



Supporting another young person to carry out a new task



Information from the following websites was used in the production of this booklet:

www.friendsofquinn.com

www.bbbautism.com

www.nsttac.com

www.vcautismcenter.org

www.gadoe.org



Notes:			
	 	 • • • • • •	
		 	

When supporting an individual to carry out a new task, we use something called the 'Hierarchy of Prompts'. This booklet gives a step by step explanation of this hierarchy.

Hierarchy of Prompts

This hierarchy of prompts is used to promote the independence of individuals.

This independence can be achieved with specific support given by another. The idea is to slowly remove this support when the individual is ready.

We will use the example of brushing teeth to demonstrate.

There are certain steps involved with the task of brushing teeth. If you were to break it down step by step you might have a list of 5-10 small tasks. This is called a task analysis.

- 1. Pick up toothbrush
- 2. Turn on water
- 3. Place toothbrush under water to wet it.
- 4. Squeeze small amount of toothpaste onto brush.
- 5. Brush top teeth for (set amount of time).
- 6. Brush bottom teeth for (set amount of time).
- 7. Rinse out mouth
- 8. Rinse off toothbrush.



For each step of your task analysis you will use a hierarchy of cues and prompts to ensure the task of brushing teeth is a success.

The first step here would be to give an initial cue of, "It is time to brush your teeth", and just see what the individual can do on their own. This will give you a good gauge of where to begin teaching.

For each step of the task analysis you will provide a prompt or cue as needed. Here is a typical hierarchy of prompts:

- 1. Non-specific verbal cue: Say "What do you do first?"
- 2. **Verbal cue**: Say "Pick up the toothbrush."
- 3. **Verbal Gesture**: Say "*Pick up the toothbrush.*" and point to the toothbrush.
- 4. **Partial Physical Prompt**: Move the individual's hand towards the toothbrush.
- 5. **Hand over Hand**: Take the individual's hand in yours and physically help them to grasp the toothbrush.



Notes:		

Strategies for Communicating with Young People with Additional Needs

Refer to the individual by name

Use clear, short and simple instructions

Keep to a routine

Set clear boundaries

Remain positive

Show empathy

Be patient and Calm



There are **two** ways to go about using these prompts and cues.

1. Starting with the Least Physical Prompts

- Use the first cue in the hierarchy such as a nonspecific verbal cue, "What do you do next?", and see what the individual does.
- Wait at least ten seconds before proceeding to the next cue. Only do this if the individual gets stuck and doesn't know what to do or if they do a step out of the sequence.
- If this is the case, give the next cue, which would be a verbal cue, "Pick up the toothbrush", and if they still don't get it then keep going through the prompts listed until they are successful with that particular step of the task.



2. Starting with the Most Physical Prompts

- Use the last prompt in the hierarchy, physical prompts e.g. 'hand over hand'.
- When you feel that the individual understands the sequence of tasks, gradually fade those prompts.
- Begin to use less invasive prompts such as a verbal gesture (Point to faucet and say "turn it on.")
- The whole goal is to eventually use as little prompts or cues as possible so that the individual ends up doing the entire sequence of steps on his or her own or as independently as they can.



It is important to note here that there may be some tasks or goals where individuals are unable to become fully independent.

The key is to allow them to experience as much independence as they are capable.

This means that you provide only as much support as they actually require.