

Strategies for Increasing Peer Social Interactions: Prompting and Acknowledgment

HANDOUT

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Look for opportunities throughout the day to prompt children to engage in positive social interactions. Specific prompting strategies include:

- ✓ *Behavioral Momentum*—Using several easy requests or tasks followed by a more difficult request to build the child's confidence and increase the likelihood that he or she will respond to the more difficult task.
For example: If a child is willing to share with a teacher but has difficulty sharing with a peer, you could take turns with the child using a preferred toy for several exchanges before requesting that the child share the toy with a peer.
- ✓ *Priming*—Giving a child an idea of what to do or how to participate (in this case, regarding a social interaction) before the child begins the play situation.
For example: Before the child goes to the housekeeping area, you suggest to the child that he or she ask the children already in the housekeeping area if they want to have a birthday party. Meanwhile, you get out the box of birthday party materials.
- ✓ *Correspondence Training*—Asking a child what he will do (regarding a social skill or behavior) before he enters into a play situation and then following up with the child to see whether he did in fact do what he said he would.
For example: As a child transitions to the messy table where another child is already playing, you stop him and ask him what he is going to do with the other child when he gets there. You then go with the child to the messy table and wait to see whether the child follows through with what he told you.



Use acknowledgment or positive feedback after positive social interactions to increase the likelihood that they will happen again.

- ✓ Once targeted behaviors are learned, you can fade to intermittent reinforcement, only reinforcing the behavior occasionally.
- ✓ Types of reinforcement or acknowledgment should be individualized for each child to ensure that it is meaningful for the child.



When reinforcing interactions, be sure not to interrupt the children while the interaction is taking place.

- ✓ Adults should wait until interactions between children have completed before providing praise or acknowledgment.



Greatest intervention benefits will be realized by combining prompting and acknowledgment strategies with the strategies outlined in the other What Works Briefs on social interactions:

- ✓ *Using Classroom Activities and Routines as Opportunities to Support Peer Interaction*
- ✓ *Environmental Strategies to Promote Positive Social Interactions*
- ✓ *Promoting Positive Peer Social Interactions*