



## Lunch and Learn: Developing a Plan to Increase Student Independence

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### A Few Guidelines...



- Keep your phone or computer on mute unless asking questions
- We will leave time at the end for Q and A
- If you have a question use the participant feature and raise your hand
- Questions and comments can be typed in the comment section

### Agenda

- Discuss some quick tips for increasing student independence during remote learning now;
- Investigate steps teams can consider for creating a plan to address the need to increase a student's independence moving forward;
- Briefly mention how NJCIE can offer additional assistance in facilitating the process for developing the plan to increase independence.



### Recognizing the Current Place in Time...

We are in the midst of navigating an unprecedented set of circumstances for educators, families and students.



### Remote Learning: Different Things for Different Students

- Across the state districts may be implementing remote learning in different ways including:
  - Technology-centered approaches (Google Classroom, Screencastify, Zoom, YouTube, etc.), relying on family/ personal technology (devices, wifi) or school-loaned resources (Chromebook lending, hotspot access);
  - Low-tech approaches (packets, other physical materials).

### Remote Learning and Adult Facilitation...

- Regardless of the way a district is implementing remote learning, in order to make it work, we find ourselves **relying** on parents to **actively facilitate** learning at home.
- For some students with disabilities, parent engagement to support their learning from home may be **more involved** than for other students.



### What have YOU noticed about the level of support your student/child needs in order to engage in remote learning?

unique window into how the child may really be **functioning** in a classroom...

*How much direct adult support do they need to complete a complex task?*

*How much redirection back to task do they typically require from adults?*

*What strategies do the students try first before asking an adult for help?*



### Passive Learners: Unintended Results of Adult Support for Students with Disabilities

Some families and educators are also noticing that students with more complex support needs have become **passive learners** who “cruise” through their instructional days as a passive passenger.

The problem here is that learning is **less likely** to take place when the student is in a passive role.



### How Much “Side-By-Side” Adult Support?

- Some parents are finding that their child needs them to sit “side-by-side” with them to facilitate learning from home.
- Close adult proximity (sitting/standing next to a student), called “**side-by-side adult support**”, must be used cautiously to avoid potential negative effects (such as unnecessary dependence on adults for support).



### Extra Support—What’s the Harm? The Impact of Adult Proximity on Socialization & Independence

Researchers found that Assistants spend **86%** of their time in **close proximity** with their student (i.e., within **3 feet** of the student)...

...and **44%** of Assistants report that their students with disabilities often think of them as their **primary friends** at school.

Michael Giangreco, 2005

### Problems with Proximity in the Classroom

- Separation from classmates.
- Negative impact on peer interactions and relationships (peers avoid student).
- Over-dependence on adults.
- Student experiences loss of “control”.
- Interference with “ownership” of the student by class teacher(s).
- Student receives limited instruction from teacher(s).



Giangreco & Macfarland, 1997; Marks & Levine, 1999; Mueller & Murphy, 2001

### Extra Support—What’s the Harm?

*If a student floated in a lifejacket for 12 years, would he be expected to swim without any help if the jacket were suddenly **removed**?*



### **Lessons Learned in Remote Learning: It's Never Too Late (or too early) to Work Toward Increasing Student Independence!**

- All of these realizations may be prompting families and educators to investigate "**less intrusive**" ways to deliver support to students and/or to prompt students **now** during remote learning, as well as when learning in a classroom **resumes**.



### **Never Too Late to Work Toward Independence! Least Intrusive Supports for Learning at Home**

Support should be "Only as Special as Necessary..."



**"The Goldilocks Rule"**  
Not too little,  
not too much...  
just right!

### **Least Intrusive Supports NOW: Facilitating Learning at Home**

Questions to Consider:

- "Do I need to be this **close**?"
- "If yes, **what** exactly am I providing to the student that requires me to be this close (e.g., redirecting his attention, answering his questions, addressing off task behavior, etc.)?"
- "Can I use **less intrusive** ways to deliver that support or prompt?"



### **Side-by-Side Support Alternatives: "WHY do I need to be this close?"**

If an adult is providing side-by-side support because the student repeatedly **asks questions** or does not make progress on a task without adult **reassurances** or work prompts from an adult, then try...



### **Setting Up for Success at Home: Be Proactive by Reviewing Expectations**

- Start by going over assignment(s):
  - *What do you need to do first, second, third? (Use to create a task check list...)*
  - *Do you have everything you need to do the assignments?*
  - *Have you ever done problems like this before?*
- If needed, work one or two examples together to make sure the child understands the assignment.

### **Proactive Structures Prevent Disruptions**



**Before** the child begins the work session, set up times to **check in** with him, so he knows when an adult will be available to help if needed.

You also could set up a "parking lot" where they can post their questions (virtually or using post it notes) for you to answer when you check in with them at the time you arranged.

