

**Establish the Independence Goals in the Individual Education Plan (IEP)**

**Pathway to INDEPENDENCE**

**STEP 1**

Demonstration/  
Focus Lesson  
"I do it."

**STEP 2**

Instruction and Prompting  
"We do it together."

**STEP 3**

Practice and Prompt Fading  
"You do it together."

**STEP 4**

Independence  
"You do it alone."

Identify the appropriate specific skill(s) to teach

- Review relevant assessments, observations, and team discussions to identify one or two independence skills to be targeted
- Collect data to establish baseline on current level of achievement
- Determine the steps required to successfully complete the skill/task using task analysis
- Determine success criteria for each step (e.g., length of time, level of prompting - refer to Prompts for Teaching Skills below)
- Identify appropriate and meaningful reinforcers for the student
- Establish a working plan to fade prompts from the onset

**Step 1**  
Educator provides explicit instruction

- Lessons are brief and targeted, supporting the student's learning profile
- May include incorporating environmental prompts into the demonstration
- Actions are adult driven - student is the observer
- Student practice with prompts should immediately follow demonstration
- Carefully monitor the progress of the student to ensure the pace is appropriate

**Step 2**  
Educators prompt, question, facilitate, support and guide instruction to meet expectation and to address student needs

- Plan should be to **prompt - reinforce - fade**
- Educator gives instruction then follows predetermined prompting plan. Prompts may be immediate following the instruction or a delay before the prompt is provided
- Provide immediate reinforcement if the student engages in the desired skill. Reinforcement provides the motivation for the student to learn and to begin to perform the skill independently
- Collect and review data on the acquisition of the new skill to ensure the prompt is working and to determine when to begin the process of fading
- Ensure generalization by teaching the skill across different places, people, and materials
- As the student becomes successful in performing the skill, it is essential that the educator begin to fade the prompt. If success is not evident, review data and revise your plan

**Step 3**  
Gradual release of responsibility to student. Students may practice and apply their learning while interacting with their peers

- Gradual release of responsibility to student begins through prompt fading and increasing expectations that earn reinforcement
- Prompts can be faded along three dimensions: **Intensity**: gradually reduce the amount of help being provided; **Time**: gradually add longer intervals of time between the instruction and the prompt; **Spatial Distance**: gradually increase the distance between the student and the educator
- Monitor reinforcement and adjust as appropriate, based on student response and preference
- Continue to plan for generalization by practicing and fading prompts across people, places, and materials as required
- Continue to collect data on skill acquisition

**Step 4**  
Students consolidate information and solidify their understanding by applying what they have learned in a new situation

- Continue to collect data on skill acquisition based on success criteria over an appropriate timeline
- Develop a monitoring plan including transition considerations i.e., how are successful strategies being shared through transition planning?
- Continue to positively reinforce as appropriate
- Differentiation of instruction will support continued independence (fairness is not sameness)
- Establish next goal to further increase independence as required in line with IEP and All About Me/IPP goals

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Administrator**

- Provide opportunities for capacity building among staff to facilitate pathways to student independence
- Facilitates scheduling that will support student movement towards independence
- Collaborate with the IEP development team
- Monitor the implementation of the IEP

**Classroom Teacher/Educator/Early Childhood Educator (ECE)**

- Collaborate in the development of the independence goals as part of the IEP
- Program for and provide direct instruction in learning skills and work habits including independence skills
- Plan intentional opportunities for the student to develop independence
- Classroom teacher evaluates and reports on student progress towards independence goals

**Educational Assistant (EA)**

- Be familiar with student profile and goals as outlined on the IEP
- On an ongoing basis, identify for teaching staff, possible opportunities for the student to move toward increased independence
- Systematically implement strategies using the hierarchy and fading of prompts, to increase student independence
- Assist in the collection of data, for and under the direction of, teaching staff

**Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)**

- Participate in developing independence goals as part of the IEP
- Ensure pertinent staff understand the independence goals identified in the IEP
- Be a resource to staff in understanding the hierarchy and fading of prompts
- Develop transition plans that incorporate independence goals
- Instruct and/or co-instruct students in developing independence skills
- Support the development of data tracking tools to assess student responses to prompts and assist in the analysis of data
- SERT collaborates with classroom teacher in the evaluation of student progress towards independence goals

**Parents**

- Share information and collaborate on setting and supporting IEP goals related to independence
- Support goals for independence identified in the IEP
- Participate in transition planning specifically in relation to goals of independence

**Student**

- Participate in IEP meetings to set goals and identify possible strategies, to the extent possible
- Participate in transition planning specifically in relation to goals of independence

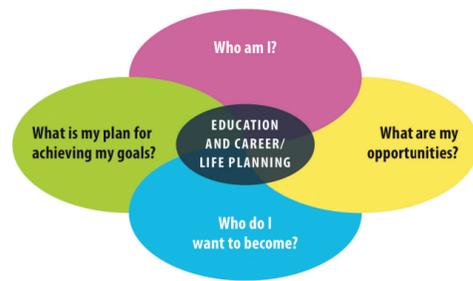
**Other Professionals**

- Share information and collaborate on setting and supporting IEP goals related to independence
- May provide resources/consultation
- Clarification of community supports to the family

**Hierarchy of Prompts for TEACHING SKILLS - Prompts should be the least intrusive possible while ensuring student success.**

