

# MERISTEM

## Prompting Strategies

Prompts serve as a type of scaffolding that supports a student while they are building skills. Once a prompt level is used and is successful, a student's support person may begin to fade the prompt. The goal is to remove the scaffolding of prompts over time to guide the student towards independence in a particular skill. To fade a prompt, gradually reduce the level of intrusiveness to foster independence.

### Types of Prompts

#### Most to least intrusive

**1. Full Physical Prompt:** Hand-over-hand assistance.

Use a full physical prompt when a student struggles with initiating a task or using the skills necessary to complete a task. For example, if a student is asked to chop a vegetable and they are unsure of how to do this, a support person may employ a hand-over-hand prompt by holding the student's hands in their own as they use a knife.

**2. Partial Physical Prompt:** Tap the arm, elbow or hand, or gently assist in moving their arm towards an object.

Use a partial physical prompt when a student struggles with initiating or staying on task. For example, if a student is chopping vegetables and slows down and eventually stops cutting, a support person may gently tap their cutting hand or arm to prompt them to complete the task.

**3. Direct Verbal Prompt:** Clear, specific instruction or repeating instruction after the concept is introduced.

Use a direct verbal prompt when a student diverts from an activity or does something that may potentially cause harm. For example, if a support person notices that a student is not using safe knife cutting techniques, they can state *"Hey, remember to hold the knife in a safe way."*

**4. Indirect Verbal Prompt:** Ask questions or redirect attention back to the activity.

Use an indirect verbal prompt in situations similar to the previous example. However, instead of telling the student they are holding the knife unsafely, the support person can pose a question to redirect their attention back to the task at hand, for example, *"What are the safest knife holding techniques?"*

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- 5. Gestural Prompt:** Point or gesture to the object/item needed to complete a task.

Use a gestural prompt if a student is struggling to identify where to start with a task. For example, if a student is asked to grab the large chef's knife to cut vegetables and they are having difficulty identifying which knife to select, a support person can tap on the handle of the correct knife to prompt the student in making an accurate selection.

- 6. Model Prompt:** Instructions are demonstrated by a support person.

Use the modeling prompt when a student is given an instruction for a previously learned skill that they are struggling to recall. For example, if a student is given the task of cutting vegetables and they are unsure of how to follow through, a support person may use a modeling prompt by starting to cut vegetables beside the student to demonstrate how to get started on the task.

- 7. Proximity Control Prompt:** Stand in close proximity to the student.

You may use a proximity control prompt when a student struggles to stay on task. For example, if a student is given a task that they know how to execute successfully, yet are having difficulty staying on task, a support person may position themselves close to the student so as to help them to stay focused/reminded of the task at hand.

- 8. Independent:** No prompting is necessary.

The student is able to receive general instruction and complete the task on their own.