Supporting Teachers and Students

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### Rewards and Reinforcers

Rewards and reinforcers are any actions, events, or items that increase the likelihood that a behavior or task completion will recur. Look for opportunities to reinforce positive behavior. Provide the reinforcer as soon as possible following the desired behavior or task completion. Deliver the reinforcer enthusiastically.

Rewards and reinforcers:

- **Tangible** – food, drink, toys
- **Social** – praise, facial expressions
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Cues vs. Prompts

- **Cue** – A signal to say or do something
- **Prompt** – Assistance to say or do something

**Prompt Levels** – Provide the amount of assistance the student needs to complete the task. Gradually decrease the level of prompt until the student can complete the task independently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt Level</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full prompt – Hand-over-hand assistance</td>
<td>Hold the student's hand while the student holds a pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial prompt – Supportive guidance</td>
<td>Support the student's wrist while the student writes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct – Clear statement</td>
<td>&quot;Put your book in your desk.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect – Ask a question</td>
<td>&quot;What should you do next?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show student, student imitates</td>
<td>Write the student's name on a paper and then the student writes or traces his/her name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gesture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement/motion</td>
<td>Put your finger to your mouth to remind the student to be quiet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Providing Clear Directions**

Providing clear directions and helping students comply is essential to maintaining a productive learning environment.

- **Establish eye contact with the student**
  Look at the student and state the student’s name when making a request.
  Example: “John, put your book away and line up at the door.”

- **Make requests specific**
  In a calm, clear voice, provide a precise description of what you expect from the student.
  Example: “Sam, quietly read the first paragraph on page 14.”

- **Make one request at a time**
  Do not ask the student to do several things at once. The student may be overwhelmed and may not be able to remember everything. After the student has complied with one request, you may make an additional request.

- **Allow time for compliance**
  State what you want the student to do and give the student three to five seconds to comply. If the student does not comply, restate the request.

- **Praise the student for complying**
  Provide verbal reinforcement when the student complies with your request. This will encourage further compliance in the future.
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PaTTAN Mission
The Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) is an initiative of the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Bureau of Special Education, working in partnership with families and local education agencies to support programs and services to improve student learning and achievement.

PaTTAN Offices
King of Prussia 800-441-3215
Harrisburg 800-360-7282
Pittsburgh 800-446-5607

www.pattan.net
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