

The prompting hierarchy is a step by step approach and starts at the least restrictive manner and increases to the most restrictive. The goal is to stay as close to least restrictive as possible.

Least Restrictive	
NATURAL CUEING	The AAC user is given the opportunity to communicate independently without any prompts. This is the goal where the individual initiates and uses the communication system on their own.
EXPECTANT PAUSE	Use of wait time. This brief, intentional pause is used to encourage the individual to use their communication system independently.
INDIRECT VERBAL PROMPT	Asking an open ended question to encourage use of their communication system. It's a subtle cue to use their communication system without directly telling them to use it.
DIRECT VERBAL PROMPT	Explicitly telling the individual to use their communication system. This can include telling them where to go to formulate their message.
GESTURAL PROMPT	Pointing to the specific button the individual needs to select to navigate their system and to create their message.
MODELING	The communication partner shows the individual how to use the communication system by showing them exactly what to do and how to say it.
PHYSICAL PROMPT	Physical assistance is provided. This includes partial hand over hand assistance (e.g., supporting them at their elbow) and direct hand over hand assistance (e.g., guiding their hand). We should avoid this type of prompting.
Most Restrictive	

This resource was created in collaboration with the Functional Communication Clinic at Penn State Health.