Better Than Prompting

Using Research-Based Strategies to Support AAC Learning

Rachael M Langley, MA, CCC-SLP – AAC Specialist

Follow along:

Disclosures

▷ Employed by Eaton RESA as an AAC Specialist

▷ Owner of Reach Language, LLC

I have no financial or non-financial relationships that influence the content of this course.

Objectives

▷ Describe at least five different forms of prompting and how they impact a learner's autonomy.
▷ Define the research-based method known as "Aided Language Stimulation" or "Aided Language Input."
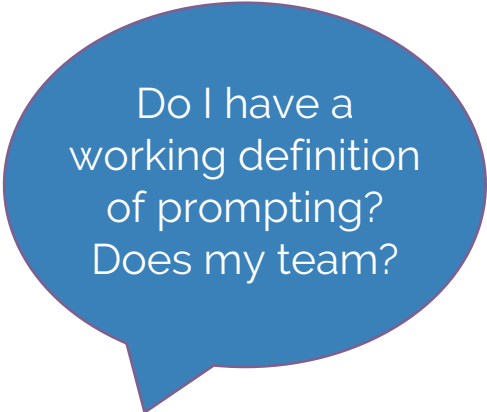▷ Participants will identify the critical difference between compliance and participation tasks.

Outline

▷ Prompting defined

▷ Prompt Hierarchies: What, When, and Why

▷ Instructional Strategies for AAC Learning

▷ The Risks of Prompt Dependence

Opportunities for discussion throughout.

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▷ Prompting defined

▷ Prompt Hierarchies: What, When, and Why

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Opportunities for discussion throughout.

Do I have a working definition of prompting? Does my team?

Prompting Defined

prompting

noun [C or U] · **UK** 🔊 /ˈprɒmp.tɪŋ/ **US** 🔊 /ˈprɑːmp.tɪŋ/

⭐ **the act of trying to make someone say something:**

[+ to infinitive] *Kids of that age really shouldn't need prompting **to** say thank you for things.*

Amazingly - without any prompting - my husband actually said how nice I looked in my new dress!

Cambridge Dictionary

Prompting Defined

Casual usage

- ▷ Conversation
- ▷ Classroom use
- ▷ Goal-writing
- ▷ IEP documentation

Detailed usage

- ▷ Behaviorists
- ▷ Errorless learning
- ▷ Reduce incorrect responses
- ▷ EBP in behavior field

Participation ⟷ Compliance

What is the goal?

Hit the switch!

Image source: talksense.weebly.com

"
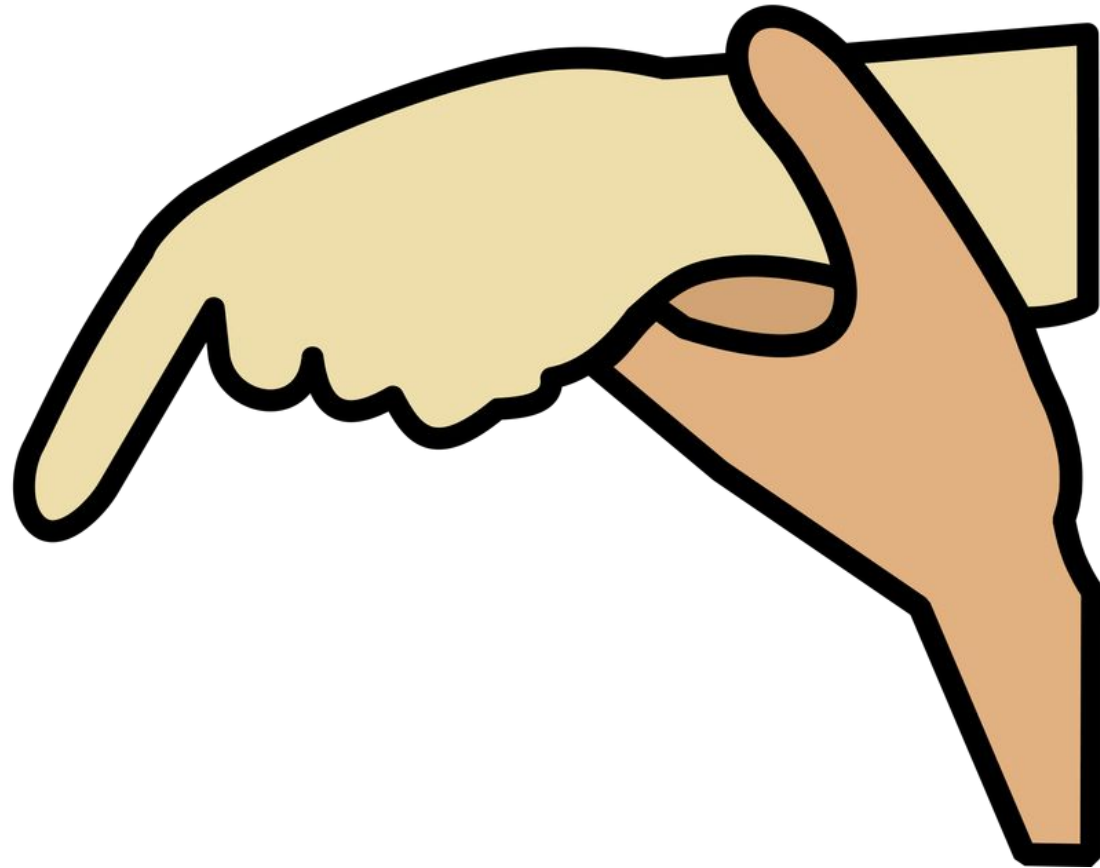
If I'm prompting, I'm trying to get the kid to say what I expect them to say. That's training, not teaching.
– Dr. Karen Erickson

Where do we see prompting?

▷ **Speech-Language Goals**
▷ **Instructional Goals**
▷ **Non-standardized language**
  ○ Minimal
  ○ Moderate
  ○ Maximum
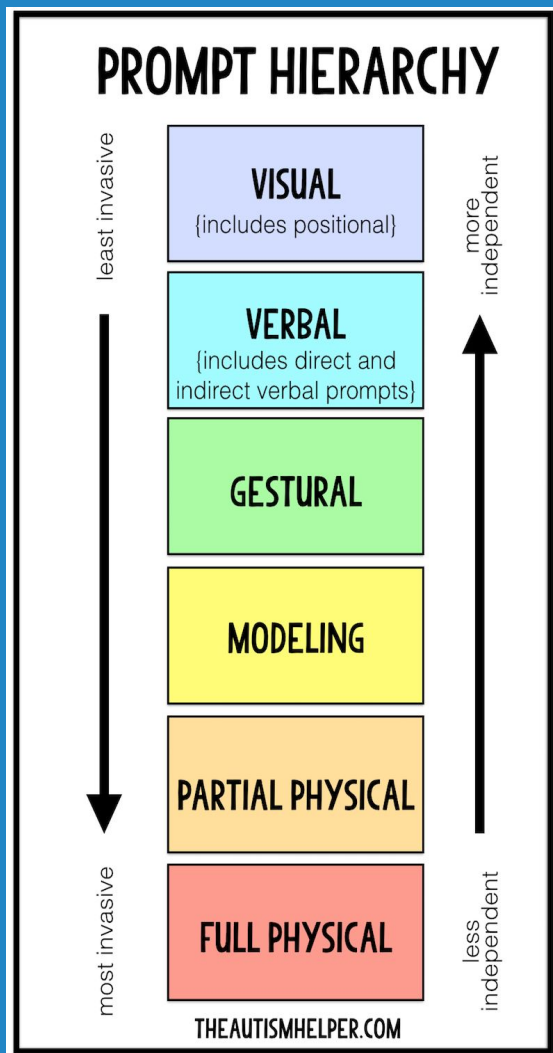 ○ Partial-verbal
  ○ Full-physical

turn & talk

Prompt Hierarchies

What, When, and Why

PROMPT HIERARCHY

least invasive → most invasive

more independent → less independent

- **VISUAL** {includes positional}
- **VERBAL** {includes direct and indirect verbal prompts}
- **GESTURAL**
- **MODELING**
- **PARTIAL PHYSICAL**
- **FULL PHYSICAL**

THEAUTISMHELPER.COM

www.theautismhelper.com

PROMPT HIERARCHY

1. **State**: Make a very general statement about the situation. ("I brought a big bag of stuff, but you don't know "**what**" is in it.") Keep eye contact and wait up to 10 seconds (more or less).

2. **Suggest**: Be a little more direct, but still general. ("You can ask me "**what**" I brought today.) Watch and Wait.

3. **Say**: Tell the person specifically what to say. ("Say the word "**what**" to find out "**what**" I brought.) Watch and Wait.

4. **Assist**: Physically assist the person. ("Let me help you say "**what**" so you can see **what** I brought.")

From "AAC in the IEP" by Lauren Enders on PrAACticalAAC; Prompt Hierarchy credited to Gail VanTatenhove.

Types of Prompting Hierarchies
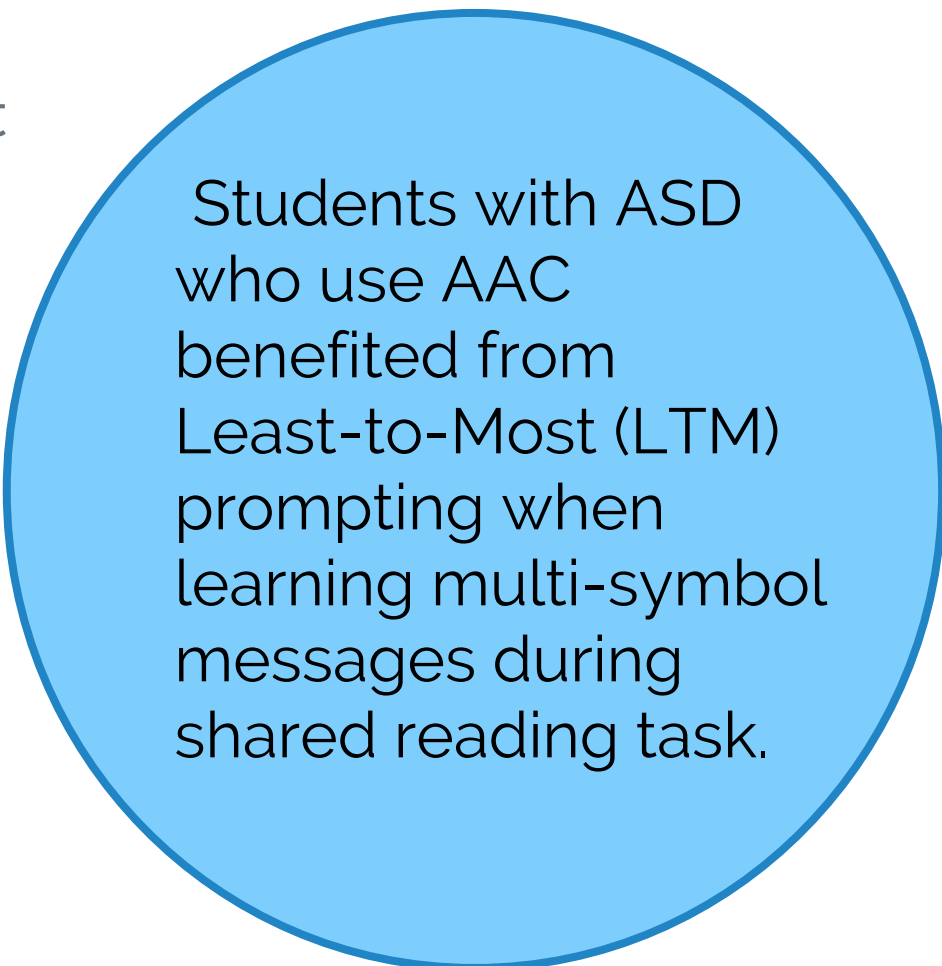
Most-to-Least
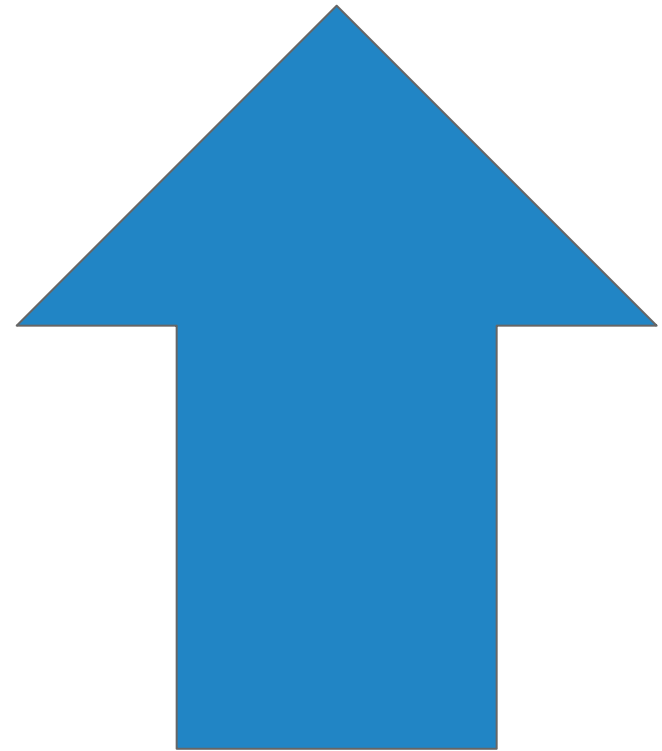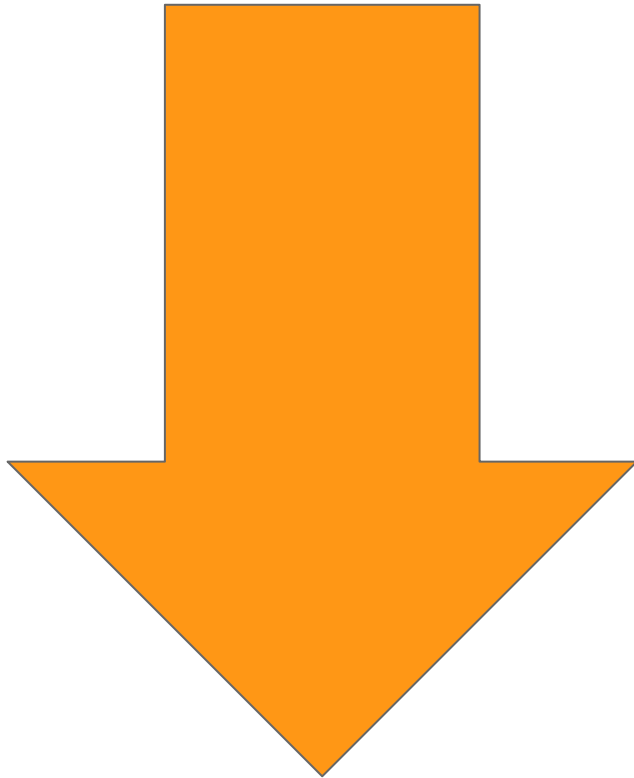
Least-to-Most

Research in AAC

Effects of a Least-to-Most Prompting Procedure on Multisymbol Message (Finke et al, 2017)

Students with ASD who use AAC benefited from Least-to-Most (LTM) prompting when learning multi-symbol messages during shared reading task.

