



AFIRM
for Paraeducators



RESOURCE PACKET: TIME DELAY: INTRODUCTION & PRACTICE

UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute
Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules for Paraeducators
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Team, Updated 2024



**The National Professional
Development Center** on Autism



**FRANK PORTER GRAHAM
CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE**

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TIME DELAY: INTRODUCTION & PRACTICE

WHAT IS TIME DELAY?

Time Delay is a foundational practice that is used with other evidence-based practices (prompting and reinforcement). When using time delay, adults provide a controlling prompt (prompt which ensures learner will use the target skill) before learner responds, which reduces errors and increases reinforcement opportunities.

Learners on the spectrum often struggle with generalizing target skills and behaviors. Learners may become dependent on prompts from adults and/or peers to use a target skill or behavior. Time delay can be used to prevent dependence on prompts.

Time delay can be used to address many different skills and target behaviors for elementary students. Research supports the use of time delay for target skills and behaviors in the following domains: social, communication, joint attention, behavior, school readiness, play, cognitive, motor, adaptive, and academic.

Controlling prompt is the words and/or actions said/used to ensure that the learner will perform the target skill successfully. It can be a gestural, verbal, visual, model, or physical prompt.

Constant time delay is a time delay procedure that uses a fixed wait time between giving the target cue/stimulus and providing the controlling prompt (typically 3-5 seconds). Constant time delay can be used after the learner is 100% accurate with two consecutive zero-second time delay trials.

Progressive time delay is a time delay procedure that gradually increases the wait time between giving the target cue/stimulus and providing the controlling prompt for each trial (up to as many as 10 seconds). Progressive time delay can be used after the learner is 100% accurate with two consecutive zero-second time delay trials.

Suggested Citation:

Sam, A., Savage, M., Steinbrenner, J., Chin, J., Morgan, W., & AFIRM for Paras Team. (2020). *Time Delay: Introduction & Practice*. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, Autism Focused Intervention Resources and Modules for Paraeducators. <https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu>

TARGET SKILL EXAMPLES

Time Delay can be used to address many different skills and target behaviors for elementary students. Research supports the use of Time Delay for target skills and behaviors in the following domains: social, communication, joint attention, behavior, school readiness, play, cognitive, motor, adaptive, and academic. Below are examples of possible target skills or behaviors that can be used for Time Delay.

Academic

- Reading Instruction
 - increase reading fluency
 - answer reading comprehension questions
- Math Instruction
 - learn math facts
 - count objects/counting to 10/20/100
- Writing Instruction
 - write a complete sentence
 - write several sentences or an essay on

Behavior

- Follow calm down routine
- Keep hands to self
- Follow teacher directions
- Use coping strategies (count backwards from 10, breathe deeply 3 times)

Adaptive

- Washing hands
- Opening items at snack/lunch (e.g., milk carton, lunch box, chip bag, etc.)
- Putting on jacket
- Putting on or tying shoes

Cognitive

- Shifts visual attention between two items

Communication

- Ask for help when help is needed
- Request a preferred item
- Ask peers questions during group work
- Verbally requesting wants/needs
- Utilize communication device
- Express feelings or emotions verbally

Play

- Initiating play with peers
- Engaging in cooperative play with peers
- Participating in games

Joint attention

- Points and/or shows at an item to share interest
- Responds to an adult's bid for joint attention (e.g., 'Look at this picture!')

School-readiness

- Follow classroom morning routine
- Go through the cafeteria line independently
- Record homework in agenda
- Printing name on paper
- Start work on assignments
- Sit in designated area during morning meeting

Motor

- Use scissors
- Complete an obstacle course
- Safely navigating stairs
- Throw a ball

Social

- Take turns when playing a game
- Initiate/Continue conversation with a peer
- Initiate/Respond to adult/peer greetings
- Comment on topic
- Ask a peer a question
- Participate in group work

PLANNING GUIDE

General Planning:

WHO:

WHEN:

DATE:

TIME:

WHERE:

WHAT (TARGET SKILL):

HOW TO USE:

Target Cue or Task Directive:

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

Controlling Prompt:

Describe how the selected prompt from above will be used.

Time Delay Procedure:☐ Progressive**OR**☐ Constant**Wait Time:****Reinforcers to Use with Student:**

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

How to Measure:

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

PLANNING GUIDE: DANIEL

General Planning:

WHO:
Daniel

WHEN:
DATE: 1/7/19
TIME: Centers 10:30AM

WHERE:
Ms. Shaw's Gen Ed kindergarten class

WHAT (TARGET SKILL):
Respond to peer's greeting

HOW TO USE:
Time delay

Target Cue or Task Directive:

During morning meeting, a peer will greet Daniel by name (e.g., "Good morning, Daniel" or "Hi, Daniel").

