps at least weekly		

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IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST: MULTI-USE

Observation:	1	2	3	4	5
Date:					
Observer's Initials:					
PLAN					
1.1 Know visual cues to use with student, if needed					
1.2 Know what types of prompts to use with student, if needed					
1.3 Know if reinforcers are needed					
1.4 Have materials accessible/ready to use					
1.5 Know what data to collect					
USE					
2.1 Review with student activity involving social interactions (if appropriate for student)					
2.2 Make sure you, student, and peers are in position to encourage peer interactions (aim for least amount of support)					
2.3 Assist the student in interacting with peers					
2.3A Support student's use of visual cues (as needed)					
2.3B Prompt learner and/or peers (as needed)					
2.3C Use appropriate wait time throughout the task					
2.4 Reinforce the student as appropriate					
MONITOR					
3.1 Collect data on target skill/behavior					
3.2 Check in with teacher about next steps at least weekly					

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COMPANION GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

Peer interactions occur when children are playing, sharing, taking turns, and/or using verbal (talking) and non-verbal (smiling, waving) communication with each other.

Research supports the use of Supporting Peer Interactions for target skills and behaviors in the following domains: social, communication, joint attention, school readiness, play, and academic.

Peer interactions may be hard for some children on the spectrum, so it is important to support these interactions throughout the day. This can be done by making time for children on the spectrum to take part in activities with their peers (including siblings). Examples include inviting other children over to play, taking your child to a playground or community activity, or setting a time for your child to interact with friends on the computer or phone. With support, all children on the spectrum can be part of peer interactions, even if they have difficulty with verbal communication.

Since many children on the spectrum struggle with peer interactions, you may need to use reinforcement, prompting, and/or visual cues to help your child become more comfortable with playing and interacting with peers. See the Companion Guides for Families for Reinforcement, Prompting, and Visual Cues for more information on how to use these practices.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS FOR USING SUPPORTING PEER INTERACTIONS?

1. **Identify the behavior or task**
   Choose the behavior that you will focus on while supporting your child with peer interactions. Think about what you want the child to do, how you would like them to demonstrate the behavior, and when this behavior or task would be performed.

WHAT	HOW	WHEN
Saying hello	Waving or saying hello to friends	Each morning at school bus stop
Taking turns	Play a game with a friend or sibling	Family game night or play date
Talk to friends or siblings	Answer questions asked by friend or sibling	During play time, online video chats
Share items or toys	Let sibling or friend play with their items or toys	Play time at home or play date
Socially participate in a remote learning meeting	Share ideas or ask questions during a remote learning session	During remote learning meeting for school

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- **TIP:** Start by selecting a behavior or skill that your child needs help with to start or complete. Think of a behavior your child **can** do but does not do consistently or does only with family and needs support to do with friends.

2. **Choose the type of activity for the interaction**

   Pick an activity where peer interactions are as natural as possible such as playing at the playground or park or being part of an online class or game.

   - **TIP:** Try to choose an activity that your child will be able to practice more than once. For example, a weekly play date, daily online/remote learning, daily trip to the neighborhood park, or waiting for the school bus with other children.

3. **Decide which supports would work best**

   Decide which supports would work best to help your child with the interaction – reinforcement, prompting, and/or visual cues.

   - **TIP:** You may need to use more than one type of support for peer interactions. Often reinforcement and prompting work best when helping a child learn how to interact with others.
   - **TIP:** Stand behind your child, rather than being in the middle of their interaction with another child to keep the interaction as natural as possible.

4. **Explain supports to peers**

   Other children can help with giving prompts and reinforcement to your child to support with the interaction. Sometimes children are more motivated to perform a task when prompted by a friend or sibling.

   - **TIP:** Peers may need some support with using the strategies. Don't forget to give the peers prompts, if needed, and reinforcement.

5. **Give reinforcement**

   Each time your child uses the behavior or skill, remember to give the reward even if prompts were needed.

   - **TIP:** Wait until the interaction is complete before giving a reward so that you do not interrupt the interaction.
   - **TIP:** Be consistent – if your child sees that you are not following through with the reward, then they may not be motivated do what is expected.

WHAT ARE THE KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN USING SUPPORTING PEER INTERACTIONS?

1. **Start small**

   Choose one task, activity, or behavior to focus on when supporting peer interactions. Wait until your child has shown success with that behavior before working on other behaviors during peer interactions.

2. **Be patient Remember learning a skill or changing a behavior takes time.**

   Once you start supporting peer interactions, it may take time to see the changes. Keep trying and stay consistent and you should see your child use the expected behavior more often.

3. **Remember to give reinforcement**

   A reward may help your child be even more motivated to participate in an activity with peers. It does not need to be a big reward – sometimes social praise is a big motivator.

4. **Limit adult involvement**

   Try to limit how much you or another adult is involved with the activity. Instead of an adult giving a prompt, try showing the peer how to prompt your child with an activity.

WHAT ARE COMMON CHALLENGES WHEN USING SUPPORTING PEER INTERACTIONS?

The following are examples of what you can do if Supporting Peer Interactions are not working exactly the way you expected.

