



{inclusion outreach}

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## Processing Time and Practice

Students with complex needs often require more time to process instructions, think about their response, organize their body, and respond. The amount of time needed to process is unique to the student. Some students need a few seconds, some 10 seconds, and some might need more. When a student is responding, interruptions (for example, restating a question) anywhere along the way may disrupt the response process, requiring a student to start again from the beginning.



Wait time is an important strategy to keep in mind when supporting students with complex needs.

- Count silently to 10
- Did that seem like a longer time than you thought?
- Would you be tempted to prompt the student before 10 seconds passed?

Giving the student time to process facilitates their learning when those of us providing instruction:

- Reduce background conversations or other distractions
- Give the instruction, stop, wait, and provide the time for the student to process
- Resist the temptation to jump in and repeat the prompt too quickly
- Resist over explaining and keep prompts short and chronologically age appropriate

Students with complex needs need more time to learn, more repetitions, and more opportunities to practice.