

Tips for Using Cues and Prompts Effectively

- Always pair cues/prompts with clear reinforcement (e.g., praise, access to preferred item).
- Use the least intrusive prompt necessary for success.
- Fade prompts systematically to encourage independence.
- Be consistent across staff to avoid confusion.
- Ensure cues/prompts are culturally and developmentally appropriate.

Visual cues and prompts are essential tools in special education, aiding students in understanding routines, expectations, and facilitating communication. Below is a detailed visual summary categorizing various types of visual cues and prompts:

Category	Cues	Prompts
Visual	• Picture symbols on task boards • Visual schedules or first-then charts • Color-coded materials or spaces	• Pointing to a visual (e.g., the bin for clean-up)- Placing the correct picture close to the student- Modelling using symbols on AAC devices
Auditory	• Timer buzz to signal pack-up time • Transition music or bells • Verbal direction: "Time to write."	• Verbal instruction: "Pick up your spoon" • Echoic prompt: "Say 'I want more'" • Sound effect paired with a task (e.g., beep for microwave start)
Kinaesthetic	• Moving to a learning area (signals group time) • Clapping rhythm to gather attention	• Hand-over-hand guidance for writing • Physical nudging toward a direction • Guided tracing over a shape or number
Tactile	• Textured object to signal start of an activity- • Braille or tactile marker on a book	• Tapping a student's hand gently to initiate movement • Placing an object in their hand to prompt use • Using textured cue cards (e.g., sandpaper letters)

The following examples align with the VAKT (Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Tactile) framework and can be tailored to suit students from Prep to Year 12 in special education settings. Implementing a combination of these cues and prompts can enhance learning outcomes by providing multiple avenues for students to receive and process information.

For practical applications and visual examples of these supports, you might find the following resources helpful:

- Using Visuals to Support Communication: This guide offers advice for teachers on using visuals to support pupils' communication, including top tips and ideas to enhance communicative opportunities. [ncse.ie](https://www.ncse.ie)
- Visual Supports and Modelling: This resource discusses various types of visual supports, such as picture cards, tactile cards, photos, and line drawings, and how they can be used effectively in educational settings. schoolsweb.buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- Visual Supports and Autism Toolkit: This toolkit provides comprehensive information on visual supports, including photographs, drawings, objects, and written words, to aid communication with children who have difficulty understanding or using language. autismspeaks.org+1autismhub.education.qld.gov.au+1

These resources offer practical examples and templates that can be adapted to meet the diverse needs of students in special education classrooms.

Conclusion

A robust repertoire of cues and prompts is essential for effective, inclusive teaching in Queensland special schools. These tools bridge the gap between intention and execution, enabling students to participate, communicate, and achieve. Through careful planning, delivery, and fading, educators can scaffold learning and build greater student autonomy and success.

Types of Cues and Prompts		
Visual	Cues	Prompts
Visual	• Picture symbols on a shedule • Visual timer • Colour-coded signs	• Pointing to materials • Presenting a photo card • Modelling with objects
Auditory	• Timer sounding • Transition music • Verbal instruction	• Direct verbal cue • Modelled statement
Physical	• Standing near a student • Light touch to elicit attention	• Partial physical guidance • Full physical guidance
Gestural	• Nod to indicate affirmation • Pointing to the door	• Pointing to direct action • Hand motion to sit down