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

Controlling Prompt:

Describe how the selected prompt from above will be used.

Ask Daniel, "What do you say?"

Time Delay Procedure:

☐ Progressive

OR

☒ Constant

Wait Time:

3 seconds

Reinforcers to Use with Student:

- High-five
- Sticker
- Verbal praise

How to Measure:

Data will be collected based using a form with three indicators: responded to peer greeting given the controlling prompt (P), responded to peer greeting independently (I), or did not respond to peer greeting given the controlling prompt (X).

Date/Trial	1	2	3	4
1/8	P	P	P	X
1/9	P	P	P	P
1/10	P	X	P	P
1/15	P	P	P	P
1/16	P	I	I	P

PLANNING GUIDE: ETHAN

General Planning:

WHO:
Ethan

WHEN:
DATE: 12/5/19
TIME: 10:15AM

WHERE:
Math block

WHAT (TARGET SKILL):
Increase fluency of
multiplication facts

HOW TO USE:
Time delay

Target Cue or Task Directive:

Show multiplication flash card and ask, "What is the answer?"

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

Controlling Prompt:

Describe how the selected prompt from above will be used.

Verbal prompt - Tell him the number

Time Delay Procedure:

☐ Progressive

OR

☒ Constant

Wait Time:

4 seconds

Reinforcers to Use with Student:

- High-five
- Social praise

How to Measure:

Date/Trial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12/5	0	0	0	P	I	I	P	I
12/6	0	0	I	P	I	I	I	I
12/7	0	I	I	I	I	0	P	I

Key: P = Correct with controlling prompt; I = Correct response independently; 0 = No response or incorrect

PLANNING GUIDE: MELANIE

General Planning:

WHO:
Melanie

WHEN:
DATE: 3/16/19
TIME: 9:45AM

WHERE:
ECS separate
classroom

WHAT (TARGET SKILL):
Identifying colors

HOW TO USE:
Time delay

Target Cue or Task Directive:

Give Melanie colored blocks. Tell Melanie to point to color (e.g., "Melanie, point to red.")

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 |

Controlling Prompt:

Describe how the selected prompt from above will be used.

Point to the correct color and say color name.

Time Delay Procedure:

☐ Progressive

OR

☒ Constant

Wait Time:

4 seconds

Reinforcers to Use with Student:

- High-five
- verbal praise

How to Measure:

Date/Trial	1	2	3	4	5
3/16	P	P	P	P	P
3/17	P	P	P	P	P
3/18	P	P	0	0	I
3/19	P	I	I	I	I
3/20	I	I	I	I	I

Key: P = Correct with controlling prompt; I = Correct response independently; 0 = No response or incorrect

CLASSROOM PLANNING GUIDE

WHO	WHEN	WHERE	WHAT	TYPE OF CONTROLLING PROMPT		
				☐ Gestural ☐ Verbal ☐ Visual ☐ Model ☐ Physical	☐ Less ☐ Partial ☐ Partial	☐ More ☐ Full ☐ Full
TIME DELAY PROCEDURE		CONTROLLING PROMPT DESCRIPTION	RESPONSE INTERVAL/ WAIT TIME	REINFORCERS	NOTES	
☐ Progressive ☐ Constant						

WHO	WHEN	WHERE	WHAT	TYPE OF CONTROLLING PROMPT		
				☐ Gestural ☐ Verbal ☐ Visual ☐ Model ☐ Physical	☐ Less ☐ Partial ☐ Partial	☐ More ☐ Full ☐ Full
TIME DELAY PROCEDURE		CONTROLLING PROMPT DESCRIPTION	RESPONSE INTERVAL/ WAIT TIME	REINFORCERS	NOTES	
☐ Progressive ☐ Constant						

WHO	WHEN	WHERE	WHAT	TYPE OF CONTROLLING PROMPT		
				☐ Gestural ☐ Verbal ☐ Visual ☐ Model ☐ Physical	☐ Less ☐ Partial ☐ Partial	☐ More ☐ Full ☐ Full
TIME DELAY PROCEDURE		CONTROLLING PROMPT DESCRIPTION	RESPONSE INTERVAL/ WAIT TIME	REINFORCERS	NOTES	
☐ Progressive ☐ Constant						

TIME DELAY DECISION TREE

Follow these steps until the student responds with 100% accuracy for 2 consecutive trials.

Target Cue: Words and/or actions that signal the learner to perform the target skill/behavior

Give the target cue to the student _____



Time Delay

Wait 0-seconds for the student to use the skill



Controlling Prompt: Words and/or actions that ensures the learner performs the target skill/behavior

Give the controlling prompt _____



Student Response

The student responds correctly



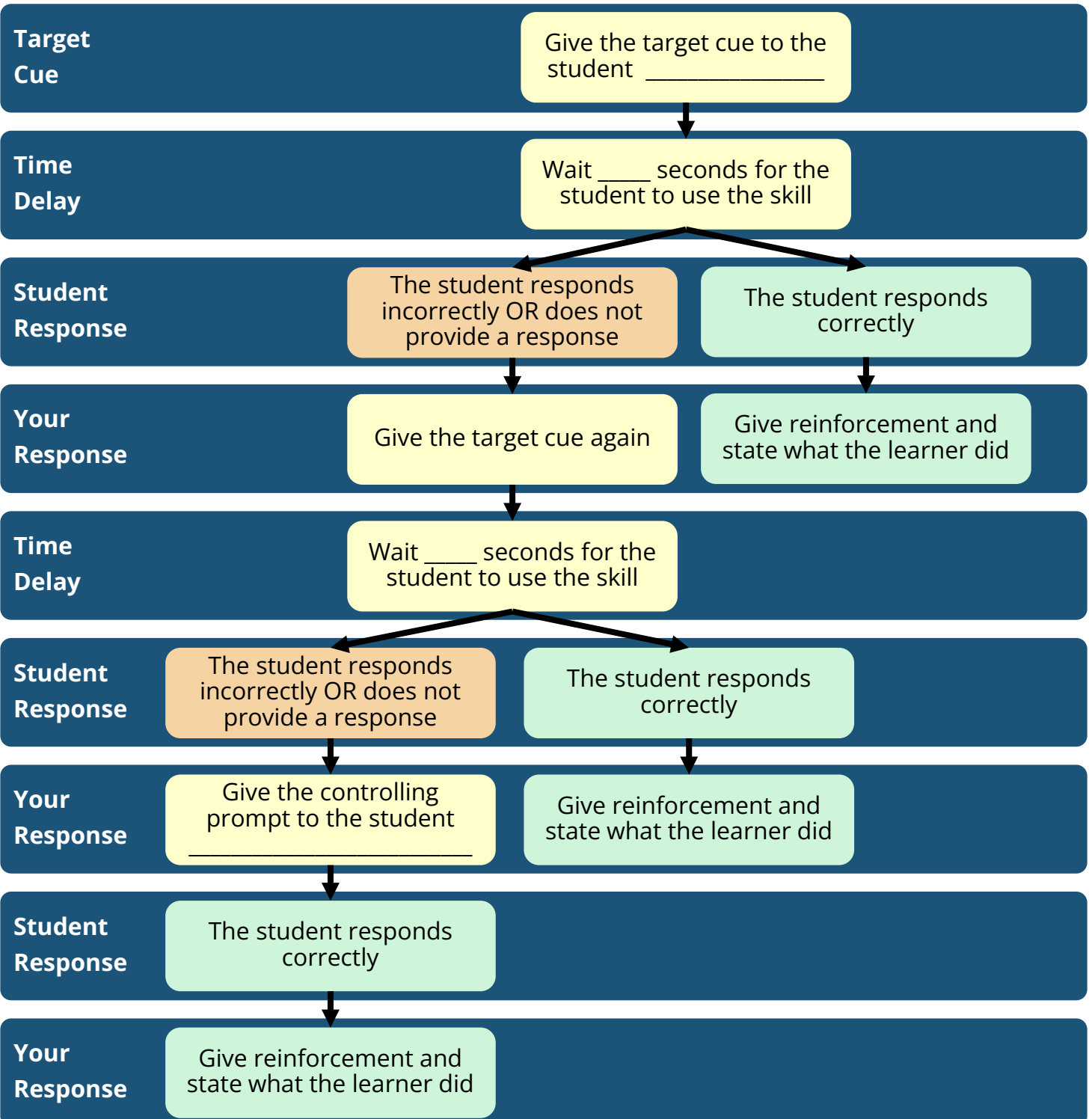
Your Response

Give the student reinforcement and state what the learner did correctly

Follow these steps after the student responds with 100% accuracy for 2 consecutive trials.

Constant time delay: Wait time should be the same for each trial (generally 3, 4, or 5 seconds)

Progressive time delay: Gradually increase wait time (add 1 or 2 seconds) for subsequent trials based on data and the student's responses



STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

This step-by-step practice guide outlines how to plan for, use, and monitor Time Delay.