Full Physical Prompts	Partial Physical Prompts	Minimal Physical Prompts	Direct Verbal Prompts	Model Prompt	Object Prompts	Visual Prompts	Indirect Verbal Prompt	Gestural Prompt	Natural Prompt
Hand over hand assistance	Partial hand over hand assistance. Usually used to initiate the task	Gentle physical guidance to support the student to initiate the task	Concise verbal cues to help the student respond correctly	Showing the student, through demonstration, what the expectation is	The student will begin the task when presented with an object	Visual representation of the task is provided to the student (e.g., photos, picture communication symbols)	When the educator tells a group or uses a term associated with the task to initiate the task	The student will begin the task when an adult points or uses gestures	The prompt occurs normally in the environment

## All About Me & IPP Guiding Questions



The All About Me (K-6) portfolio and the Individual Pathways Plan (IPP Gr 7 to Graduation) which are required for all students, may be used as a source of information when developing the IEP, transition plan and goals towards independence.

## Glossary

### Gradual Release of Responsibility

Students are given multiple opportunities through each phase to practice and become confident when applying skills or strategies to a new task. Building a culture of independence takes time, but each step paves the way for students to speak up on their own behalf and to take charge of their own learning and life.

### Prompting

To prompt is an instructional technique used to help students make correct responses until they learn to respond to the instruction independently.

### Fading

To fade prompts means the educator is gradually reducing the strength of the prompt and building towards student independence.

### Generalization

The process of taking a skill learned under one condition and the student demonstrating this skill under other conditions. Conditions may include different settings, people, materials, instructions or actions.

### Task Analysis

Task analysis involves breaking a complex skill into smaller, teachable units, the product of which is a series of sequentially ordered steps or tasks.

### Reinforcement

The presentation or removal of something immediately following a response/skill which increases the likelihood that the skill/response will occur again.

### Reinforcers

Something (i.e., stimulus) presented or removed that increases the likelihood that the skill will occur again.

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## Links and Resources

**Alberto, P. & Troutman, A. (2013)**  
*Applied behavior analysis for teachers.*  
Boston: Pearson.

**Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2007)**  
*Applied behavior analysis, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*  
Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall.

**Creating Pathway to Success**  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/cps/CreatingPathwaysSuccess.pdf>

**EduGains Website**  
<http://www.edugains.ca/newsite/HOME/index.html>

**Effective Educational Practices for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders**  
<https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/autismSpecDis.pdf>

**Erin Oak Kids Website**  
<http://www.erinoakkids.ca/>

**Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2008)**  
*Better Learning Through Structured Teaching: A Framework for the Gradual Release of Responsibility.*  
Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

**Individual Education Plan**  
<https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide/resource/iepresguid.pdf>

**Learning for All**  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/LearningforAll2013.pdf>

# Fostering Student Independence

## An Educator's Guide

This guide has been developed by the Barrie Region Boards to assist educators and families as they support the pathway to student independence.

The gradual release of responsibility model provides educators with the instructional framework to move from educator supports to student independence.

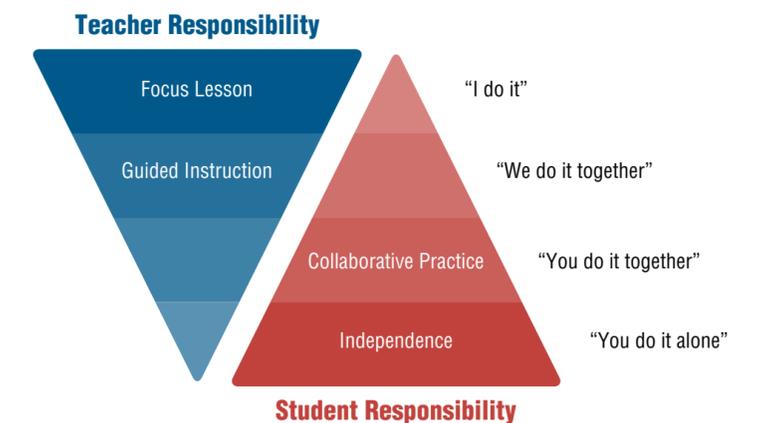


**“By gradually releasing responsibility for learning to students, teachers help students improve the quality of their lives.”**  
- Ontario Ministry of Education

*Fostering Student Independence: An Educator's Guide* is a resource brochure that is intended to clarify the precise planning used when scaffolding support for student independence. The development of the independence skills needed for a student to succeed in school and life begins early. The goal(s) for fostering independence should be explicitly stated in the IEP (Individual Education Plan). The IEP should clearly identify and define observable and measurable outcomes.

Independence allows for a student's voice in self-determination. This includes knowing who they are, what they want or need, and making choices and decisions that affect their life. Incremental steps are used by educators and families to move from assuming all of the responsibility, to students becoming increasingly independent.

## A Model for Success for All Students



Fisher, D., @ Frey, N. (2008). *Better learning through structured teaching: A framework for the gradual release of responsibility.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

This model accommodates a wide variety of developmental levels and is designed to increase the intellectual, personal, physical, social and career development of all students.

Students are given multiple opportunities through each phase to practice and become confident when applying skills or strategies to a new task. Building a culture of independence takes time, but each step paves the way for students to advocate on their own behalf and to take charge of their own learning and life.