VANDERBILT KENNEDY CENTER
TREATMENT & RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

From Hints to Independence: *How to use prompting effectively*

In this webinar you will:

- Understand and explain prompting strategies to caregivers
- Match and apply prompting techniques to skills
- Design and adapt prompting strategies that creatively engage each child's unique learning needs

Presented by Jenny Baggett & Amanda Spiess

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Bio

Jenny Baggett

Jenny Baggett is an educational consultant at the Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders (TRIAD). She specializes in applied behavior analysis and caregiver coaching for autistic individuals and their families. She hosts webinars that cover a variety of topics related to best practices in early intervention that reach hundreds of providers in Tennessee each year. Jenny is a strong believer that all children can learn skills that help them advocate for themselves, keep themselves safe, and lead them down a path for a fulfilling life. She is passionate about empowering caregivers to teach their children the skills they need to do this. In her personal life, she enjoys baking and traveling with her husband and two young children.

Amanda Spiess

Amanda Spiess earned her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Middle Tennessee State University in 2008. Amanda worked in the early childhood setting for 4 years before transitioning into a therapist role, providing ABA services within clinic and home settings to children diagnosed with Autism. In 2016 Amanda enrolled at Arizona State University online to pursue coursework in applied behavior analysis and curriculum instruction. Amanda graduated her master's program in 2017 and is now a Licensed Board Certified Behavior Analyst. Amanda has worked at TRIAD for 10 years as a part of the early intervention team. In this role Amanda is able to support parents and early interventionists by coaching them in evidence-based practices that support the child and family. Amanda truly enjoys being a team member on the first services family receive through TEIS. In her free time Amanda enjoys running, reading and spending time with her family.

Agenda

Introduction/Housekeeping

What is prompting?

