San Diego City Schools
Institute for Learning
Special Education Programs Department

PROMPTING HIERARCHY LEVELS
adapted from Diagnostic Center, Southern California (California Dept. of Education)
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The Promoting Hierarchy Levels are a range of instructional stimuli provided in order to direct an individual toward the performance of a desired response. Prompts range from the least to the most intrusive. The amount of assistance increases with each level in the hierarchy.

1. **Natural Cue: (N)**
   Behavior independently occurs as a result of a natural cue to a stimulus in the environment. The individual performs the behavior without any assistance.

2. **Gestural Prompt: (G)**
   Physical gestures that may include pointing, beckoning, or shaking one’s head to indicate approval or disapproval.

3. **Indirect Verbal Prompt: (IV)**
   The instructor uses words to imply that some behavior needs to occur.

4. **Modeling: (M)**
   Performing the desired behavior in order to encourage the initiation of that behavior by the individual.

5. **Symbolic (Pictorial or Written) Prompt: (S)**
   Symbols (pictures or words) are presented to guide behavior. Often a sequence of pictures or a list of words are used, combined with the gestural prompt of pointing to the symbol of the desired behavior for that moment in time.

6. **Direct Verbal Prompt: (DV)**
   The instructor explicitly states the behavior that needs to occur.

7. **Minimal Physical Prompt: (MP)**
   Slight physical contact that guides the individual toward the behavior.

8. **Partial Physical Prompt: (PP)**
   The instructor physically starts the individual on the desired behavior, and then ceases the physical assistance so the individual may complete the behavior independently.

9. **Full Physical Prompt: (FP)**
   The instructor physically guides the individual through the entire behavior.