



HOW TO TEACH: “HELP Card”

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Teaching a child to initiate help from others is an essential life skill. Children that do not know how to request help may just wait for someone to come to them or “act out” to show they need help. Either way, an adult can teach a functional approach to ask for help. When a child is struggling and her frustration is increasing, her ability to communicate will decrease. A visual **HELP Card** will cue the child to seek assistance and will give her a means to communicate.

Teaching the Help Card

1. In a contrived setting, in a **low frustration moment** set the child up to need help (i.e. needing a toy piece, opening a package).
2. Be sure the **Help Card** is **within reach and visually accessible**. Using the hand under hand technique, assist the child to give the **Help Card** to the adult.
3. The adult responds by modeling the language (i.e. “I want help”) and **promptly** helps the child.
4. Praise the child in a manner that is reinforcing (i.e. “great job asking for help”).
5. Multiple **Help Cards** should be easily accessible to the child throughout her day and within all activities. Attaching a **Help Card** to the game will enable the child to request help before she reaches the frustration level.

It’s important to respond in a way that is reinforcing to the child when praising her for successful attempts and use of the tool. Some children may be motivated with verbal praise while others may be reinforced by a visual or a gesture.

Remember, simply giving the child the **Help Card** is not effective. The child needs many successful opportunities to learn how to use and trust the tool. Create daily positive opportunities for a child to ask for help. To support the skill development, adults can model requesting help and using the card themselves.