

# Tip 3: Prompting

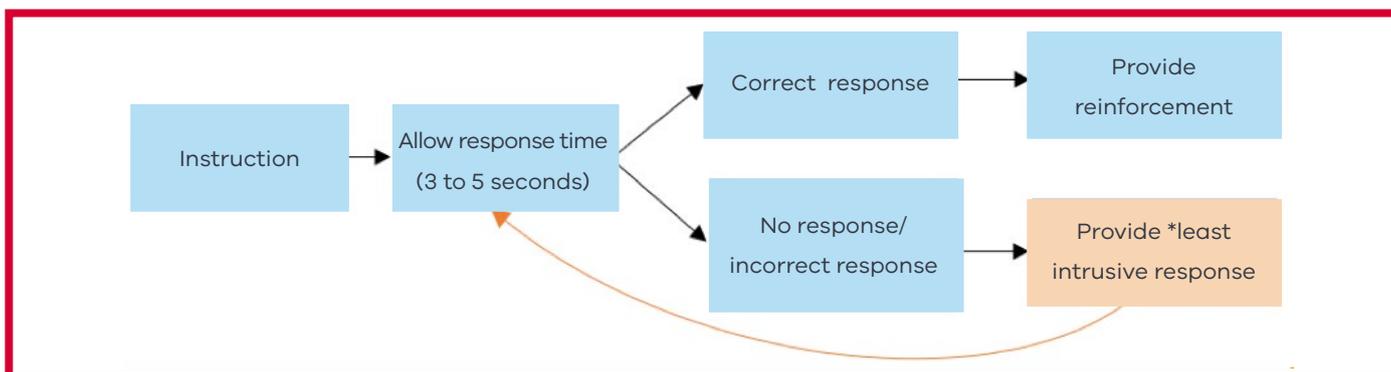


## Watch this video

- [Video - Tip 3: Prompting](#)

### Definition

Prompts are supports and reminders used to help children complete a task.



### Benefits

Providing prompts allows your child to experience success. If they do not receive enough prompts, they will continue to incorrectly complete a task, and then over time these will become habits.

Prompting can be used to encourage positive behaviour/s, and proactively increase your child's engagement in learning new skills.

### Using this tip

In order to support your child to do their homework tasks or practise new skills independently, use the least intrusive prompt possible (\*intrusive = disruptive or hands-on).

Please discuss this with your child's teacher first.

The different types of prompts are often presented in an order from least to most intrusive. It is important to reduce the prompts over time so students do not become prompt-dependent.

<p><b>Least intrusive</b></p> <p><b>Most intrusive</b></p>	<b>Independent</b>	Child completes task with no assistance.
	<b>Visual</b>	Example: attached reminder signs to desks or on walls, highlighting.
	<b>Verbal</b>	Short redirection. Example: 'Next step', 'keep working'.
	<b>Explicit Verbal</b>	Repeat the instruction. Example: 'Please, write your name at the top of the page'.
	<b>Gestural</b>	Point to direct child's attention.
	<b>Model</b>	Demonstrate the task and tell your child to imitate the action.
	<b>Physical</b>	Hand-over-hand prompting.

**Note:** physical prompts refer to gently guiding your child's hand to help them do a task – not physically forcing a child to do something.

They are rarely required with school-aged children (they are used more frequently with children in the early years or for students with disability or additional needs).

- **Example:** holding a pencil to help your child trace or write.
- **Non-example:** physically moving your child back into their seat if they are walking around the room.

As soon as your child resists a physical prompt you must cease prompting (e.g. if they pull away from the pencil, you must let go).

## Encourage independence

Allow your child to try a task independently whenever possible.

**Start with independence** and work your way through the prompt hierarchy to find the least intrusive prompt necessary to help them to complete the task.

Do not use all of the prompts: select three or four that best suit the task and the child.

**Example:** For Maria to answer a question during maths homework, she may need a:

1. chance to respond independently
2. visual prompt
3. full verbal prompt
4. gestural prompt.

After giving a prompt, allow response time (three to 10 seconds) before trying the next (more intrusive) prompt type. This will help to avoid over-prompting and children from becoming prompt-dependent.

When going through the prompt hierarchy give a prompt type only once. If there is no response or an incorrect response, try the next prompt type.

If there are multiple steps to a task, reset the prompting for each step. Start with independence for each step and each task. Children may require different prompts for different tasks.





## Best Practice Tips

When using the Prompting tip:

- discuss with your child's teacher
- use the least intrusive prompt necessary
- allow sufficient response time (three to 10 seconds)
- prompt children before they incorrectly complete a task
- reduce prompts over time, to increase independence
- if your child resists, stop prompting.

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## Handy resources

- [Prompting and Fading](#)