Time delay can be used to address many different skills and target behaviors for elementary students. Research supports the use of time delay for target skills and behaviors in the following domains: social, communication, joint attention, behavior, school readiness, play, cognitive, motor, adaptive, and academic.



PLAN

- 1. Know the cue or task directions**
 - Review the planning guide and make note of the cue or task directions you will use.
- 2. Know the controlling prompt**
 - Review the planning guide so that you know the controlling prompt to use with the student.
 - The controlling prompt ensures your student will have 100% accuracy in performing the skill or behavior.
 - The controlling prompt will vary for different students and different goals.
- 3. Know if progressive OR constant time delay will be used**
 - Review the planning guide so that you know the time delay procedure to use with the student.
 - **Constant time delay:** always use the same amount of wait time (usually 3-5 seconds) before providing the cue again
 - **Progressive time delay:** the wait time gradually increases over time and can be as much as 10 seconds.
- 4. Know the length of wait time/response interval**
 - Review the planning guide and note the length of wait time you will use with the student.
- 5. Know what reinforcement to use**
 - Review the planning guide so that you know appropriate reinforcers to use with the student.
- 6. Know what data to collect**
 - Review the planning guide to see what data you should collect.
 - Review any prepared data sheets with your teacher to understand how the data should be collected.
 - 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.

USE

1. Have needed materials ready

- Materials should include resources you need for the lesson, reinforcers, and a data sheet.
- If the student has a variety of reinforcers listed on the planning guide, consider having a basket of the items close by so that you can easily access the ones you need.

2. Get the student's attention

- Prepare the student for what they will be working on before giving them the task direction. This could include providing an overview of the task or expectations for the session.
- Make sure that the student is focused on you before you give directions.

3. Give student the cue or task direction

- Give the student the task direction identified on the planning guide.

FOLLOW STEPS 4 AND 5 IF USING 0-SECOND TIME DELAY UNTIL THE STUDENT RESPONDS WITH 100% ACCURACY FOR 2 CONSECUTIVE TRIALS.

NOTE: A trial is usually considered going through the skill targets one time (e.g., going through one round of the 10 target vocabulary words is one trial) or a pre-defined number of targets of the same skill (e.g., greeting three peers during morning group).

4. Deliver controlling prompt with 0-second delay (immediately)

- Immediately give the student the controlling prompt identified on the planning guide (and Time Delay visual, if using)
- Remember the controlling prompt is provided before the learner responds when using a 0-second time delay.
- If the student has 100% accuracy for 2 consecutive trials during your first session you can start with the time delay for the next session if you are addressing the same targets (e.g., the same set of math facts).

5. Provide reinforcement

- Provide the reinforcement immediately when the student responds correctly.
- Pair verbal reinforcement with a description of the target behavior or skill
- Use the reinforcers identified on the student's planning guide.
- Remember to have a variety of reinforcers available and to vary the reinforcers used with each student.

FOLLOW STEPS 6 AND 7 IF USING 1 OR MORE SECOND TIME DELAY UNTIL THE STUDENT RESPONDS WITH 100% ACCURACY FOR 2 CONSECUTIVE TRIALS.

6. Wait determined amount of time

- Follow the wait time listed on the planning guide (and Time Delay visual, if using)
 - **Constant time delay:** be consistent with your wait time for each trial
 - **Progressive time delay:** gradually increase the wait time based on student progress and discussion with supervising teacher

7. Respond to the student

- If student responds correctly:
 - Provide reinforcement as outlined on the planning guide (see Step 5 above)
- If student responds incorrectly or does not respond:
 - Give target cue/stimulus again as outlined on the planning guide (and Time Delay visual, if using)
 - Wait determined amount of time as outlined on the planning guide (and Time Delay visual, if using)
 - If student responds correctly, provide reinforcement as outlined on the planning guide (see Step 5 above)
 - If student still responds incorrectly or does not respond:
 - Provide the controlling prompt as outlined on the planning guide (and Time Delay visual, if using)
 - Provide reinforcement as outlined on the planning guide (see Step 5 above)