Least-to-Most Prompting

For example, after a book-reading task the final prompting level would include:

(a) [expectant delay]

(b) *What do you see?* [expectant delay]

(c) *I see Jay Jay sleeping* [expectant delay]

(d) *I see Jay Jay sleeping* {JAY JAY SLEEPING} [expectant delay]

(e) *Now you try* [expectant delay]

(f) Hand-over hand assistance {JAY JAY SLEEPING}.

*Prompts (b-f) always included (a)

Prior to Prompting

Hierarchies are designed as reminders of the type and frequency of support a learner may need to succeed at a task after providing direct instruction.

- Prompting is not a stand-alone teaching method.
- Prior to expecting independent use, we are responsible for providing direct instruction.
  - This may include modeling in context, peer modeling, vocabulary practice, video modeling, and other aided-language experiences prior to independent, functional use.
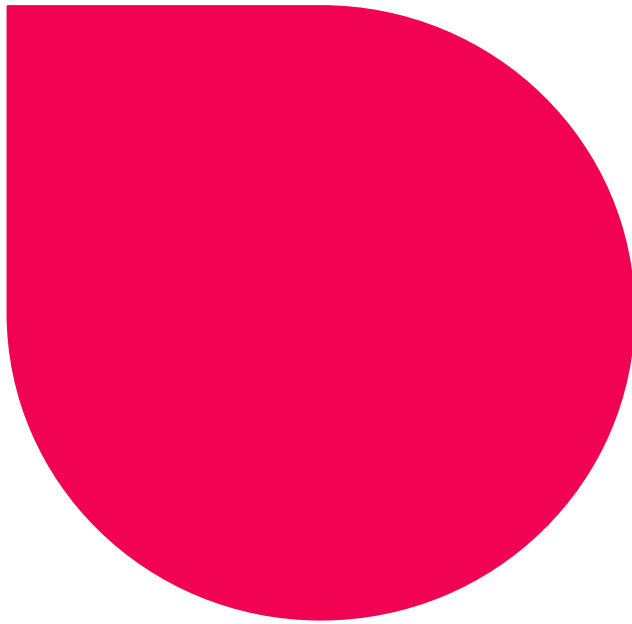
Prompting is not a stand-alone teaching method.

AAC Prompting Hierarchy

▷ Developed from Rocky Bay Positive AACtion handout
▷ Contributions from Dr. Senner (2010) and YAACK (1999)

AAC Prompting Hierarchy (From Positive AACtion - Rocky Bay 2010; Senner 2010; YAACK 1999)

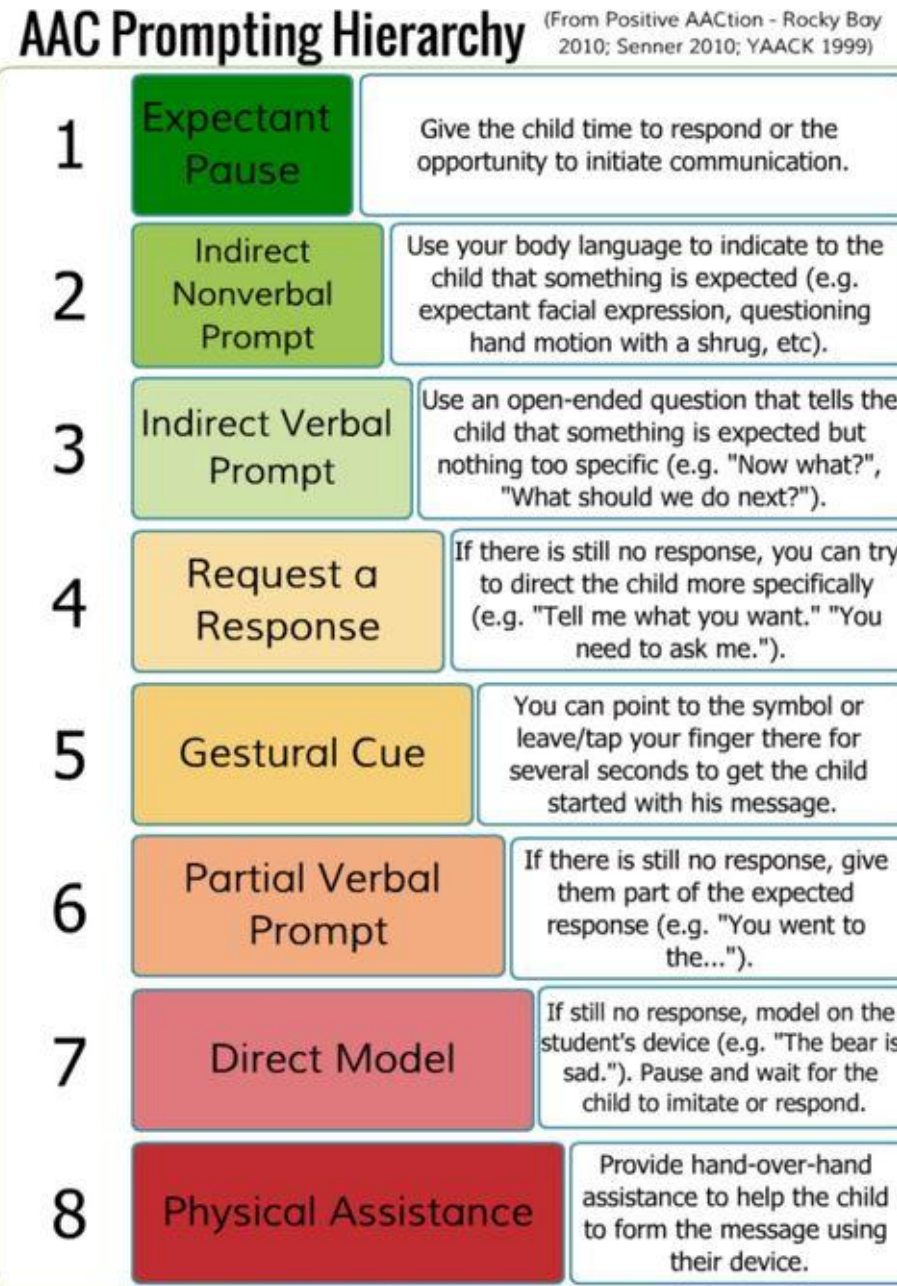|		
1	Expectant Pause	Give the child time to respond or the opportunity to initiate communication.
2	Indirect Nonverbal Prompt	Use your body language to indicate to the child that something is expected (e.g. expectant facial expression, questioning hand motion with a shrug, etc).
3	Indirect Verbal Prompt	Use an open-ended question that tells the child that something is expected but nothing too specific (e.g. "Now what?", "What should we do next?").
4	Request a Response	If there is still no response, you can try to direct the child more specifically (e.g. "Tell me what you want." "You need to ask me.").
5	Gestural Cue	You can point to the symbol or leave/tap your finger there for several seconds to get the child started with his message.
6	Partial Verbal Prompt	If there is still no response, give them part of the expected response (e.g. "You went to the...").
7	Direct Model	If still no response, model on the student's device (e.g. "The bear is sad."). Pause and wait for the child to imitate or respond.
8	Physical Assistance	Provide hand-over-hand assistance to help the child to form the message using their device.