Different types of prompts

How to use prompting effectively

Prompting Strategies

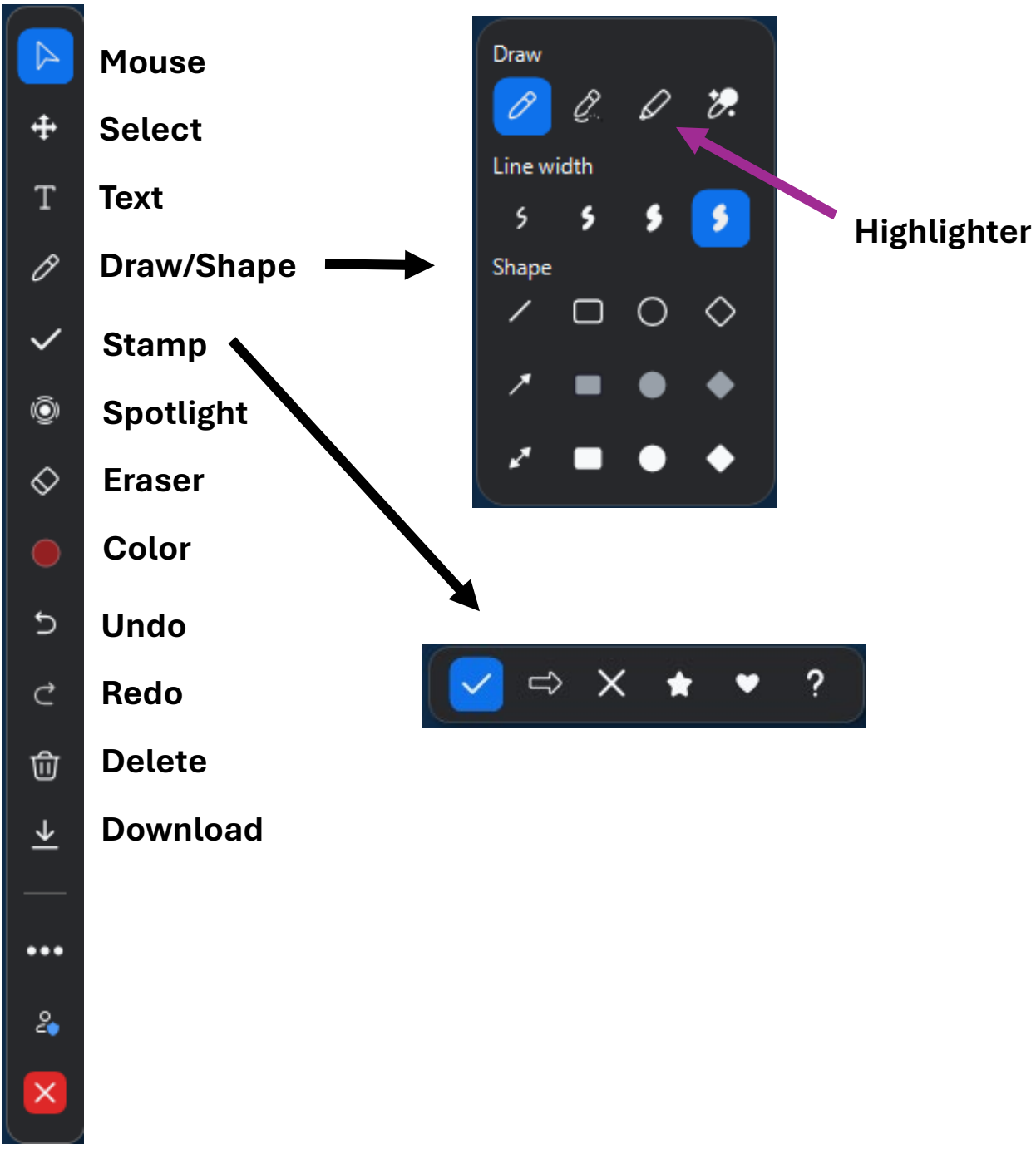
Case Studies

Resources/Closing

Zoom Orientation – Annotation

Push computer mouse to the top of the screen
Click drop down arrow under VIEW OPTIONS
Click Annotate

OR…Look for the pencil with line icon on the bottom left corner of your screen



Write down all the instructions that you hear:

ABCs of Behavior & Learning

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
Event that occurs _____ a behavior	Anything that the child does that can be _____	What happens immediately _____ the behavior

Prompting

1. In behavior science, prompts are considered supplementary _____.
2. A prompt is a type of _____we give a child to teach or maintain a new skill or behavior.
3. Prompting supports _____.
4. Prompting ensures the child's _____ and reduces _____.

Word Bank

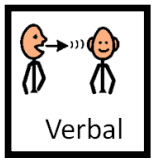
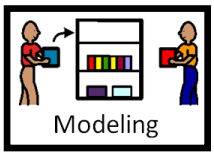
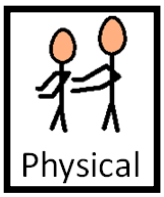
help | skill acquisition | success | antecedents | errors

Prompting

A **prompt** is the type of help we give a child to teach or maintain a new skill or behavior. Prompts are given to make sure a child is **successful** with this skill and given before or at the same time your child is using a previously learned behavior to communicate.

For example, if your child is *reaching* to communicate what they want, prompting your child to *point* to what they want will teach this new skill with success in the moment they want something. This success can help your child to learn this skill.

Choosing which prompt to use may depend on how your child best learns new skills, if this is a new skill, or if you are teaching more independence with a skill they have already started to learn. Review the chart for more information and examples.

