

BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES

Home learning edition

WHAT IS HURDLE HELP?

Hurdle help is the help, support, encouragement, assistance, guidance, you can provide to your child to help them “over the hurdle” they are currently facing.

When children are faced with a frustrating question, activity, situation, the fastest way to escape that frustration is to avoid the activity. However, when they avoid, the activity doesn't get done, feelings can escalate, and it can quickly become a power struggle situation.

Prior to your child reaching their heightened level of frustration, hurdle help can alleviate them from escaping as you are helping them to be successful in the activity and therefore increasing their confidence, both of which increase likelihood the activity will be completed.

Children often have a hard time recognizing when their emotions are increasing or elevating. Hurdle help is a way to provide assistance to a child to immediately reduce their frustrations, so they are able to re-engage with the activity in a successful and confidence manner.

EXAMPLES OF HURDLE HELP:

- Providing a validating and encouragement statement
- Giving direction on where the student can start
- Modeling how to solve the first question
- Using a prompt such as, “what could we do first” or “where could we look to review how to solve this”
- Starting to pick up the toys, laundry, books first and then have them join in (I do, You do model)
- Using language such as, “I'll do one, then you do one” or “I'll do one, we will do one together, and then you can do one”
- Bringing a snack or drink to the child if it seems they may be hungry
- Having a conversation with the child about what's going on, where they feel stuck, what they aren't sure of

KEYS TO EFFECTIVE HURDLE HELP:

1. Provide help prior to escalation occurs. Once a student has reached an elevated step, they may not be willing or able to accept the help you are looking to provide.
2. Ensure you are providing help in a genuine tone and with neutral facial features. If we seem upset, frustrated, or annoyed, the help may not be perceived as authentic and true.
3. Even if a student has previously shown mastery of an activity or task, they may still require hurdle help on a different day. Remember, different day includes different influences to behavior.

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WHAT IS BEHAVIORAL MOMENTUM?

A strategy to increase motivation to complete a task by increasing a child's confidence in successfully completing a task by completing easy, already mastered tasks prior to the non-preferred or more challenging activity.

Building momentum to a harder task, by starting with 2-5 easier, simpler, already mastered tasks.

Providing reinforcement for completion of simple activities leads to engagement and increased motivation to complete a harder, more challenging task for the child.

EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIORAL MOMENTUM:

Child who is easily frustrated by writing assignments:

- Have child read individual sight words on index cards first (followed by praise)
- Then have the child read the words in a sentence (followed by praise)
- Then have the child write the sentence (followed by additional praise)
- Using the mastery of the sight words and reading skills to provide praise for successful completion of activities that the child is able to do, and that builds momentum for the non-preferred challenging task of writing.

Child easily frustrated by math facts:

- Ask the child what day of the week it is (follow by praise)
- Ask the child what the weather is like (follow by praise)
- Ask the child what their favorite snack is (follow by praise)
- Show the student a math fact and say, "what's the answer" (followed by additional praise)
- This is an example of verbal momentum done by asking questions the child knows the answers to first, and then presenting a more challenging concept or question to them.

KEYS TO EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORAL MOMENTUM:

1. Keeping the tasks quick and simple and related to concepts the student already knows. This is not a time to add in new skills or concepts.
2. Watch for signs of frustration. If the child is becoming frustrated by the quick pace of the questions, slow down, and allow the child to breathe and settle back into the activity.
3. If the child still isn't motivated to complete the task, consider modifying or simplifying the task so that they are more likely to engage.
4. Providing some degree of reinforcement is essential after completion of the simple tasks as well as reinforcement (ideally more valuable reinforcement) after completion of the challenging activity that is presented.

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WHAT IS A PROMPT?

A prompt is a support that is given to someone when giving them a task. There are different types and levels of prompts that can be used. Which prompt is used depends on the child's level of independence with the specific skill that is being requested and/or knowledge of how to complete the task.

WHAT IS PROMPTING?

The act of providing support to a student to increase likelihood they will be successful at completing the task or instruction that was given.

TYPES OF PROMPTS:

MOST TO LEAST PROMPTING ↑	Natural Cue Occurs	↓ LEAST TO MOST PROMPTING
	Independent Response	
	Visual Prompt	
	Verbal Prompt	
	Gestural Prompt	
	Modeling Prompt	
	Partial Physical Prompt	
	Full Physical Prompt	

WHICH DIRECTION DO I GO?

If you are teaching a brand new skill for the first time you will most likely use most to least prompting. Although based on each individual child, you may start at a different level other than the very bottom of the ladder. Some may need to start with a physical prompt, whereas other children may start with a model, for some even just a verbal prompt may be enough.

If the student has the skill, but isn't demonstrating it, use least to most prompting. Provide 1 (no more than 2) repeats per level and then move down the chain until the child completes some portion of the original demand given.

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EXAMPLES OF PROMPTING:

Natural Cue Occurs: Direction or Instruction is given by adult

Example: Following, "Please put on your shoes"

Independent Response: Child responds without any additional support from the adult

The child walks to their shoes and puts them on.

Visual Prompt: a visual picture or word written out to show the expectation

When shown a picture of schedule for getting dressed, the student goes to his shoes

Verbal Prompt: simplified verbal repeat or rephrasing of the original direction

Repeat of directions, "put on shoes"

Gestural Prompt: a motion that signals a response such as tapping an item, holding one up, or pointing

Pointing to the area of the home the shoes are or holding up a shoe in the direction of the student

Modeling Prompt: Showing the child exactly what you want completed.

Putting on your shoes in front of the child

Partial Physical Prompt: slight physical guidance to direct child to completing the task

Tapping shoulder or guiding elbow to pick up shoe, and then reducing prompt once the child starts

Full Physical Prompt: physically assisting the child complete the direction either by working hand over hand or guiding each motion needed in the step

Assisting the child hand over hand with steps to putting on the shoe

KEYS TO EFFECTIVE PROMPTING:

1. As you increase prompt level provided to your child, you can pair the additional prompt with a simplified version of the original direction or instruction. Be mindful not to overload with verbal information though, as it can be hard for your child to process if too much information is presented at one time.
2. If a child becomes resistant to physical prompting, back away and try a different approach.
3. If you are sounding like a broken record, try a different prompt level.
4. Remember to be mindful of where you are starting with prompting levels or children can become prompt dependent
5. Provide wait time in-between prompts to allow the child to process the information that has been presented.