MONITOR

1. Take data on target behavior/skill

- Collect data on the target skill during the session.
- 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 Time Delay 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 cue or task directions		
1.2	Know the controlling prompt		
1.3	Know if progressive or constant time delay will be used		
1.4	Know the length of wait time		
1.5	Know what reinforcement to use		
1.6	Know what data to collect		
USE			
2.1	Have needed materials ready		
2.2	Get student's attention		
2.3	Give student the target cue or stimulus		
Follow steps below until student responds with 100% prompted accuracy for 2 consecutive trials			
2.4	Deliver controlling prompt with 0-second delay (immediately)		
2.5	Provide reinforcement		
Follow steps below after student responds with 100% prompted accuracy for 2 consecutive trials			
2.6	Wait determined amount of time		
2.7	Respond to student		
2.7A	If student responds correctly, provide reinforcement		
2.7B	If student responds incorrectly or does not respond:		
2.7B.i	Give target cue/stimulus again		
2.7B.ii	Wait determined amount of time		
2.7B.iii	If student responds correctly, provide reinforcement		
2.7B.iv	If student does not respond correctly, provide controlling prompt, followed by reinforcement		
MONITOR			
3.1	Collect data on target skill/behavior		
3.2	Check in with teacher about next steps at least weekly		

IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST: MULTI-USE

Observation:		1	2	3	4	5
Date:						
Observer's Initials:						
PLAN						
1.1	Know cue or task directions					
1.2	Know the controlling prompt					
1.3	Know if progressive or constant time delay will be used					
1.4	Know the length of wait time					
1.5	Know what reinforcement to use					
1.6	Know what data to collect					
USE						
2.1	Have needed materials ready					
2.2	Get student's attention					
2.3	Give student the target cue or stimulus					
Follow steps below until student responds with 100% prompted accuracy for 2 consecutive trials						
2.4	Deliver controlling prompt with 0-second delay (immediately)					
2.5	Provide reinforcement					
Follow steps below after student responds with 100% prompted accuracy for 2 consecutive trials						
2.6	Wait determined amount of time					
2.7	Respond to student					
2.7A	If student responds correctly, provide reinforcement					
2.7B	If student responds incorrectly or does not respond:					
2.7B.i	Give target cue/stimulus again					
2.7B.ii	Wait determined amount of time					
2.7B.iii	If student responds correctly, provide reinforcement					
2.7B.iv	If student does not respond correctly, provide controlling prompt, followed by reinforcement					
MONITOR						
3.1	Collect data on target skill/behavior					
3.2	Check in with teacher about next steps at least weekly					

COMPANION GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

Time Delay is an evidence-based practice that starts with a higher level of support (prompts) to help a child to learn or do a certain skill, and then reduces the prompts. Time delay can be especially helpful for reducing the number of prompts and supports your child needs to complete a task.

Time delay uses prompting, so it would be helpful to review the Prompting: Introduction & Practice module and the Companion Guide for Families: Prompting first.



Target cue is words and/or actions that let your child know to start the task/behavior.

Controlling prompt are words and/or actions that will make sure that your child successfully does the skill/behavior as they are learning a new skill. It can be a gestural, verbal, visual, model, or physical prompt (see definitions below and/or the Prompting module for more detailed information).

Zero-second delay uses the controlling prompt right after giving the target cue. The 0-second delay is used when the child is first practicing the skill.

Constant time delay uses the same amount of wait time between giving the target cue and using the controlling prompt (usually 3-5 seconds). The constant time delay can be used after the child is regularly successful with the 0-second delay.

Progressive time delay uses gradually longer amounts of wait time between giving the target cue and providing the controlling prompt. The progressive time delay can be used after the child is regularly successful with the 0-second delay. You can increase the time when the child is regularly successful at the previous delay time.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS FOR USING TIME DELAY?

1. Identify the behavior or task

Choose the behavior that you will focus on while using Time Delay with your child. 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
Completing chores	Choosing a chore from a list (washing dishes, putting toys away, making bed, laundry)	At least 1 time per day
Greeting others	Waving and or saying hello/goodbye	When family members leave/return home

WHAT	HOW	WHEN
Entering and exiting the car	Buckling and unbuckling the seatbelt	Every car ride
Getting dressed	Put on coat	Before going outside
Complete homework activity	Identify colors, recall math facts, spelling words, etc.	Each afternoon/evening
Eating with a fork or spoon	Sitting at the table during	At mealtime

- **TIP:** Start by selecting a one-step behavior or skill that you can quickly help your child complete successfully.

2. Determine the target cue and controlling prompt

Choose the words, pictures, or actions that you will use to let your child know it is time to use the task (target cue) and the words and/or actions to make sure your child will be successful with completing the task (controlling prompt).

- **EXAMPLE:** If you are helping your child learn to say goodbye to a family member, your target cue could be saying, "Wave bye" and your controlling prompt could be taking the child's hand and waving it at the family member.
- **TIP:** Use the same target cue for each attempt so that your child knows exactly what is expected.
- **TIP:** For the controlling prompt, try to use the prompt with the least amount of support that still makes sure that your child will be successful with the task or behavior every time.

