

BEWARE Prompt Dependence

When a learner **needs** a prompt to start or complete a mastered task, that prompt has become the Discriminative Stimulus (SD) instead of a support. This happens when a prompt has not been faded and/or the helper doesn't realize they are prompting.

Meet Jim. He can say and read “hello” and “good morning,” knows the names of his teachers and classmates, and notices when someone comes into a room. But he does not respond to greetings unless someone says, “Say, good morning to Jenny,” or “Say hello to Mrs. R.” In this example, Jim's behaviour of greeting others is prompt dependent.

TIPS FOR BUILDING INDEPENDENCE

BEFORE TEACHING

- ✔ **EVALUATE AND CHOOSE THE LEAST INTRUSIVE PROMPT(S)** that will allow the learner to be successful with the task.

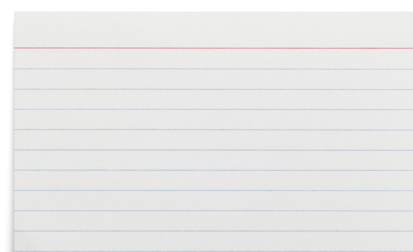
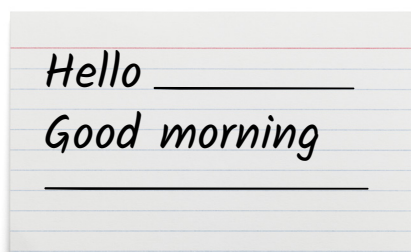
Some options:

- **Visual:** Pictures, text
- **Gestural:** Pointing, hand signal
- **Verbal:** Say what to do, or ask, “What do you need next?”
- **Model:** Show what to do.
- **Graduated guidance:** Physically guide the learner's body to complete part of the task.
- **Full physical:** Guide the learner's body to complete entire task.

- ✔ **PLAN FOR FADING THE PROMPT.**

DURING TEACHING

- ✔ **PRAISE AND REINFORCE** independent completion.
- ✔ **COLLECT DATA AND EVALUATE** whether the prompt is working and being faded at the correct pace.



This is an example of how to use Jim's strengths as a prompt (reading) and how the visual written prompt could be faded.