

STEPPING BACK

Ways
To
Step
Back.....



We as caregivers, always have the best interests of our students at heart. However, our concern for their wellbeing often results in our continued help when this might not be in our student's best interest. Sometimes we need to 'step back' to allow our student to try and thus become more independent within an activity; and allow them to make their own mistakes.

The following are some steps to keep in mind when 'trying' to step back and allow our student to 'step forward'. These ideas were inspired by the AFB (American Foundation for Blindness) '19 Ways to Step Back'

Highlighted strategies are found on the PISP website at www.pisp.ca

1. Remember, you're stepping back so your students can step forward and become independent. Keep this in mind !!!
2. If a child is able to be independent or can assist in helping with dressing, zippers, picking up dropped items, etc. give them time to try. What's a few more seconds and it may give your student a great sense of accomplishment.
3. Try not to let time be the guiding factor for encouraging independence in learning new skills. If you don't allow the time for your student to try now, they may never learn to participate to their optimum potential.....
4. Remember your '*prompting and fading*' strategies and try the next 'fading strategy', it may fail, but give a try any way. Your student may be ready for the challenge.
5. Remember, your student may have ultimate success with '*Backward Chaining*' and may be ready for the next 'step back', give it a try. But most of all don't forget to encourage and use this strategy for activities,

after all we are hoping that our student will become as independent as possible within that activity!

6. If your student uses object or visual cues, or is trying to participate in an activity by using their hands, try '*hand under hand*' instead of '*hand over hand*'. This gives your student much more choice and is far less invasive. It feels 'more independent', try it !!!
7. Whenever you add prompts, include a plan to phase them out.
8. Let your students make mistakes! We all make mistakes, protecting your student from making mistakes does not encourage their learning.
9. If possible, start to sit or stand further away from your student. If you've been at your student's side, sit further back. If you've been close, move further away, this allows other students to step in and help out.
10. Even though helping can feel right, sometimes less is more, less is better.....
11. Remember, this is about your student's skills, not yours as a helper.
12. If, by stepping back, you feel like you aren't doing your job, take data instead. You may be surprised at how well your student and his peers manage without you.
13. Have your student, or you, ask their classmates to assist them to participate in activities instead of you automatically 'jumping in' (for non verbal students, use the Step-by-Step or other augmentative communication device).
14. Assign student partners for academic and leisure activities. Create Peer Groups to help facilitate more student assistance within the school environment.
15. If your student appears to be trying to participate in an activity on his/her own, stand back and let them try !!!!
16. Post a sign, '**How can I step back?**'

Adapted from Classroom Collaboration - by Laurel J. Hudson Ph.D. (Perkins School for the Blind) by AFB (American Foundation for the Blind).