



### **Intensive Teaching Trials (ITT)**

Intensive teaching is the use of a positive reinforcer for responses that are completely unrelated to that reinforcer. For example, if a child likes trains, the trains could be given to the child contingent upon the child performing a few tasks such as clapping, pointing to a shoe and telling you their name. None of these responses have anything to do with the trains. The location of the teaching does not define intensive teaching. It can be implemented anywhere, but is often taught at a table to promote the best instructional control.

When teaching intensively we like to use positive reinforcement and not negative reinforcement. This loosely means that we want our children working to “get” something from us and not working so that we will leave them alone. In order to do this we use a variety of proven and effective procedures such as:

### **Teaching Procedures**

- 1) **Errorless teaching:** Use prompts as antecedents as much as possible. The less frequently the child is wrong the more likely he/she will stay motivated by the reinforcer you are offering and the value of escape will remain low.
- 2) **Variable Ratio:** We recommend a variable ratio (VR) schedule of reinforcement when working intensively. The child should never know when the reinforcer is coming. If your VR is 20, this means the average number of demands presented is 20. For example, sometimes you would reinforce after 10 responses, sometimes after 30, or anywhere in between. Intermittent reinforcement creates strong behavior. You want the child’s behavior of responding to your teaching demands to be very strong.
- 3) **Mix and Vary Instructional Demands:** When teaching, we do not present the same demand over and over. We recommend mixing demands from all the skill areas. These can be motor imitation, receptive id, receptive commands, tacts, echoics, RFFCs and intraverbals.
- 4) **Intersperse Easy and Hard Demands:** Easy demands are demands, which the child can respond to easily, without prompts. These are also sometimes called high-probability responses. We start with a low percentage of “hard” demands and slowly increase, as we are able.
- 5) **Fluency:** We recommend keeping your inter-trial intervals (ITI) to less than one second. This is the time between the child’s response and your next demand. We also recommend to keep the latency on the child’s responses to less than two seconds. If he/she does not answer within two seconds, we will use whatever prompt level is necessary to get the response, and then immediately fade the prompt.
- 6) **Most-to-Least Prompts:** Instead of using least to most prompts, which may allow for more mistakes, we use a time delay prompt and fade procedure. For new or difficult responses we immediately use a full prompt. On the very next trial, we ask the same question again and wait two seconds for the child to respond independently. If they do not, we will try to use less of a prompt to evoke the response.