	Prompt Type	Example
	Verbal • Using words or sounds to cue or model the goal behavior • Verbal prompts are the most difficult to fade	When a child reaches for a cookie, prompt him or her to say "cookie" by saying "cookie" • **Note**: just provide the verbal prompt, "cookie," and not, "say cookie."
	Modeling • Demonstrating a behavior so the child will imitate the skill • Can be generalized to the natural environment by teaching child to imitate peers as models	Clean up toys yourself while the child is expected to clean up as well.
	Visual • Presenting visual objects, images or photos (e.g., written word, photographs, line drawings, etc.) that clarify the expectation of the new skill	Show the child a picture of their shoes or their actual shoes as a prompt for them to put on their shoes before going outside
	Positional • Positioning yourself or objects in the environment to make it easier for the child to understand the expectation and be successful	You get on the floor at eye level and hold two choices close to the child's face, positioning the one you know they want closer than the other choice to prompt for the child to choose.
	Gestural • Using facial expressions, movements with your body (i.e. point), or eye gaze to hint for the child to do what you've asked	Pat the seat next to you when you say "sit down" when offering a snack
	Physical • Touching the child or moving their body to show them how to do the goal behavior	Use hand over hand to assist the child to dry hands with a paper towel • **Note:** Physical prompts can and should be faded quickly, and only used with consent

Prompting Strategies

	When/How to use	Examples of skills
Most-to-least Building success and confidence before fading support	Teaching brand new skills Ensuring _____ Preventing frustration	• Brushing teeth • Walking with support • Pointing to body parts
Least-to-most Allow child to try independently before offering help	Promote _____ Practicing known skills Generalizing to new settings Emerging skills	• Waving "bye" • Clean up toys • Follow 1-step instruction
Graduated Guidance Provide physical guidance on a moment-by-moment basis Remain in position to prompt as needed	Teaching skills that require _____ assistance	• Handwashing • Toothbrushing • Writing • Transitioning
Time delay Errorless or near-errorless learning	Teaching with *at least* two different behaviors at a time Only use the least intrusive prompt that will ensure the child is successful	• Identifying colors • Identifying body parts • Identifying letters

Notes:

Jamie

Background: Jamie is a 4-year-old autistic boy who loves playing with LEGO at home. He often gets deeply focused on building and doesn't want to stop when it's time to transition to other activities—like getting ready for dinner, going to bed, or leaving the house. When Dad says it's time to stop, Jamie may whine, yell "No!", or try to hide his toys. Sometimes he runs to another room or refuses to follow directions.

Current Strategies Dad Uses:

- Gives a 5-minute verbal warning before transitions.
- Uses a visual timer to show time counting down.
- Offers a preferred activity after the transition (e.g., bedtime story, choosing dessert).

Despite these supports, Jamie still struggles with transitions several times a day.

1. What prompts and prompting procedure would you suggest Dad use to support Jamie's transitions?

   _____

   _____

2. What would be some signs that it's time to fade prompts?

   _____

   _____

3. How would you recommend Dad fade those prompts over time?

   _____

   _____

AVA

Background: Ava is a 2-year-old autistic child with limited verbal communication. She enjoys watching a particular YouTube video featuring animated nursery rhymes. When she wants to watch it, she may point to the tablet or bring it to Dad, but she doesn't yet use words or picture symbols to make a clear request. Sometimes she becomes frustrated and cries or throws the tablet if Dad doesn't immediately understand what she wants.

Current Strategies Dad Uses:

- Offers a few video choices and asks Ava to point.
- Uses simple verbal prompts like "Which one?" or "Show me."
- Has started introducing a basic communication board with video icons.

Despite these efforts, Ava often struggles to communicate her specific request, especially when the video she wants isn't shown or available.

1. What prompts and prompting procedure would you suggest Dad use to support Ava's communication?

   _____

   _____

2. What would be some signs that it's time to fade prompts?

   _____

   _____

3. How would you recommend Dad fade those prompts over time?

   _____

   _____

Teaching Prescription

ROUTINE:

Skill:

Strategies Currently in Place

1.

2.

3.

What types of prompts will you use?

- ☐ Verbal
- ☐ Positional
- ☐ Modeling
- ☐ Gestural
- ☐ Visual
- ☐ Physical

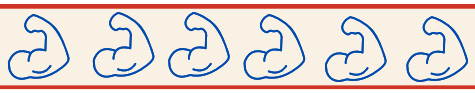
How will you reinforce the behavior:

How will you know when to fade?

How will you fade?

What supports/resources do you need?

How confident are you feeling?

Fill in: 

How did it go?

Fill in: 

Notes: