Help Sheet

0 – 25 Specialist Teaching and Support Service

Precision Teaching

Why?

- Precision Teaching is an evidence-based teaching method designed to improve accuracy and fluency in skills like reading, spelling and maths.
- It is often used as an intervention and is beneficial for learners who get **"stuck"** learning key facts / skills.
- Precision teaching has a range of applications e.g. high frequency words, phonics, number facts such as number bonds and timetables etc.
- It enables pupils to experience success and boost self-esteem and monitors daily progress.
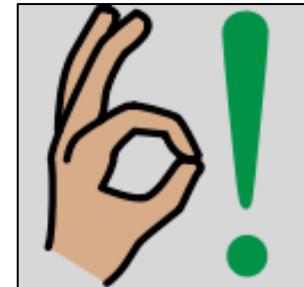
Key Features

- Uses quick, repetitive practice to reinforce learning.
- Helps learners retain and apply knowledge effectively.
- Involves charting progress to ensure improvement.

You will need:

- **Time and space to deliver structured sessions daily**
  Typically, 5-10 minutes.

- **Measurement tools**
  Probes to assess fluency. Record sheets to measure the number of correct and incorrect responses and track progress using charts or graphs to see the improvement. A stopwatch or timer to measure responses per minute.

- **Teaching materials**
  Flashcards, worksheets, a range multi-sensory resources to teach target learning.

- **Adaptability**
  Adjust teaching methods based on student progress.
 Modify difficulty levels if learners struggle or excel.
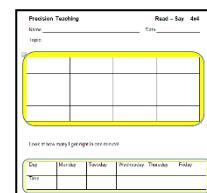
Help Sheet

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How?

- You will need to provide daily one-to-one sessions (around 10 minutes) between a teacher or teaching assistant and the learner. The first session of the week will be slightly longer, as this is when you introduce and teach the target items using engaging, multi-sensory activities.
- Each Daily Session Should Include:
  - A short recap of previous learning (e.g., flashcards, discussing tricky parts).
  - The use of a probe sheet and record sheet (see attached) to measure fluency.
- It is important that the pupil masters the specific skill/items before introducing new ones. This ensures progress is secure and builds confidence.
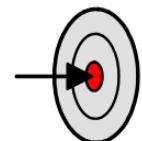
1. ### Step 1: Identify and Assess
   Decide on the specific skill you want to target (e.g., reading, spelling, or maths). Complete an assessment to establish a baseline.

2. ### Step 2: Select Target Items
   From the baseline, choose up to three new items to focus on. Add two secure items for confidence-building. These five items will be placed on a probe sheet in random order.

3. ### Step 3: Teach New Items
   At the start of the week, introduce the new items using multi-sensory, engaging activities. Examples: whiteboards, paints, magnetic letters/numbers, coloured pens, and games.

4. ### Step 4: Daily Practice and Testing
   Test the child daily using the probe sheet for one minute (or two minutes for spelling). If they finish early, start again from the beginning. If they make an error or pause for more than five seconds, move to the next item.
   Before testing, recap new learning (e.g., flashcards, discussing tricky parts, memory strategies).

5. ### Step 5: Track Progress
   Record both correct and incorrect responses on a chart. Do this with the child so they can see their progress.

6. ### Step 6: Mastery
   The child is felt to have mastered the items when they achieve 90% accuracy for three consecutive sessions.

7. ### Step 7: Repeat the Cycle
   Create a new probe sheet. Include two items from the previous sheet and three new ones. Continue the cycle, recording fluency daily and tracking progress weekly.

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Things to note:

- Ideally the session should be led by the same adult each day.
- If the pupil is struggling, you may need to:
  - Change the teaching method/arrangement
  - Increase motivation
  - Simplify the task or reduce the number of items to be learnt
 - Go back to a pre-requisite skill

Ideas for using precision teaching to develop reading

- **Sight Word Recognition**
  Select a set of high-frequency words that the student struggles with.
- **Phonics and Decoding**
  Use **word lists** containing phonetic patterns (e.g., CVC words like "cat," "dog").
- **Sentence Fluency**
  Provide short sentences that contain target words or phonetic patterns. Use the 'phrase fluency' option on the free probe generator link on page 5 of this document.

Ideas for using precision teaching to develop maths skills

- **Number Bonds**
  Focus on quick recall of number bonds (e.g., pairs that make 10 or 20).
- **Times Tables**
  Select a specific times table (e.g., the 7 times table).
- **Mental Arithmetic**
  Use addition, subtraction, multiplication, and/ or division drills.
- **Problem-Solving Fluency**
  Provide word problems that require quick calculations.
- **Shape and Measurement Recall**
  Use flashcards with properties of shapes or measurement conversions.
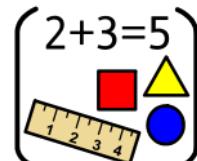
Reference / Evidence base – informed by:

Haring and Eaton 'Hierarchy of Learning' 1978

Sample Record Sheet

PRECISION TEACHING RECORD CHART

Name:	DOB:	Year:	Start Date:

Focus:

NUMBER PER MINUTE		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
	100																				
	95																				
	90																				
	85																				
	80																				
	75																				
	70																				
	65																				
	60																				
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	8																				
	7																				
	6																				
	5																				
	4																				
	3																				
	2																				
	1																				
	0																				
		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Correct																					
Incorrect																					
Total																					
% accuracy																					

Updated June 2025 C&L Team

Sample Probes

dog	mat	cat	mat
pig	cat	pig	mat
cat	mat	dog	pig

s	p	t	i
a	t	a	p
i	n	p	n
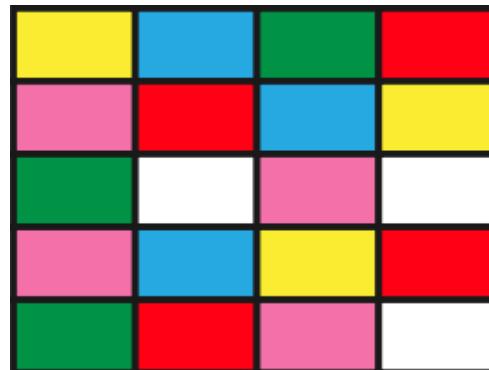
1x3	6x3	4x3	2x3
7x3	1x3	10x3	8x3
5x3	9x3	5x3	1x3
2x3	3x3	9x3	2x3
8x3	7x3	6x3	10x3
4x3	0x3	9x3	3x3

Name ....

this	what	how	this	how	5
what	how	this	what	how	10
this	what	how	what	this	15
how	this	what	this	how	20
what	how	this	what	this	25
how	what	this	how	what	30
this	how	what	this	how	35
what	how	this	how	what	40

Comments:

wait	play	great	mate
stay	apron	day	drain
break	grey	eight	plate
snail	jail	paper	clay
paste	veil	faint	they
prey	alien	basic	rein

Name ....

10-5=	10-7=	10-3=	10-4=	10-1=	5
10-6=	10-2=	10-8=	10-6=	10-3=	10
10-7=	10-1=	10-2=	10-5=	10-8=	15
10-4=	10-3=	10-8=	10-6=	10-7=	20
10-5=	10-4=	10-2=	10-1=	10-8=	25
10-3=	10-1=	10-4=	10-2=	10-7=	30
10-6=	10-5=	10-1=	10-2=	10-7=	35
10-8=	10-3=	10-6=	10-5=	10-4=	40

Comments:
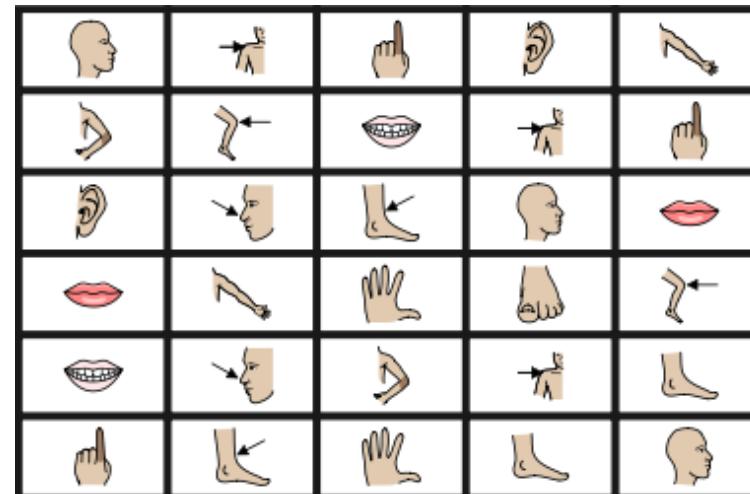
Follow this link to access free probe generators.
[Precision Teaching Probe Generators](#)