Your child does not interact with peers even when prompted

Interacting with peers may be difficult with for your child. Try
- modeling interactions for them such as taking turns in a game or having a conversation
- teaching your child how to respond to others – role playing different situations can help them start to become more comfortable interacting with their peers, some kids like to role play with dolls or favorite toy figures
- increasing reinforcement for positive behaviors – when your child does what is expected, give some type of motivating reward

Your child does not have siblings or any same age peers that live close by

You may need to create opportunities for your child to interact. Try:
- helping your child join a sports team, church group, community activity or class, or school club depending on their interest(s)
- using a video chat, such as FaceTime or Google Hangout, to help your child interact with others when they cannot meet in person
- inviting another child over for a playdate. Keep these short (about 30 minutes at first) and do a structured adult-led activity like baking/decorating cookies, building a Lego structure, doing a craft, or going on a hike or scavenger hunt

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Your child will not perform the task when give the visual cue

A. Try to determine the cause. Some possibilities are:

Cause	Suggestion
Child does not understand how to use the visual cue	Use a different visual cue that gives the information needed to understand how to use the visual cue do the task/behavior in a way they can understand (for example, if you used words, try adding picture or if you used pictures, try changing to photographs). Show your child how to complete the task using the visual cue.
The task is too difficult	Break into smaller steps and focus on one step at a time.
Child is not motivated	Change reward and/or give a choice of rewards.
Visual cue has too much information	Make the visual cue simple. Too many pictures and words can be too much for a child to follow. Make the visual cue for one step of the task and use simple visuals to show how to complete the step.

After showing your child the visual cue, they wait until you give a prompt to do the task

A. When a child knows how to do a task but will only do it when prompted, they may be developing prompt dependency. To reduce prompt dependency, try:
- increasing response wait time – sometimes a little more time to process the directions can help a child start working on the task
- increasing reinforcement for positive behaviors – when your child does what is expected, give some type of motivating reward

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AFIRM Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules

The National Professional Development Center on Autism

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GLOSSARY

Augmentative or alternative communication (AAC): Forms of communication like speech-generating devices, sign language, or picture symbols that support a learner's ability to interact with peers beyond spoken language.

Fidelity: How well and how often the implementation steps for an evidence-based practice are followed.

Gestural prompt: A movement that provides the learner with information about how to perform the target skill/behavior (e.g., pointing to the top of the paper to remind the student to write their name).

Implementation checklist: The specific steps needed to accurately follow an evidence-based practice.

Independent: A student is able to use a behavior or skill without assistance or support from an adult or peer.

Least-to-most prompting: A prompt hierarchy with at least three levels used to teach new skills. At the first level, the learner is given the opportunity to respond without prompts. The remaining levels include prompts that proceed from least to most amounts of assistance. The last level is the controlling prompt.

Model prompt: Demonstrating the correct way to perform the target skill/behavior for the learner. Useful when verbal or visual prompts are not sufficient to help the learner perform the target skill correctly.

Natural peer interactions: Situations or activities that are unplanned and naturally occur during the school day that provide opportunities for learners on the spectrum to interact with their peers in age-appropriate ways.

Non-speaking communication: Using body language, facial expressions, or actions to communicate with peers like smiling, high-fiving, or gestures.

Peer exchanges: Other forms of interacting with peers beyond typical methods of communication; can include taking turns or sharing materials.

Peer training: Training provided to a peer by a supervising teacher or team member that is necessary when a peer is providing a learner on the spectrum with reinforcement, prompting, and/or visual cues.

Physical prompt: Hands on assistance given to a learner to successfully perform the target skill or behavior. It is generally used when the learner does not respond to less restrictive prompts. Useful when teaching adaptive or motor skills.

Positive reinforcement: Feedback provided to the learner (e.g., praise or reward) after the learner performs the target skill or behavior.

Prompt: Assistance given to help the learner perform a specific (target) skill or behavior. Prompts can be verbal, gestural, physical, visual or a model.

Prompting hierarchy: The order and types of prompts to give a learner to assist with performing the target skill or behavior. The hierarchy can be different depending on the needs of the student and the type of goal. Refer to the Prompt Hierarchy Examples document for examples of prompt hierarchies by target skill/behavior.

Reinforcer: Motivating attention, activity, or material provided to a learner immediately after completing the target skill/behavior to increase the likelihood the target skill/behavior will be used again in the future. Must be age-appropriate and meaningful to the learner.

Set-up peer interactions: Situations or activities intentionally planned to encourage social interactions between learners on the spectrum and their peers; should be age-appropriate and simulate natural situations or activities as much as possible.

Social praise: Words used as a reinforce for a learner's skills or behavior Examples include, "Nice job!" "You did it!" Always follow with a specific description of the behavior you are praising.

Token economy: A specific type of positive reinforcement system in which after a learner has successfully completed the target skill or behavior, a token is provided. After earning a certain number of tokens, the learner earns a more desirable reinforcer after earning a predetermined number of tokens. Examples of tokens are checks on a checklist, play money, cards, stickers, tickets, etc..... After earning tokens, the learner gets 5 minutes of iPad time, drawing, playing with Legos, etc....

Traditional communication: A learner on the spectrum speaking/using verbal language to interact with peers.

Verbal prompt: Includes any spoken words directed to learners to help them perform a target skill correctly. Verbal prompts range in intensity level from least to most restrictive.

Visual cues: Concrete objects, pictures, symbols, or text that provide a student with information about a routine, activity, behavioral expectation, or skill. Visual cues must be appropriate for both the task and the learner's skill level and work to support a student's independence.

Visual directions: Visuals that organize instructions for an activity or task. These can include things like arranging steps or tasks in visually distinct areas (like drawers, compartments, file folders) or providing written or pictorial steps for a task.

Visual prompt: A picture, icon or object used to provide learners with information about how to perform the target skill or behavior.