### Positive Monitoring & “Check-Ins”

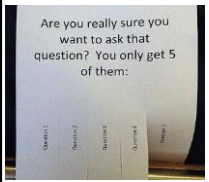
- Once the check-in times are established in advance with the student, if possible, try **NOT** to sit directly next to the child for the duration of the work session, but be close by to respond as needed.
- Instead of sitting next to the child throughout the work time, supervising adults can **periodically check-in** to see if the child is on task and getting the task accomplished.

### Positive Monitoring & “Check-Ins”

- When checking-in, look for opportunities to give positive feedback.
- Praise things like perseverance, diligence, effort:
  - “I’m proud of how you are not giving up!”**
- Praise the child’s specific behaviors/actions:
  - “I like the way you have...”**
 (avoid vague comments: **“You are smart!”**)

### Visual Supports to Manage Disruptions

Are you really sure you want to ask that question? You only get 5 of them:



If the child has trouble adhering to the structure/schedule you set up, set up a **visual** way to minimize disruptions...

My “Help” Scale	
5	Impossible to handle! Not ready
4	Really hard for me. I will need lots of help to work on this.
3	Hard for me. I can try to work on this.
2	With a plan I can do this on my own.
1	No sweat — easy as pie. I can do this totally on my own!

Visual supports include: thumbs up (I can do this!), thumbs up with a speech bubble (I'm getting there), and thumbs down (I need help!).

### Be Less Intrusive: Try Visual Supports

#### Use visual supports instead of verbal or physical prompts...

- Visual supports can be a better option than verbal prompts, since it can be **more difficult** to reduce a student’s reliance on our spoken prompts.



### Teaching Students to Use the Strategies: Visual Supports

- A **checklist** (“to do list”) can be used to enable students to see how much work is required within a given block.
- Use checklists to reduce the amount of **verbal prompting** used to move a student through each step.
- This promotes **independence** and helps students develop **memory skills**.



### Visual Supports and Students’ Self-Management

- Students can learn to use checklists, calendars, and other visual supports for organization to **self-manage** their own work load and daily events.
- This helps the student learn to rely less on adults.
- Remember that students may need to be **taught** how to use the support to achieve greater independence.



### Be Less Intrusive Using Visual Supports: Try Video Modeling

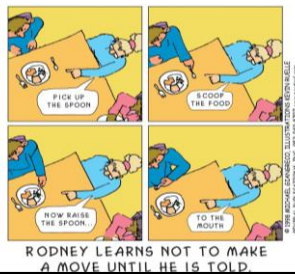
- Consider making video recording of the desired behavior and providing that to the student so that they can watch others demonstrate the target skill.
- In addition to helping develop checklists, creating videos like this is also something that paraprofessionals/aides can do for teachers to support remote instruction.



Visuals Support All Levels of Prompting			
DEPENDENT		INDEPENDENT	
Physical with visuals	Verbal with visuals	Gesture with visuals	Visual / Independence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hand under hand</li> <li>Individual's body or body part is moved toward task or object</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verbal instructions given to the individual in order for the task to be completed.</li> <li>(Most difficult prompt to fade)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model</li> <li>Indicate next step with action</li> <li>Point to visual</li> </ul>	<p><b>Use visuals to guide students and teach students to use the visuals for themselves.</b></p>
Most Invasive		LEAST INVASIVE	
<p><b>VERBAL</b> With a plan to fade</p>		<p><b>SILENCE / WAIT TIME</b> To support independence</p>	

### "Good Things Come to Those Who Wait"

- Do not **automatically** prompt each step of a routine or activity.
- Remember to **wait** a few seconds between prompts to avoid creating a dependence on your prompts.



### Barrier to Independence: Depending on Adults to Prompt

- A **prompt** is a cue or hint meant to help a student to perform a desired behavior, skill, or part of a skill.
- Prompts can be as permanent as stop signs that signal the need to decelerate your car, to gradually fading prompts such as reducing the amount of hand over hand assistance used to teach a child to cut with a pair of scissors.



### Barrier to Independence: Prompt Dependence

- Prompt dependence** comes when a student **needs** a prompt in order to initiate a skill or activity.
- Often the skill may have already been mastered, but prompting is so much a part of the student's expectations or the way they learned the routine that they will **not** initiate and/or complete an activity without the adult prompting.



### Points to Ponder...

How can we make sure that **any support** provided to our student is going to serve as **bridge** to their independence and **not a barrier**?



**Want to Decrease Close Adult Support?  
NOW is the Time to Plan It Out!**

Most of our frustration at work is **lack of understanding** surrounding what is expected of us.

John Maxwell



**Actively Working Together to Increase Student Independence: Developing a Plan**

1. Identify where we are **NOW** (include the type, frequency, and intensity of the supports being provided—be specific!).
2. Discuss where we want to **GO** (ideas about reducing the type of supports used, frequency of their use, etc.).
3. Then create a plan that explains **HOW** we will get there (so all adults will be on the same page).

Download handouts for this at: <https://www.njcie.org/online>

Developing a Plan for Reducing Close Adult Support	Request Currently Provided (see examples below)
Student Objective, Skill or Action	
How much adult support is given	
How often is it given?	
Ask the student to answer questions during class	
Ask the questions being answered	
Read about text in class	
Complete written work in class	
Take quizzes or tests	
Transition between class activities	
Complete class projects	
Turn in homework	
Complete independent work	
Stay on task and focused when performing independent work	
Pay attention to teacher's voice	
Communicate with peers	
Complete work collaboratively with one partner and/or a group	
Engage in conversations (unstructured time (lunch, recess, etc.))	

**Where Are We NOW?**

Think of a student you know and review the list, recording levels of support given **now** in each of the specific activities. Then select several to address **now** to move the student closer to independence...

**Prompt Hierarchy: Least to Most Intrusive**

- \*\*\*Less Intrusive
- Natural cue/indirect prompt
- ▼
- Modeling
- ▼
- Visual prompt
- ▼
- Verbal prompt
- ▼
- Partial physical
- ▼
- Full physical
- More Intrusive

**Points to Ponder:**  
What types of prompts do you use most often when directing your student(s)/child?

**Natural Cue:** It's raining outside

Student will take umbrella when he/she goes outside

Does the student perform the skill correctly?

**Let's Try One Together...**

1. Draw attention to the natural cue/prompt in some way.  
("Look it's raining outside.")
2. Ask a question about a necessary action.  
("What do you need to take when it's raining outside?")
3. Give a choice.  
("It's raining outside, do you need to take sunglasses or an umbrella?")
4. Tell the student what action to take.  
("It's raining outside, take your umbrella")
5. Physically guide the student through the process of getting the umbrella.

NO

**Where Are We NOW?**

Think about how much **adult assistance** is given to enable the student to...

- Pay attention during instruction?
- Ask questions during instruction?
- Answer questions during instruction?
- Begin a work task?
- Turn in completed work?
- Work in a group with several peers? With a partner?

### Where Are We **NOW**?

Think about how much **adult assistance** is given to enable the student to...

- Read aloud during instruction?
- Complete class projects?
- Take quizzes or tests?
- (*when in session*) Interact with peers with and without disabilities during unstructured time (lunch, recess, etc.)?



### Identifying Levels of Support: Example Independence Scale

- 5 = completes the task independently
- 4 = completes with visual or gesture prompting from an adult
- 3 = completes with adult's verbal prompting
- 2 = completes with partial physical assistance (requires physical assistance sometimes, but not continuously)
- 1 = completes with full physical assistance (requires continuous physical assistance)
- 0 = does not complete even with physical assistance

### Planning for Independence...

**Fading** is decreasing the level of assistance needed by the student to complete a routine, task or activity.

**Step Four Worksheet: Outlining a Plan to Reduce the Types and Levels of Support/Assistance Provided**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Use the data and information gathered with the forms on the previous pages to develop a plan for reducing the types and levels of assistance provided to this student in order to increase independence.

Activity	Needs Assistance With	Type of Assistance	Steps to Reduce Level of Assistance	Comments

- Teams can work together to brainstorm ideas about **reducing** the type of supports currently used, frequency of their use, etc.
- These ideas can be written down to use in developing an individual student **"independence plan"**.

### Planning It Out: Tools To Try

**Step One: Identifying the Types and Levels of Student Assistance Provided**

Activity	Needs Assistance With	Type of Assistance	Steps to Reduce Level of Assistance

**Step Two: Outlining a Plan to Reduce the Types and Levels of Student Assistance Provided**

Directions: Use the data and information gathered with the forms on the previous pages to develop a plan for reducing the types and levels of assistance provided to this student in order to increase independence.

Activity	Needs Assistance With	Type of Assistance	Steps to Reduce Level of Assistance

**See handouts available at <https://www.njcie.org/online>: Fading Support Worksheets**

### Next Steps? NJCIE Can Help!

- If you would be interested in additional support from NJCIE in developing a plan to fade adult support and facilitate increased student independence as well as any related professional development and/or technical assistance in this matter, please contact:

[team@njcie.org](mailto:team@njcie.org)



### Parting Thought: "You Have Had the Power All Along!"

What is one thing today's discussion **affirmed** about your view of supporting students?

What is one thing **you** can try **now** to help forge a path towards **independence** with a student/your child?





## Templates and Resources

- Please check out our website for new additions to the free resources available for download (finished products, templates to individualize and more):
  - <https://www.njcie.org/online>
- If you need something that does not seem to be on the website for download, please contact me, so we can add:
  - [michellelockwood@njcie.net](mailto:michellelockwood@njcie.net)



*Thank you and please enjoy  
the rest of your day!*

**Additional  
Questions/Comments?  
Please contact NJCIE:**

**(732) 613-0400**

**[www.NJCIE.org](http://www.NJCIE.org)**