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PROMPTING HIERARCHY
(Senner, 2010; YAACK, 1999)

1. Pause
- Give the child time to respond or the opportunity to initiate communication.

2. Indirect Nonverbal Prompt
- Use your body language to indicate to the child that something is expected (eg. expectant facial expression, questioning hand motion with a shrug, etc).

3. Indirect Verbal Prompt
- Use an open-ended question that tells the child that something is expected but nothing too specific (eg. "Now what?", "What should we do next?").

4. Request a Response
- If there is still no response, you can try to direct the child more specifically (eg. "Tell me what you want."; "You need to ask me.").

5. Gestural Cue
- You can point to the symbol or leave/tap your finger there for several seconds to get the child started with his message.

6. Partial Verbal Prompt
- If there is still no response, give them part of the expected response (eg. "You went to the ....").

7. Direct Model
- If the child still does not respond tell the child what to say (eg. "The bear is sad."). Pause and wait for the child to imitate or respond in some way with his device.

8. Physical Assistance
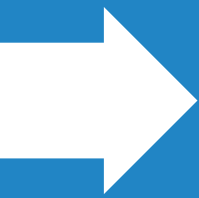- Provide hand-over-hand assistance to help the child to form the message using their device.

AAC Prompting Hierarchy

▷ Eaton RESA AAC PLC
▷ Provide coaching-style feedback within classrooms

AAC Prompting Hierarchy
(From Positive AACtion - Rocky Bay 2010; Senner 2010; YAACK 1999)

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Dissecting

The Prompt Hierarchy

AAC Prompting Hierarchy

Expectant Pause — Give the child time to respond or the opportunity to initiate communication.

- Least intrusive
- Increase wait time

AAC Prompting Hierarchy
(From Positive AACtion - Rocky Bay 2010; Senner 2010; YAACK 1999)

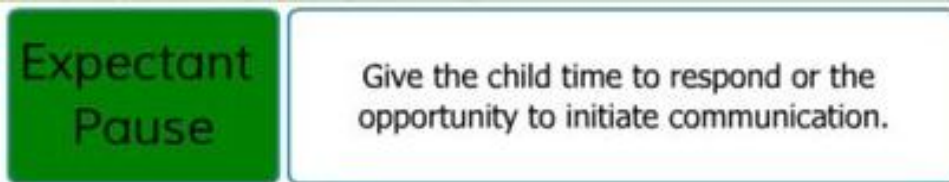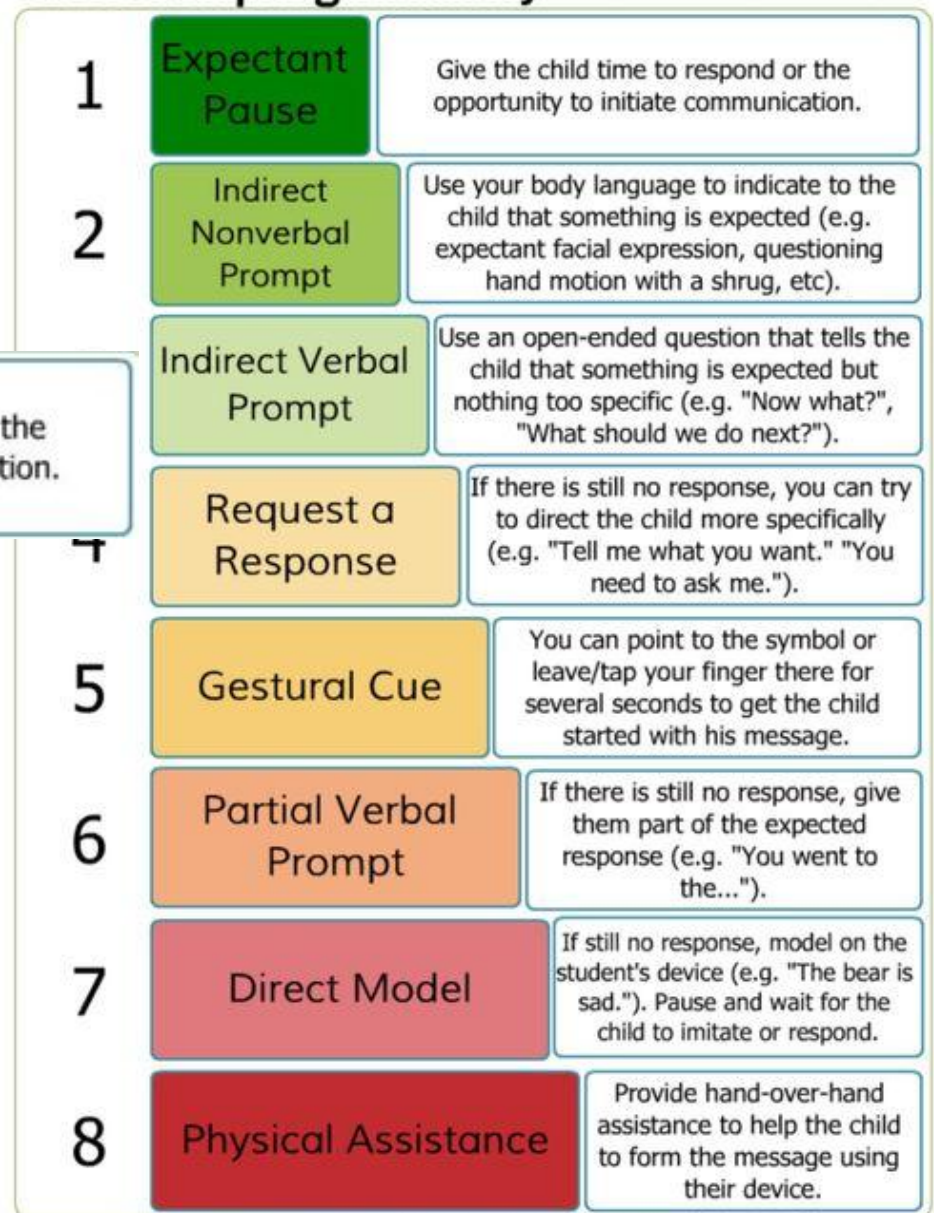| #	Prompt	Description
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PAUSE.
RELAX.
BREATHE.

THERE IS POWER IN
AN EXPECTANT PAUSE.
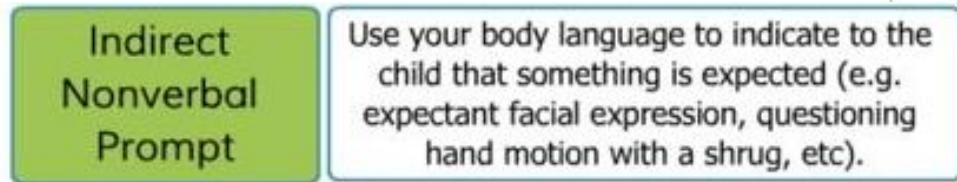
Rachael Langley - AAC Specialist

"

"Expectant wait time, without pressure, can allow the child time to process and respond with her own motivation. (Keep extraneous verbal clutter to a minimum)"

Linda Burkhart, Two Switches for Success: Access for Children with Severe Physical and/or Multiple Challenges
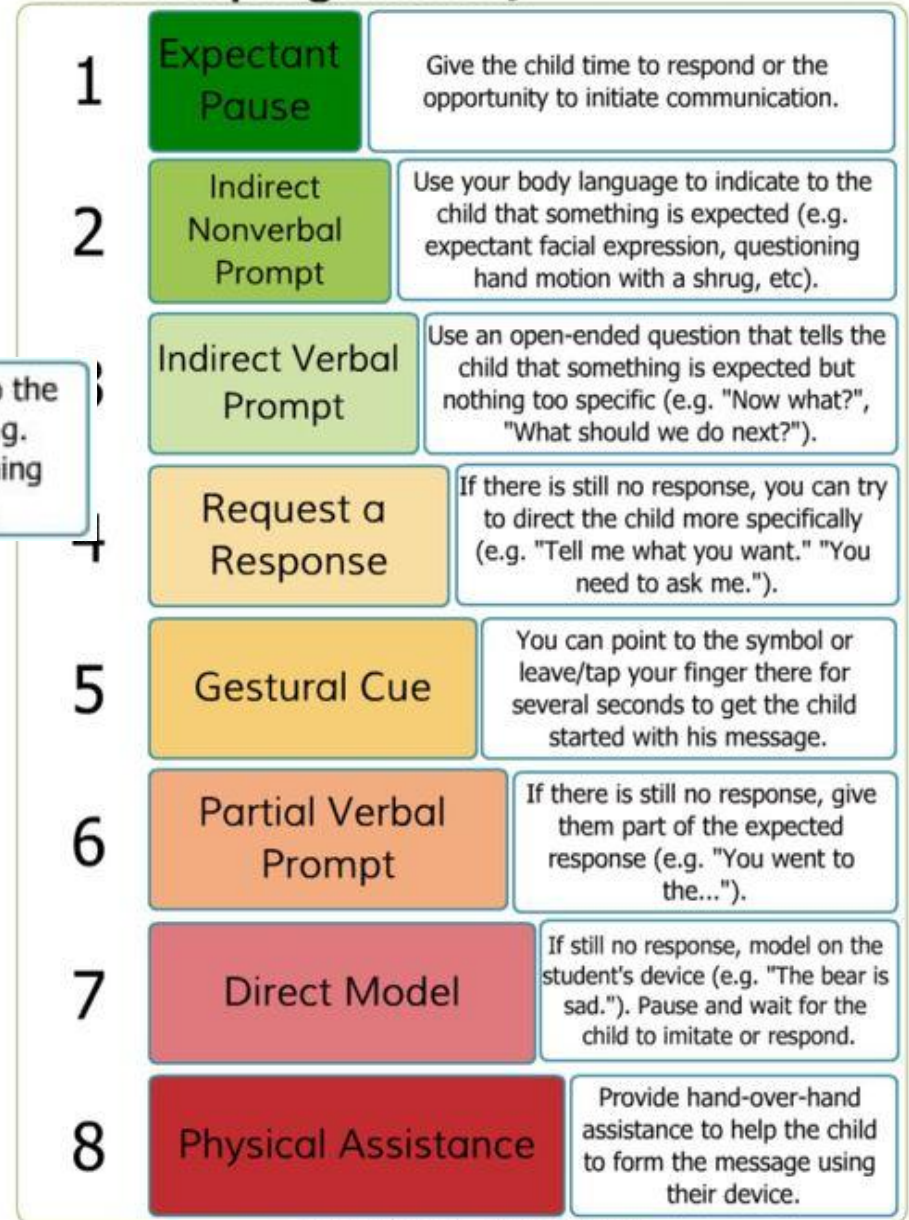
AAC Prompting Hierarchy

Indirect Nonverbal Prompt	Use your body language to indicate to the child that something is expected (e.g. expectant facial expression, questioning hand motion with a shrug, etc).

- Less intrusive
- Body language

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AAC Prompting Hierarchy

Indirect Verbal Prompt
Use an open-ended question that tells the child that something is expected but nothing too specific (e.g. "Now what?", "What should we do next?").

- Guided verbal support
- Non-specific modeling
- Verbal only – requires AAC learner to code switch

AAC Prompting Hierarchy (From Positive AACtion - Rocky Bay 2010; Senner 2010; YAACK 1999)

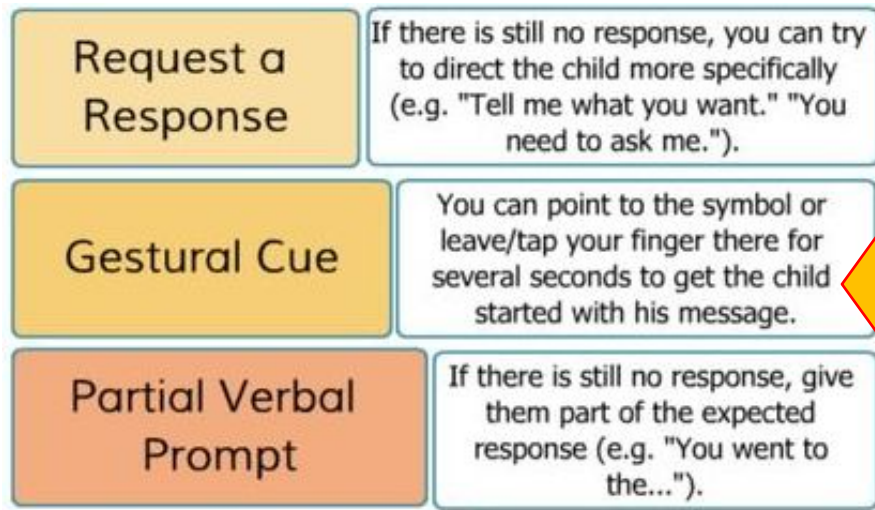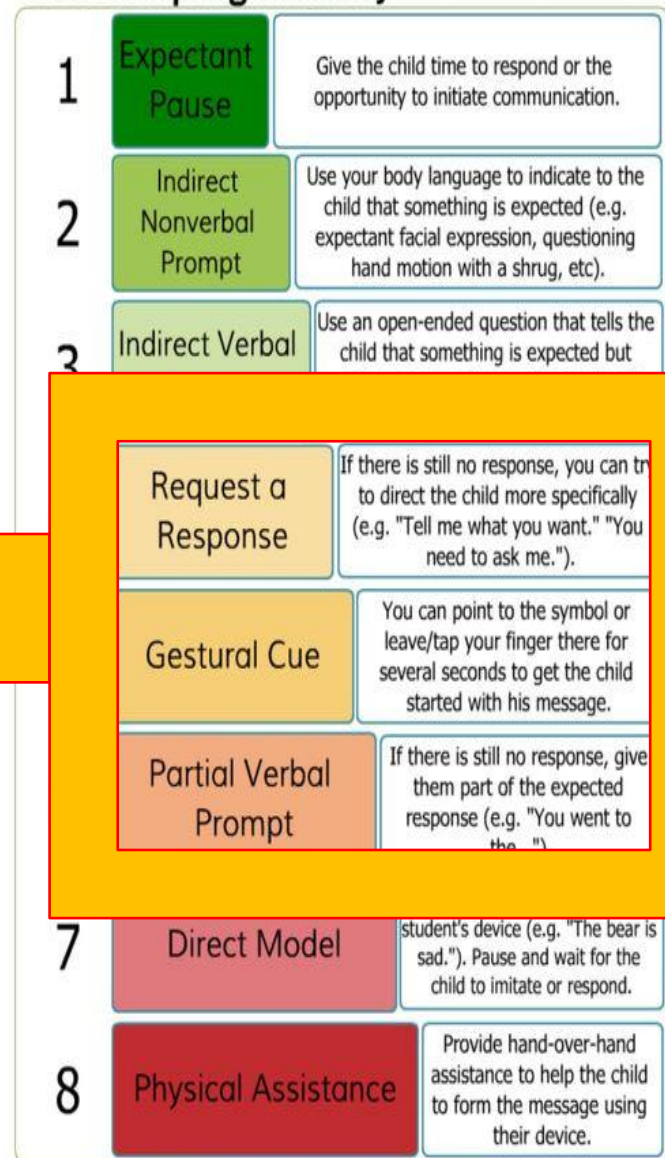| 1 | Expectant Pause | Give the child time to respond or the opportunity to initiate communication. |
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CAUTION

