

January 31, 2013

Issue 28

Inside this issue:

Behavior Tip	2
OT Corner	2
Teacher Tip	3
Read All About It!	3
Communication Corner	3
Coming Soon!	4
Good News Corner	4
Apps for Education	4
Try This	4

Hierarchy of Prompts

This article explores the use of prompting as a strategy to support a student's readiness for learning and to facilitate individual student success. Prompting is a powerful tool that can be used to increase achievement, independence and motivation. Prompts assist students to initiate and complete tasks or activities accurately and then move on to the next item. Each type of prompt can range from minimal to very directive. The level and intensity of prompting required is unique to each student and may vary depending on the skill being addressed and the learning environment. Our primary objective is to reduce or remove prompts as soon as possible so that students learn to achieve the same success independently.

There are many different types of prompts. **Visual** prompts are observable tools which provide information to the learner and can include schedules, cue cards, reinforcement charts and mini schedules. **Verbal** prompts are direct or indirect instructions about what the student is to do. An indirect verbal prompt provides a cue that something is expected of the student, but very little information is given, such as *look at what the class is doing*. A direct verbal prompt is specific and tells the student what is expected, e.g., *time to line up*. A verbal model can be partial or full. For example, when teaching a student to ask to go to the bathroom, you can model *bathroom*, *need bathroom*, or *I need the bathroom*. A **physical** prompt can be partial such as a touch or tap on the elbow or can include total assistance such as hand-over-hand modelling. When using a physical prompt to teach a skill, it is important to remember not to also provide verbal instruction to the student as verbal prompts can become embedded in activities and can inhibit their ability to achieve independence.

Each type of prompting provides a different level of support which can range from least to most intrusive. This is known as a hierarchy of prompts. The overall goal of understanding and using a hierarchy of prompts is to teach students to initiate and complete tasks or activities and then move on to the next item without relying on adults to provide assistance. There are two ways of using the hierarchy of prompts, *least-to-most* or *most-to-least*. The type of hierarchy we decide to use is dependent on the individual student and the task being taught to the child.

The *least-to-most* hierarchy of prompting encourages educators to teach a new skill by beginning with the least intrusive type of prompt and moving down the hierarchy to more direct prompting if required to support successful achievement of the skill. Each trial begins by providing the student an opportunity to respond with the least amount of assistance possible. This approach ensures that a student does not become dependent on a more intrusive prompt and also allows the instructor to gauge the type of support the student requires to achieve success. When using a least-to-most style of prompting, all errors should be interrupted as soon as they occur with the next level of prompt. For instance, if the teacher realizes the student is beginning to respond incorrectly to a prompt, he/she should interrupt the error with the next level of support in the sequence without waiting the specified time interval. Errorless learning is an important component in teaching a new skill to students because errors, once repeated, can be difficult to eliminate.

An alternative strategy using a hierarchy of *most-to-least* intrusive prompts is often used for teaching students to use work systems or activity schedules. For example, when teaching a student to use a work system, we may initially use hand-over-hand (from behind) to guide them on how to use the system correctly. However, over time we can begin to use less intrusive prompts such as a simple touch, a gesture, a verbal prompt or a visual cue to encourage them to begin using the work system

Reference: McClannahan, L. & Krantz, P., (1999), Activity Schedules for Children with Autism. Woodbine House. Bethesda, MD.

ASD Team Members:

- Patricia Assouad
ASD Consultant
- Dr. Andrew Bennett
Psychologist-Coordinator
- Katie Cohene (on leave)
- Jovette Francoeur
Special Needs Consultant
Coordinator
- Sabrina Gabriele (on leave)
ASD Consultant
- Joëlle Hadaya (on leave)
Occupational Therapist
- Jade Lawsane
ASD Consultant
- Sasha Zalob
ASD Consultant
- Cheryl McDonald
ASD Consultant
- Helene Packman
Speech & Language
Pathologist

Behaviour Tip

To increase the frequency or the duration of a targeted behaviour, many students benefit from the implementation of a reinforcement chart e.g., *I am working for*. Put simply, students receive tokens for demonstrating a desired behaviour or skill and, after accumulating a set number of tokens, a tangible reward is provided. These systems are quite common in elementary and secondary schools. In order for such systems to be effective, it is imperative that, initially, students experience success rapidly and have easy access to the tangible rewards. In other words, when introducing reinforcement systems, ensure that it is easy for the students to obtain tokens and receive their reward. This will help to boost motivation and increase buy-in. Expectations and demands can be gradually increased afterwards. Remember that a little taste of victory goes a long way.

Occupational Therapy Corner

Functional Skills for Successful Transition into High School

It is well known that successful inclusion into a high school environment is significantly influenced by a student's ability to comfortably and independently participate in school routines and activities. It is therefore very important for elementary school teams to address functional independence when preparing for the transition of students with an Autism Spectrum Diagnosis into high school. Here are some key skills to keep in mind when preparing your student for the transition to high school.

