

PROMPTING

GOAL

Learn the basics of prompting in ABA and how it can be used to teach children with autism. Understand how and when to use prompting with your child.

BACKGROUND

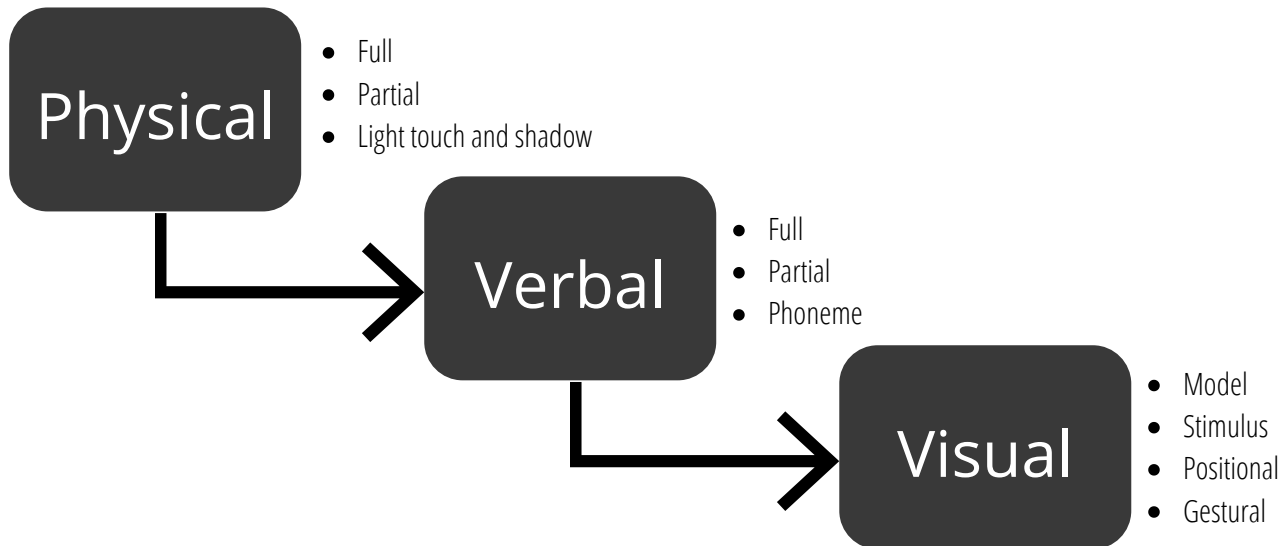
Prompts are essential for teaching your child new skills. A prompt is the help you give your child to get him to respond correctly. Prompts provide a cue to your child. What the cue is depends on the type of skill you're teaching and what types of prompts work best for your child.

LEVELS OF PROMPTS

Prompts range from the least amount of help to the most amount of help. Generally, when teaching new skills, you will provide more help at first and gradually provide less help as your child gets better at performing that skill. Your child's BCBA may recommend different prompting strategies for your child but they will still fall along this continuum.



TYPES OF PROMPTS



There are 3 main types of prompts that you can use to teach your child: physical, verbal and visual.

Each of these can be further broken down into specific types of prompts that we will cover in this lesson. These 3 types of prompts fit along the continuum we just talked about with physical prompts usually being the most amount of help you can give your child and visual prompts usually being the least amount of help. Providing less help allows your child to become more independent in completing the task.

PHYSICAL PROMPTS

When to use

Physical prompts are useful when teaching tasks that require your child to complete some sort of physical movement such as motor imitation or listener responding tasks, as long as he doesn't mind you moving his body.

How to use

Typically, these types of prompts involve you gently guiding your child's body to perform the action. If you want to teach your child to imitate you when you wave your hand, you would say "copy me" then help him move his hand in a waving motion. If you were teaching him to put his arms up when you say "show me arms up" then you would gently move his hands in an upward direction.

Teaching using physical prompts

This process is similar to the way you might teach a child to write the letters in his name. When using physical prompts to teach these skills, you would begin with your hand gently guiding his hand to perform the skill you are teaching, helping him through each part of the movement. Gradually fade this help by moving your hand further down his hand toward his wrist, then his forearm, then elbow, his upper arm, then shoulder. Fade this help until he's performing the skill on his own.

Physical prompts are useful for teaching skills that require physical movement such as motor imitation, matching, listener tasks, personal care tasks, and many academic tasks. Physical prompts are not used to teach vocal communication but are useful when teaching PECS, sign language or other forms of alternative communication

VERBAL PROMPTS

When to use

Verbal prompts are only helpful if your child imitates the words and sounds you make. It can also be difficult to completely eliminate verbal prompts so when possible, consider using either physical or visual prompts.

How to use

Verbal prompts are words or sounds that you say that help your child respond correctly in a specific situation. For example, you want to teach your child to sing a song with you by finishing part of the song when you say, "the wheels on the". You can give him a full verbal prompt by saying the whole word you want him to say. In this example, you would say, "bus." You would then expect that he repeat the word "bus." To fade these prompts, you would give him just part of the word, making the "bu" sound and expecting him to say "bus".

VISUAL PROMPTS

When to use

Visual prompts are useful for all of us. Any time a you put a reminder on the calendar, move reusable grocery bags closer to the front door so you don't forget them, or put your vitamins next to the coffee maker you're using a visual prompt.

Similarly, visual cues can help your child learn many new skills.

How to use

Visual prompts provide some type of visual cue to help your child respond correctly. Modeling is a type of visual cue that is useful when teaching many listener skills. For example, if you want to teach your child to wave when you say "show me waving", you would wave your hand to show him what you want him to do.

Teaching using visual prompts

Let's look at another example. Think of the earlier example where you were teaching your child to say "bus" when you said "the wheels on the..." Instead of using a verbal prompt by saying "bus", you could hold up a picture of a bus or even a toy bus. This is a visual prompt.

Positional prompts are another form of visual prompt. You might change an element of a correct item to help him choose it. For example, you want to teach him to respond to "which one quacks?" by choosing the correct animal. You can move the duck closer to him so he's more likely to choose it. Then, you would gradually move the duck so that it was more inline with the other animals. Another option might be to make the correct answer slightly bigger. There are lots of ways you can provide visual cues to help your child respond correctly.

If using pictures to teach your child different skills, consider making the correct answer bolder in color and the other pictures more faded. Another option might be to make the background color of the correct answer a different color. As you can see, with a little creativity, there are lots of ways you can give your child a visual prompt to help him learn the correct answer.

The background of the entire page is a grayscale photograph. It shows several pairs of hands reaching up from the bottom and sides, with the fingers positioned to form heart shapes. The focus is soft, and the lighting is bright, creating a warm and supportive atmosphere.

PROMPTING

No matter what type of prompt you decide to use, you must help your child become more independent by fading the prompts you use. Gradually move along the continuum toward the least amount of help you can give him until he learns to respond on his own.

Images are of models for demonstration purposes and do not depict children with autism.