DANGER
PROCEED WITH CAUTION

AAC Prompting Hierarchy

AAC Prompting Hierarchy (From Positive AACtion - Rocky Bay 2010; Senner 2010; YAACK 1999)

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	Request a Response	If there is still no response, you can try to direct the child more specifically (e.g. "Tell me what you want." "You need to ask me.").
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Teaching Language

- Showing the student examples of how they could respond

- Giving peer models

- Allowing learner to self-select words

- Welcoming but not requiring a response

Telling What to Say

- Directing learner to words they "should" say

- Starting their sentence for them

- Choosing or limiting the words that they can select

- Requiring a response

Behavior vs. Language Learning
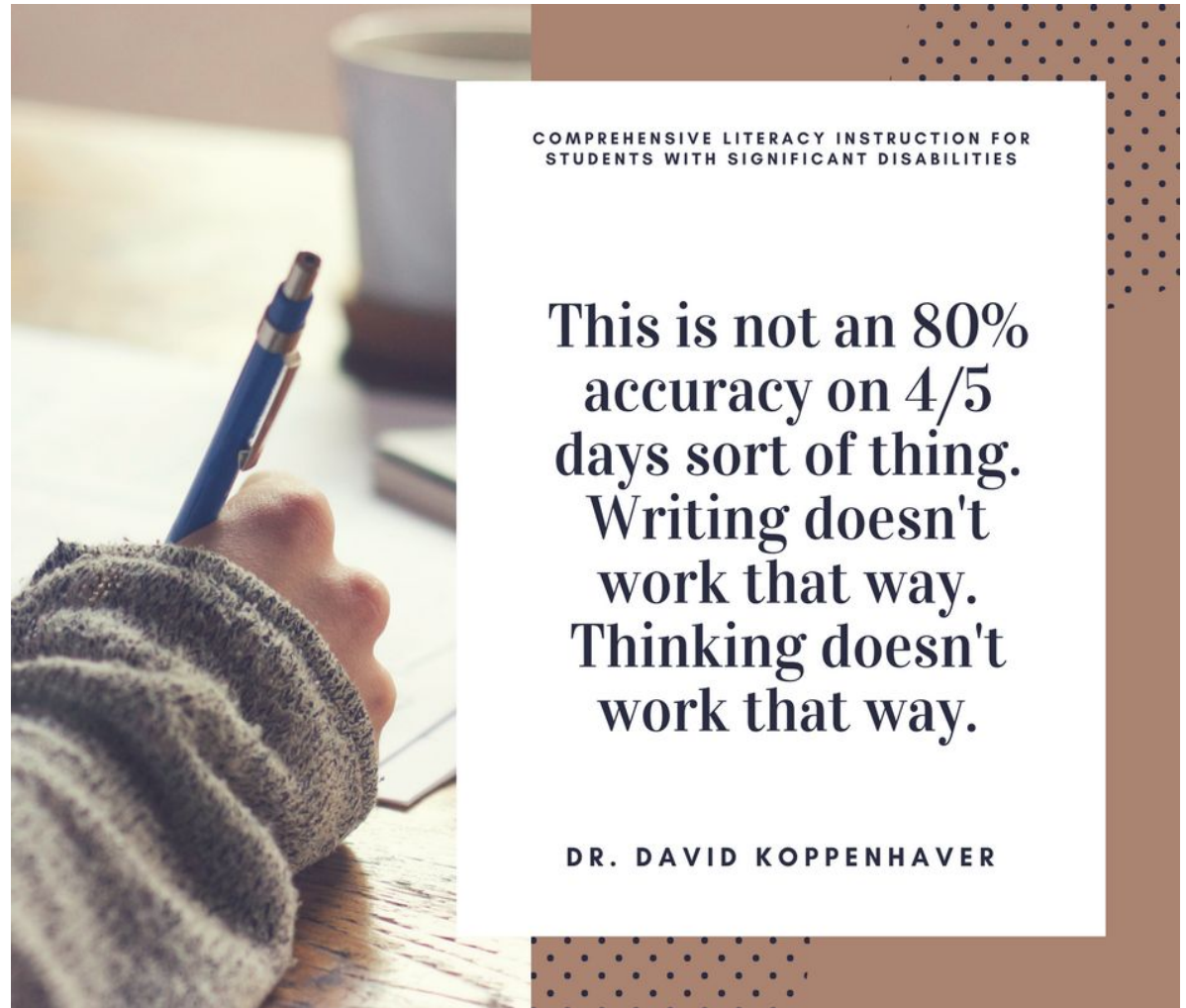
COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY INSTRUCTION FOR
STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

This is not an 80% accuracy on 4/5 days sort of thing. Writing doesn't work that way. Thinking doesn't work that way.

DR. DAVID KOPPENHAVER

Instructional Strategies

for AAC Learning

Participation Model

- ◦ Uses peers' functional communication as goal
- ◦ Assess barriers
- ◦ Plan for today & tomorrow
- ◦ Evaluate & adjust

Rosenberg and Beukelman (1987)

Mirenda and Beukelman (1998, 2013)

ASHA Technical Report (2004)

Participation Model

- ◦ Look for patterns
- ◦ Address systemic problems, when possible
- ◦ Support a well-designed learning environment

Research Supporting Aided Language Input

- Established for over 2 decades
- Shows effectiveness of ALI with various types of learners
- Research
  - Elder & Goosens
  - Drager
  - Dada & Alant
  - Harris
  - Binger & Light

"

"Augmented input can be broadly defined as an umbrella term for systematic modeling input from two or more modalities, one of which must include the learner's AAC system"

(Allen, Schlosser, Brock, & Shane, 2017, p.157)

**AAC Modeling Intervention Research Review
2016
Authors:** Samuel C. Sennott, Janice C. Light,
David McNaughton

Research Review

"The results of the review indicated that AAC modeling intervention packages led to meaningful linguistic gains across four areas including
(a) pragmatics...
(b) semantics...
(c) syntax... and
(d) morphology."

Research Review

The positive impact observed in research leads authors to state that there is

"a strong argument for using AAC modeling as a foundation of AAC intervention."