- **Independent physical orientation within school building:** Assess the ability of the student to orient and transition independently at school. If the student is sensitive to noise/busy environment, start practicing transitions 5 minutes prior to the other students to avoid high traffic periods, as your student will most probably be using such a strategy in HS. To help the student develop the ability to move around the school independently, give the student errands/chores which require him/her to go to the different areas of the school (office, gym, music class, specific classrooms, computer lab, washroom, locker, etc.). Teach the student to read door numbers/signs if they are literate and/or to orient using visuals (pictograms, arrows, tape on floor, etc.). Provide supervision from afar or ask the student to lead you to designated areas if independent transition is too demanding.
- **Understanding and using a rotating schedule:** In addition to teaching time concepts and how to read a clock, it is important to develop time orientation skills using a written/visual weekly school schedule (ask the child to place activities in appropriate time slots according to the day of the week) and have the student follow that schedule. When this is mastered, replace week days by numbers on the schedule to prepare the student to use a rotating schedule.
- **Managing belongings and using lockers:** Practice using 2 lockers next to each other (one for clothes and schoolbag and one with shelves/organizer for books/supplies) to prepare the student for taking appropriate workbooks/supplies to specific classes, as needed in high school. Teach the student how to use a lock (combination, key, or simple combination ring lock, as appropriate).
- **Dressing for physical education:** With parental consent, practice undressing/dressing skills, including changing into a T-shirt and shorts for gym. Teach lacing and tying running shoes if developmentally appropriate.
- **Cafeteria Skills:** Teach the student how to use vending machines, to read money amounts and to give *one dollar more* (rounding strategy) to pay for meals/items at the cafeteria. Practice carrying heavy items (including plate with food, glass of water, bowl of soup, etc.) on a tray.
- **Leisure:** Finally, identify leisure activities enjoyed by your student that could be performed in HS during free time periods (e.g.: using iPod, reading/looking at magazine, etc.) and teach your student to be independent while using them.

As appropriate, teach and practice these skills in Cycle 3 to facilitate a smoother transition into high school for your student.

Good luck and have fun!!!



Lester B. Pearson School Board
1925 Brookdale Avenue
Dorval, Quebec
Phone: 514-422-3000
Fax: 514-422-3014

Our team is comprised of professionals with a variety of specializations. Designated as a Centre of Excellence within the province, our mandate is to assist LBPSB schools in the implementation of best practices for the inclusion of students with an ASD and to serve as a resource to the other English school boards in Quebec. Our team provides assistance to students and families and works to support educational personnel in augmenting their capacity to meet a wide range of needs in the classroom. We do this through direct intervention, coaching, consulting, professional development, and the sharing of materials.

We're on the web!

<http://www2.lbpsb.qc.ca/eng/asdn/index.asp>

Good News Corner

We are thrilled to introduce Sasha Demarais-Zalob, who recently joined the ASD Team as a Consultant for Autism. His expertise and experience are huge assets to our team.

Congratulations to Katie Cohene on the addition of a new baby girl in the family. Ella Juliette was born on October 22, 2012.

Congratulations to Sabrina Gabriele on the birth of her baby girl. Priya was born on December 31, 2012.

Apps for Education

The following applications are designed to create, store, share information, refer to people at school and develop individual schedules (for iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch—Requires iOS 5.0 or later). The iGet it Apps Series offers several Apps in two main categories. While the I see-quence category will help with transitions, scheduling and social scenarios for various situations, the Identification series helps with the naming of various people (All about me, iGet...my family, iGet...my classmates, I Get...people in my community, iGet...people at school). These applications offer picture, text and audio support for the easy creation of books with existing photos or by using the camera on the device. The titles and subtitles are also fully customizable. Below are two Apps of the apps which are particularly helpful to prepare for a transition to a new school. The website also offers ideas on how each App could be used to work on receptive and expressive language.

Cost: \$2.99

For more information on these Apps as well as other iGet It! Apps, visit: www.igetitapps.com

My schedules at school



School



Try This

A number of our students are working on increasing their vocabulary or spelling word bank related to winter words, either in English or in French. Now that the holidays are over, Christmas cards may be re-used as a fun and inexpensive way to reinforce these skills. One activity is to have several Christmas cards face down in a pile. The first card is turned over and the student verbally says, *I see... ___* and points to the winter item that he or she has found. This can also be done in a small turn-taking group. An *I see* sentence strip or visual bank of items to choose from may be helpful for some students. For students who are learning to read, a winter item checklist may be written on the back of the card. The students find the items and circle them on the card. For students working on spelling, they can identify one or two winter words per card and circle them and then write them down.

Coming Soon!

Our spring lecture will be held on **Tuesday, March 19th from 7-9pm in the LBPSB boardroom**. Adriana Karka will be speaking about techniques to help students with an ASD cope with anxiety.

In our next newsletter, we would like to publicize the written and artistic work of our students with ASD, if you have anything to share please send it to cmcdonald03@lbpsb.qc.ca. Please ensure that the students and their parents are aware that the work will be included in the newsletter (it can be included with or without student names).

A full day symposium on the topic of anxiety and individuals with an ASD will be brought to you by our Centre of Excellence for Autism and the Gold Centre on **May 17, 2013**.