Progressive Time Delay Procedures

Determine which skill to teach:
Discrete Behaviors, like naming pictures or reading sight words, should always be taught at least two per session (e.g., teach naming colors red and yellow together, rather than teaching only red).

Chained Behaviors, like hand-washing or completing a transition, should generally be taught as a set of behaviors rather than one step at a time (e.g., leaving activity, walking to visual schedule, choosing top picture, walking to correct area, matching pictures in correct location, entering area).

Determine which prompt to use:
For progressive time delay, you use one type of prompt. This prompt should ensure that the child will respond correctly. This should be decided separately for each child and behavior. For example, a child might require hand-over-hand (full physical prompts) to share preferred items. That same child might be able to respond correctly to a gesture prompt (teacher points to the correct choice) for a receptive identification task.

Data collection:
Record whether the child made a correct response or an error, and whether it was before or after the prompt.
Unprompted correct: Correct response, before the prompt.
Prompted correct: Correct response, after the prompt.
Unprompted error: Error, before the prompt.
Prompted error: Error, after the prompt.

Start with 0-second trials:
During 0-second trials, you provide the cue or task direction and immediately provide the controlling prompt. Example 1: When a student walks to the sink (the cue to turn on the water during hand-washing), you immediately provide physical guidance for turning on the water. Example 2: You say "What color is this? Red." with no delay between giving the direction ("What color is this?") and the controlling prompt ("Red.").

Provide reinforcement for all *prompted correct* responses.

Continue 0-s trials for several sessions (usually between 10-40 trials) and until the child is consistently responding with *prompted corrects*.

Move to 1-second trials:
During 1-second trials, you provide the cue or task direction and then wait for 1 second to provide the controlling prompt.

Provide reinforcement for correct responding, regardless of whether the response was a *prompted correct (*response after the prompt) or *unprompted correct* (response before the prompt).

If a child makes many errors *before* the prompt, you may need to do wait training (see related document). If the child makes many errors *after* the prompt, you may need to choose more powerful reinforcers or a different type of prompt.

Continue 1-s trials for several sessions (usually between 10-20 trials) and until the child is correctly responding with **either** *prompted correct* or *unprompted correct* responding.

Move to 2-second trials:
These trials and consequences are the same as 1-second trials except the delay between cue/direction and controlling prompt is 2-seconds. Following 2-second trials, you can move to 3-second trials, then 4-second trials. Oftentimes, 4-second trials are used for the remainder of instruction. If your student generally takes longer than 4-seconds to respond (e.g., has a motor delay that results in a longer duration reaction time), you can continue increasing the delay.

Mastery:
Continue instruction until a child has met the pre-specified mastery criterion (e.g., 100% correct over 3 sessions). If applicable, add new behaviors (e.g., more colors), *starting with 0-second delay.*