3. Decide which time delay procedure and wait time to use

Choose if you will use constant time delay (same amount of wait time) or progressive time delay (gradually increasing wait time). Decide how much time to wait for your child to respond before repeating the target cue and giving the controlling prompt.

- **TIP:** Everyone processes information at a different rate. The amount of time needed can be different depending on the task. Think about how long it generally takes your child to respond to a request or direction.
- **TIP:** If you are using time delay for the first time, it might be easiest to start with a constant time delay.

4. Choose the rewards (reinforcers)

Choose rewards that will be motivating to your child. These can be a variety of things such as a specific item, time to do a preferred activity, or special praise from you and/or other members of your household.

- **TIP:** See the Companion Guide for Families: Reinforcement for more information about reinforcement.
- **TIP:** For rewards that are activities/items, try to avoid using rewards that your child can use at any time.
- **TIP:** A social reward (like high fives or praise) or a quick/small reward (like a sticker) may work best when using time delay because you will often have the child work on a set of short skills in a row. If bigger rewards work better, consider using a token reinforcement system to work towards earning a big reward.

Social

- Tickles
- Hugs
- Praise ("Good job finishing homework," "I love how you helped your sister clear the table")
- High-fives
- Clapping
- Cheering
- Tight squeezes

Activities/Items

- Computer game
- Time to play outside
- Favorite game
- Pokémon© cards
- Legos
- Drawing
- Movie
- Swinging on a swing
- Preferred snack
- Tokens for token reinforcer

5. Use 0-second delay

Give your child the target cue and then give the controlling prompt right after. Use the 0-second delay until your child is able to respond correctly at least two times in a row.

- **EXAMPLE:** If you are helping your child learn to say goodbye to a family member, you give the target cue (Say "Wave bye") and then immediately give the controlling prompt (Take your child's hand and wave goodbye).
- **TIP:** If your child responds incorrectly when given the controlling prompt, you should change the controlling prompt to one that gives more assistance.

Give the target cue to your child



Wait 0-seconds to for your child to use the skill



Give the controlling prompt to your child



Your child responds correctly

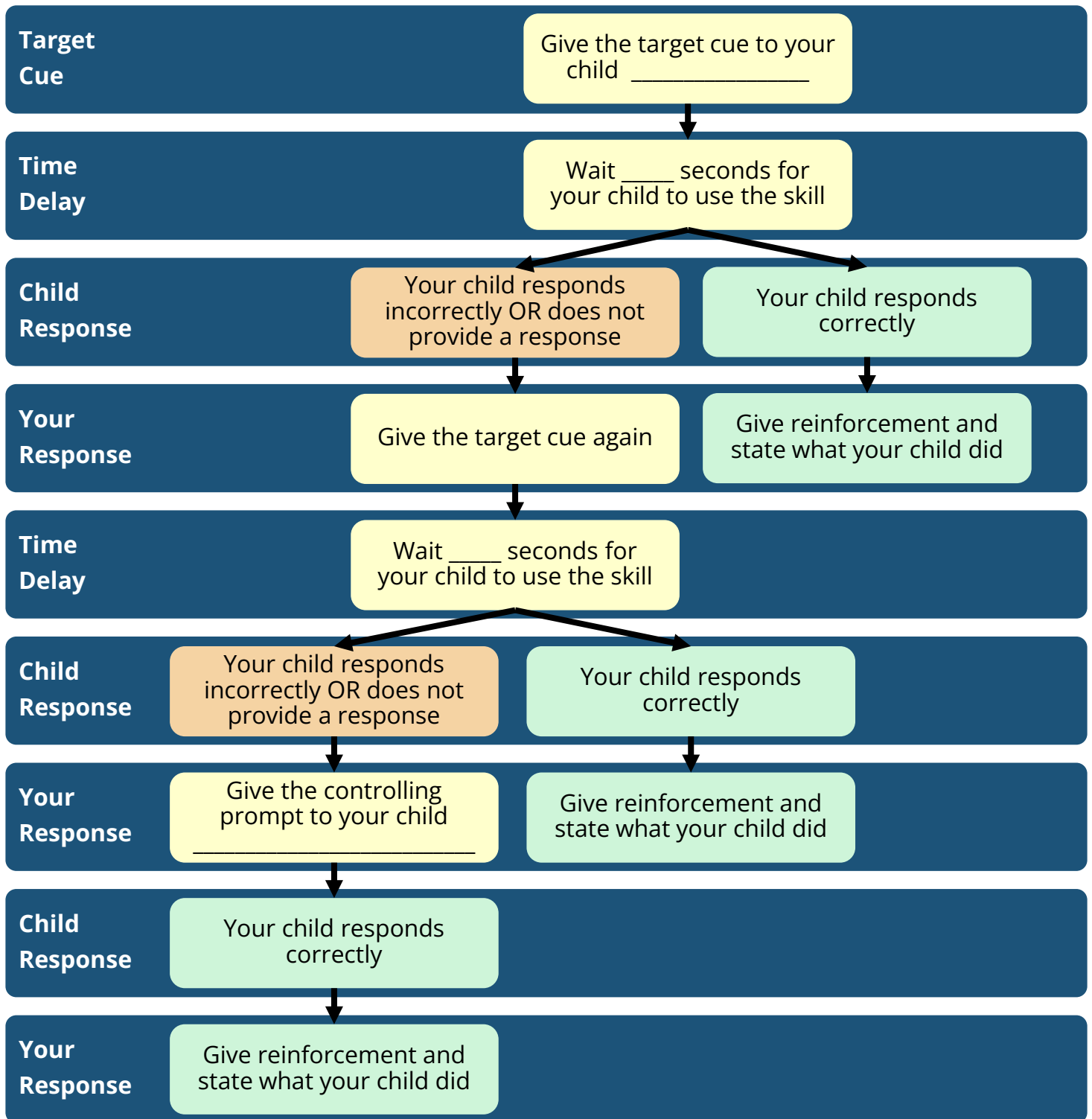


Give your child reinforcement

6. Use constant or progressive time delay (when your child is ready)

Use the wait time you determined would work best before you give the controlling prompt.

- **TIP:** It is best to use constant or progressive time delay after your child has been successful two times in a row when you used a 0-second delay.
- **TIP:** After giving a prompt, try counting the number of seconds in your head or tap your fingers while you quietly count to remember to give enough wait time.
- **TIP:** If you are using progressive time delay, you may start with 1 or 2 seconds and keep increasing the wait time 1- or 2-seconds at a time up to total of 10 seconds.



7. Give reinforcement (rewards) each time your child shows the desired behavior

Each time your child uses the behavior or skill, remember to give the reward even if the controlling prompt was needed.

- **TIP:** Be consistent – if your child sees that you are not following through with the reward, then they may not be motivated to do what is expected.

WHAT ARE THE KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN USING TIME DELAY?

1. Start small

Choose one task, activity, or behavior to focus on when starting with time delay. Wait until your child has shown success with that behavior before using time delay with other activities or tasks.

2. Be patient

Remember learning a skill or changing a behavior takes time. Once you start using time delay, 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. Use the 0-second delay until your child can perform the task with the controlling prompt

Once your child can do the task or behavior two times in a row with the 0-second delay, you can move onto using constant or progressive time delay. For example, if your child is learning a certain daily chore, it would mean the child successfully completes all of the steps with the 0-second delay two days in a row. If you are working on a school task, like sorting, it would mean the child successfully sorts all of the pieces with the 0-second delay two sessions in a row.

4. Give enough time to respond during attempts when you are using the time delay

Everyone needs a moment to process a request or direction, and children with autism can have slower processing times. Choose a wait time that will help your child be successful not just based on the amount of time you want them to respond. A general starting wait time is at least 3-5 seconds before giving the next prompt. However, some children may need more time (10 seconds or longer).

5. Remember to give reinforcement

A reward may help your child be even more motivated to perform the task. It does not need to be a big reward – sometimes social praise is a big motivator.

WHAT ARE COMMON CHALLENGES WHEN USING TIME DELAY?

The following are examples of what you can do if time delay is not working exactly the way you expected

Your child will not perform the task after the controlling prompt is given even when there is no delay for the controlling prompt (0-second delay).

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

Cause	Suggestion
Child does not understand that they need to perform the task	When starting a task with time delay, remind your child that they are to do or say what you did after you show them.
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. Remember to give the reward each time your child does the task.
The controlling prompt does not provide the level of support needed	Change your controlling prompt to provide the level of support your child needs to perform the task successfully (e.g., full physical such as hand over hand or a model prompt).

Your child will not perform the task until after the controlling prompt is given when you are using the time delay (not the 0-second delay)

- 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
- B. Another possibility is that moving from the controlling prompt to independently performing the skill is too hard for your child. Least-to-most prompting may work better with helping your child learn this skill. See the Prompting: Introduction & Practice module and the Companion Guide for Families: Prompting for more information.

Suggested Citation:

Perkins, Y., Sam, A., & AFIRM for Paras Team. (2020). *Time Delay: Companion Guide for Families*. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, Autism Focused Intervention Resources and Modules for Paraeducators. <https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu>

TIME DELAY EXAMPLES: HOME

Time delay can be used to address prompt dependency for many different skills and target behaviors for elementary-aged children. Research supports the use of time delay for target skills and behaviors in the following domains: social, communication, joint attention, behavior, school readiness, play, cognitive, and academic.

Below are examples of target cues and controlling prompts based on the level of support needed for the child. These are just examples. You should use a target cue and controlling prompt that will work best for your child.

Target Skill/Behavior: Put away toys		
Level of Support	Target Cue	Controlling Prompt
Low	Say, "Time to clean up"	Point to toys
Medium	Say, "Time to clean up"	Point to toys and say "Put your Legos in the box"
High	Say, "Pick up your toys"	Use hand over hand assistance to help child put toys in the box

Target Skill/Behavior: Eat with a spoon		
Level of Support	Target Cue	Controlling Prompt
Low	Give child a bowl of applesauce and spoon	Point to the spoon
Medium	Give child a bowl of applesauce and spoon	Say "Use your spoon"
High	Give child a bowl of applesauce and spoon	Move child's hand to the spoon

Target Skill/Behavior: Zip up coat		
Level of Support	Target Cue	Controlling Prompt
Low	Child puts on coat	Say, "Zip up your coat"
Medium	Child puts on coat and you say, "Zip up your coat"	Show child how to zip up the coat and then unzip for them to try
High	Child puts on coat and you say, "Zip up your coat"	Use hand-over-hand assistance to help child zip the coat

Target Skill/Behavior: Buckle seatbelt after entering car

Level of Support	Target Cue	Controlling Prompt
Low	Everyone gets in the car	Point to seatbelt
Medium	Everyone gets in the car and you say, "What do you need to do first?"	Say "Buckle your seatbelt"
High	Everyone gets in the car and you say, "Buckle your seatbelt."	Say "Do what I do" and show child how you buckle your seatbelt

Target Skill/Behavior: Say 'Hello' to others

Level of Support	Target Cue	Controlling Prompt
Low	Someone says, "Hello" or waves to your child.	Ask, "What do you say?"
Medium	Someone says, "Hello" or waves to your child.	Say, "Say hello to [name]"
High	Someone says, "Hello" or waves to your child.	Take child's hand and wave hello

Target Skill/Behavior: Practicing math flashcards

Level of Support	Target Cue	Controlling Prompt
Low	Show flashcard	Tell child the answer
Medium	Show flashcard and say, "The answer is..."	Tell child the answer
High	Show the flashcard and ask, "What is the answer?"	Tell child the answer

Target Skill/Behavior: Reading a word list

Level of Support	Target Cue	Controlling Prompt
Low	Point to the word	Tell child the beginning sound of the word
Medium	Point to the word and ask, "What word?"	Sound out the word
High	Point to the word and say, "Read this word"	Tell child the word

GLOSSARY

Constant time delay: A time delay procedure that uses a fixed wait time between giving the target cue/stimulus and providing the controlling prompt (typically 3-5 seconds). Constant time delay can be used after the learner is 100% accurate with two consecutive zero-second time delay trials.

Controlling prompt: Words and/or actions to ensure that the learner will perform the target skill successfully. It can be a gestural, verbal, visual, model, or physical prompt.

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

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.

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

Progressive time delay: A time delay procedure that gradually increases the wait time between giving the target cue/stimulus and providing the controlling prompt for each trial (up to as many as 10 seconds). Progressive time delay can be used after the learner is 100% accurate with two consecutive zero-second time delay trials.

Prompt dependence: When a learner will only perform a skill or behavior with the use of a prompt. Prompt dependence may limit a learner's growth and path towards independence.

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

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.

Response interval: The amount of time the instructor waits without providing additional assistance to allow the learner to respond to the direction or prompt.

Target cue/stimulus: Words and/or actions to let learner know to perform the target skill (e.g., asking "What word?" when you want a student to read a word or placing a block in a student's hand during a color matching activity).

Time delay: A prompting procedure that systematically fades the use of prompts. Time delay includes the use of a target cue/stimulus, a controlling prompt, and a reinforcer to increase opportunities to demonstrate a skill or behavior and decrease opportunities for error. Constant and progressive are two types of time delay procedures.

Zero-second (0-second) time delay: the initial time delay trials when the controlling prompt is given immediately after the target cue/stimulus.