

# Tips for Teaching

## Generalizing and Maintaining Skills

### Promoting Generalization and Maintenance of Skills

Generalization and maintenance are two very important concepts that should always be considered and incorporated into any programming for the teaching of new skills.

#### Generalization

- ◆ occurs when the behaviour is seen outside of the learning environment
- ◆ includes across different settings, times, people, environments, and stimuli

##### Example 1: Generalization

Mohammed learns to request to go out with one staff and is also able to ask to go out with all the staff that work in his group home.

##### Example 2: Lack of Generalization

Mohammed learns to request to go out with one staff, but does not ask to go out to any other staff in his group home.

#### Promoting Generalization

- ◆ Teach loosely. Use a variety of examples, materials, and instructions.
- ◆ Practice the skill in different environments, with different people, and at different times.
- ◆ Teach within the natural context as often as possible.
- ◆ Teach using many examples, including non-examples (e.g., what not to do)

#### Maintenance

- ◆ the continuation of a behaviour or skill over time
- ◆ includes when a behaviour or skill persists after teaching, prompts and rewards are no longer being provided

##### Example 1: Maintenance

Ryan learns to say hello to his peers at the day program in September and continues to say hello to his peers at the day program in January.

##### Example 2: Lack of Maintenance

Ryan learns to say hello to his peers at the day program in September. In January, Ryan no longer says hello to his peers at day program.

#### Promoting Maintenance

- ◆ Continue to practice skills after being learned and avoid prompts to maintain independence.
- ◆ Fade rewards slowly over time. Do not remove rewards all at once.
- ◆ When possible, have the learner monitor their own behaviour.
- ◆ Ensure frequent opportunities are available to continue using the skill.

**Important to Consider:** If steps are not taken to ensure that a skill can be maintained over time and persist after the fading of rewards, any skills learned may be lost. In addition, if steps are not taken to ensure a skill can be demonstrated with different people, in multiple environments, and when presented in a variety of ways, any skills learned during teaching may not be transferable to natural settings

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