



**Important techniques for teaching new skills:
Introduction to Discrete Trial Instruction for the Home**

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Selecting and Teaching Skills

Select the skill and match to an instruction

Type of Skill	Instruction	Tips
Labeling (naming things)	See item + "What is it?"	
For example, show them a picture of a cow and ask them "What is this?"		
Imitation (imitate others)	See action + "Do this." "Copy me."	Do not tell them what to do (i.e., clap as you clap).
For example, when they look at you, shake your head yes and say "Your turn"		
Receptive (following instructions)	Instruction to complete task and necessary items	Use an array with other items for them to be able to discriminate.
For example, put three items/pictures on the desk and say "hand me the big one" or "touch the child who is eating"		
Visual Performance (complete a task)	Instruction to complete task and necessary items	Use puzzles, shape sorters, pattern building, etc.
For example, build a pattern and give them the pieces they need to complete it and ask them, "What goes next?"		
Intraverbals (responding to others)	Target skill (i.e., "A cow goes ___", "Where do you milk?", etc.)	Fill in the blank statements, personal questions, WH questions, describing activities, recalling events, etc.
For example, when working on personal information you will ask them, "What is your name?"		

Match the prompt to the instruction

Hierarchy	Prompt	Explanation	Example
Least Intrusive  Most Intrusive	Independent	The child is able to perform the task on their own.	Teacher: "What is something you eat?" Child: "Apples!"
	Verbal	Providing a direct or an indirect statement about the response that is expected.	Teacher: "What comes after Tuesday?" Teacher prompts student by stating "Wednesday"
	Gestural	Pointing, nodding, providing a facial expression, etc. that indicates what the learner is supposed to do.	Teacher: "Touch the dog" Teacher points at the picture of the dog.
	Model	Showing the learner what they are expected to do.	Teacher: "Roll car" Teacher places hand on car and rolls it back and forth.
	Partial Physical	Providing minimal physical guidance to occasion the desired response.	Teacher: "Clap your hands" Teacher touches the top of both of the child's hands.
	Full Physical	Providing full ("hand-over-hand") assistance to complete a task.	Teacher: "Put the car in the box" Teacher places their hand on top of the child's, picks up their hand, places it on top of and grasps the car, and brings the car to the box.

Assessing Preference

Follow these guidelines to select effective reinforcers:

1. Present 3-4 items (toys, snacks) that you suspect the child may like
2. Allow the child to sample each of the items by modeling how to play with the toy or by prompting him/her to take a snack that is offered
3. Then place all the items out on the table and ask the child to select one (e.g., “Pick one” or “What do you want?”)
4. Remove the toys/snacks that are not selected and allow the child access to the item/snack selected in step 3 for 5-10 seconds.
5. Gently remove item and begin conducting teaching trials

How will I know if the child becomes disinterested in the item I selected?

It is important to watch your child carefully to make sure that he/she is still interested in the item you selected to use as a reinforcer.

Below are some common signs that your child may not be interested in the item:

- Pushes item away when offered
- Ignores the item presented and looks at something else
- Says, “I don’t want that!”
- Says they want a specific toy (e.g., “I want the blue car”)
- Runs away and grabs a different toy

What do I do if the child is no longer interested in the item I selected?

- Present new choices and follow steps 1-5 above
- If child asks for a specific toy, start using the toy that they request

Securing Attention

Use one or more of these techniques to secure the learner’s attention:

1. Wait expectantly for 2-3 seconds for the learner to orient toward you*
2. Say the learner’s name (e.g., “Karen”)
3. Say “look” or “look at all the pictures”
4. Lay out the targets near you and then sliding them in all at once towards the learner such that it grabs his/her attention

NOTE: You should always secure the learner’s attention before beginning a trial. If one of these techniques does not work, repeat the technique one time then move to a different technique. Notify your BCBA if you consistently have trouble securing the learner’s attention.

DO NOT DO THE FOLLOWING TO SECURE ATTENTION

- Touch each individual target
- Name each individual target
- Snap your fingers at the learner
- Say his/her name repeatedly
- Physically guide the learner’s face toward material
- Repeatedly say any of the appropriate statements (e.g., “Rachel, Rachel, Rachel,...”)

Conducting Teaching Trials

Follow the steps listed in the Discrete Trial Checklist to conduct teaching trials:

Discrete Trial Instruction Checklist	
1. Get data sheet and fill it out	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Assess preference and select a reinforcer	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Allow the learner to have access to the reinforcer for a brief time	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Remove reinforcer and begin a trial within 5 seconds	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Secure attention	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Present the targets	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Give the instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Waits 3-5 seconds for response	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Re-state the instruction and use correct prompt (if needed)	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Immediately deliver reinforcer while providing descriptive praise	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Remove targets	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Immediately & accurately record data (after the reinforcer is given)	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Remove reinforcer	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Begin new trial	<input type="checkbox"/>

Collecting Data

DTI Datasheet

Fill out the instruction, prompt, and targets prior to session. Circle + for independent or - for an error or prompted response for each trial during the session.

Instruction: _____

Prompt: _____

Trial	Target	+ / -
1		+ -
2		+ -
3		+ -
4		+ -
5		+ -
6		+ -
7		+ -
8		+ -
9		+ -
10		+ -
11		+ -
12		+ -
Percentage		

Instruction: _____

Prompt: _____

Trial	Target	+ / -
1		+ -
2		+ -
3		+ -
4		+ -
5		+ -
6		+ -
7		+ -
8		+ -
9		+ -
10		+ -
11		+ -
12		+ -
Percentage		

Instruction: _____

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7		+ -
8		+ -
9		+ -
10		+ -
11		+ -
12		+ -
Percentage		