Sennott, et al 2016
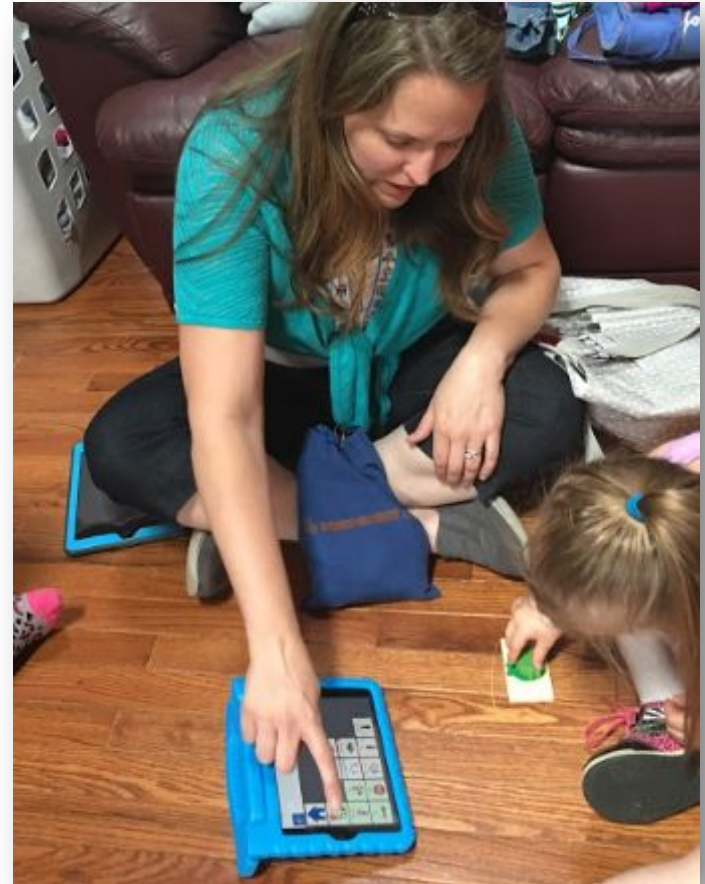
Aided Language Input

Consider the student's level of existing language comprehension

Intact Receptive Language

◦ students may have intact receptive language, but no means for output

◦ could be students with cerebral palsy or other motor impairments

◦ need language mapped for expressive output

◦ need shorter period of ALI

Disordered Receptive Language

◦ students have little receptive language knowledge

◦ could be students with autism, neurological differences

◦ they lack the language infrastructure on which to overlay symbol-based language

◦ require longer period of ALI

Gayle Porter, 2014

YEAH IF YOU COULD TRY SOME AIDED LANGUAGE INPUT

THAT WOULD BE GREAT

imgflip.com

Rachael Langley AAC Specialist

AAC Prompting Hierarchy

#	Step	Description
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Back to the hierarchy...

AAC Prompting Hierarchy

Direct Modeling Why is this way down here?

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Participation / Compliance

What do we mean by modeling?

"Modeling" for Instruction

◦ Let me show you how you COULD do it

◦ If you don't do it, that's okay

◦ I will keep showing you how, until you are ready

◦ You can do it

"Modeling" for Performance

◦ First I do it, then you do it

◦ If you don't do it, I will help you do it

◦ The more you do it, the less I have to help you

◦ You will do it

And you're doing this because...

"We would all do well to ask ourselves this phrase everyday...If a system (VOCA) is presented to each Learner one after another that repeats such a message, *isn't it likely that the Learner is simple fly-swatting in response to staff approaching, smiling, speaking and presenting such a system?* What are they really learning?"

- Tony Jones
  talksense.weebly.com

encourage COMMUNICATION WITHOUT *requiring it*

DR. KAREN ERICKSON

The Risks of Prompt Dependence

AAC Prompting Hierarchy

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Physical Assistance — Provide hand-over-hand assistance to help the child to form the message using their device.

Let's go back to our why! What is our goal?

Whose message is it?

"Prompts are always used to support the child to communicate their own message and never used to elicit an externally contrived message."

Linda Burkhart, ATIA 2014

Resource

When You Need Your Hands to Help….
Facilitation Guidelines for Staff Working With Students with
Physical Challenges
By: Dale Gardner-Fox M.S., RPT

"

I believe that when the proper amount and type of support is provided...without taking over the movement itself (which is often what hand-over-hand assistance turns into), the brain has the best chance to learn to replicate the movement.

– Dale Gardner-Fox, M.S., RPT

When we need our hands to help...

Motivation

 ◦ Choice

 ◦ Meaning

 ◦ Purpose

Independence vs Production

Support Strategies

Risks of Physical Prompting

◦Vulnerable population

◦Abuse rate among people with disabilities
  ◦ Rate of abuse eight times higher than typical population. This is among people who can self-report.

npr

SPECIAL SERIES
abused and betrayed

Risks of Physical Prompting

"What does a hands-on, full physical "cue" tell the child? It tells them that:

A) we have the right to manipulate their bodies or make them touch or do things whether they want to or not

and

B) that we have the right to force them to say things just because we want them to say it."

Kate Ahern

Assistive Technology Specialist & Teacher

Author of www.teaching learnerswith multipleneeds. blogspot.com

COMMUNICATION AUTONOMY

The ability to say
what you want
when you want
to whomever you want

Rachael Langley AAC Specialist

AAC Prompting Hierarchy

AAC Prompting Hierarchy (From Positive AACtion – Rocky Bay 2010; Senner 2010; YAACK 1999)

1	Expectant Pause	Give the child time to respond or the opportunity to initiate communication.
2	Indirect Nonverbal Prompt	Use your body language to indicate to the child that something is expected (e.g. expectant facial expression, questioning hand motion with a shrug, etc).
3	Indirect Verbal Prompt	Use an open-ended question that tells the child that something is expected but nothing too specific (e.g. "Now what?", "What should we do next?").
4	Request a Response	If there is still no response, you can try to direct the child more specifically (e.g. "Tell me what you want." "You need to ask me.").
5	Gestural Cue	You can point to the symbol or leave/tap your finger there for several seconds to get the child started with his message.
6	Partial Verbal Prompt	If there is still no response, give them part of the expected response (e.g. "You went to the...").
7	Direct Model	If still no response, model on the student's device (e.g. "The bear is sad."). Pause and wait for the child to imitate or respond.
8	Physical Assistance	Provide hand-over-hand assistance to help the child to form the message using their device.

Rachael Langley 2015 ~ rlangley@eatonresa.org

We have better ways.

Uncommon Sense Blog, used with permission

Alternatives to physical prompting

"...skills training for children with severe developmental delays the passive observation of **a model demonstrating the target skill is more effective than interactive modeling involving hand-over-hand** instruction with verbal prompting."
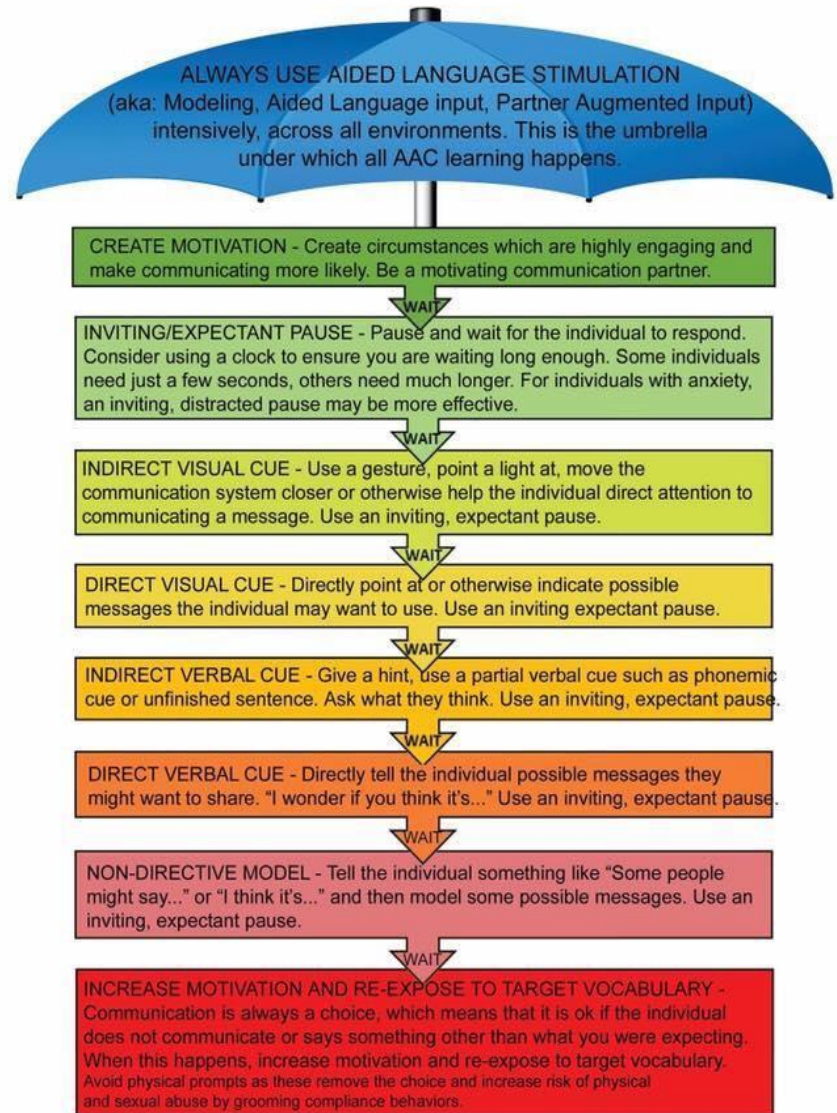
- Biederman et al, 1998
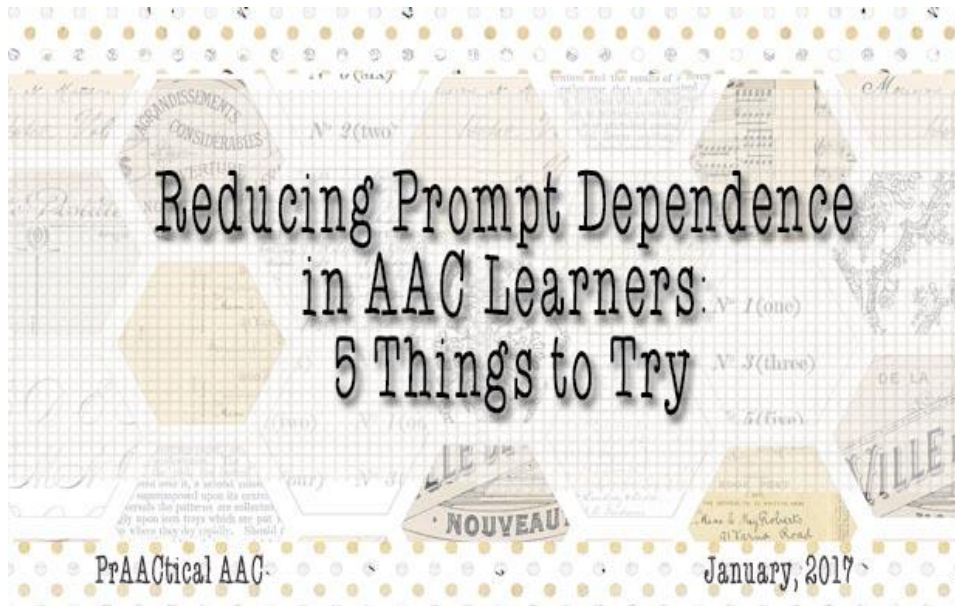
Rethinking the Prompt Hierarchy

Kate Ahern
Teaching Learners with Multiple Needs Blog
Shelane Nielsen

PROMPT HIERARCHY

ALWAYS USE AIDED LANGUAGE STIMULATION
(aka: Modeling, Aided Language input, Partner Augmented Input) intensively, across all environments. This is the umbrella under which all AAC learning happens.

CREATE MOTIVATION - Create circumstances which are highly engaging and make communicating more likely. Be a motivating communication partner.

WAIT

INVITING/EXPECTANT PAUSE - Pause and wait for the individual to respond. Consider using a clock to ensure you are waiting long enough. Some individuals need just a few seconds, others need much longer. For individuals with anxiety, an inviting, distracted pause may be more effective.

WAIT

INDIRECT VISUAL CUE - Use a gesture, point a light at, move the communication system closer or otherwise help the individual direct attention to communicating a message. Use an inviting, expectant pause.

WAIT

DIRECT VISUAL CUE - Directly point at or otherwise indicate possible messages the individual may want to use. Use an inviting expectant pause.

WAIT

INDIRECT VERBAL CUE - Give a hint, use a partial verbal cue such as phonemic cue or unfinished sentence. Ask what they think. Use an inviting, expectant pause.

WAIT

DIRECT VERBAL CUE - Directly tell the individual possible messages they might want to share. "I wonder if you think it's..." Use an inviting, expectant pause.

WAIT

NON-DIRECTIVE MODEL - Tell the individual something like "Some people might say..." or "I think it's..." and then model some possible messages. Use an inviting, expectant pause.

WAIT

INCREASE MOTIVATION AND RE-EXPOSE TO TARGET VOCABULARY - Communication is always a choice, which means that it is ok if the individual does not communicate or says something other than what you were expecting. When this happens, increase motivation and re-expose to target vocabulary. Avoid physical prompts as these remove the choice and increase risk of physical and sexual abuse by grooming compliance behaviors.

(C) Kate Ahern, M.S.Ed 2016 with Shelane Nielsen

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Reducing Prompt Dependency

Dr. Carole Zangari, PrAACtical AAC

- Exaggerate the pause time
- Use visual supports instead of verbal or physical prompts
- Fade gradually
- Use video modeling
- Involve the learner in tracking independent behaviors

Video Modeling

- Evidence-Based Practice
- Allows for consistent repetition without expectation
- Readily available technology
- Allows for self-evaluation for adults/clinicians modeling (e.g. speed, number of questions or directives, etc)

Video Modeling

PODD Video Model:
Let's go to the swimming pool!

Take-Aways

On Prompting & Prompt Awareness

"

It is now clear from clinical experience and research, that children can effectively learn to use their AAC Systems through the use of Aided Language Stimulation.

-Linda Burkhart, Feb 2014

I'M JUST A SLP

standing in front of the team asking them to

MODEL AAC.

Prompt Awareness

- Identify levels of prompts

- Discuss with the team

- Establish shared goals for modeling vs prompting

- Promote expectant pauses

- Coach & provide examples of alternatives to prompting

OUR GOAL IS
NOT TO
MAKE
CHILDREN
DO ANYTHING.
OUR GOAL IS
TO MAKE THEM
WANT TO
DO ANYTHING.
– DR. KAREN ERICKSON

Thanks!

Questions?

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