

## Precise Learner Performance Levels on Skills that are Part of Essential for Living

The performance of a learner on each skill that is part of *Essential for Living* is measured using the following twenty-one performance levels (i.e., performance criteria). The abbreviations for these levels may seem intimidating, but will take a few weeks to learn, and will permit you to record precise levels of learner functioning during initial skill assessments and small increments of learner progress during instruction through acquisition, fluency, generalization, and maintenance. *Essential for Living* is the only curriculum or assessment instrument of its kind that includes such performance criteria and that permits the measurement of the following levels of learner functioning:

These levels range from **not exhibiting problem behavior or resistance to prompts**

- SA the absence of self-injurious, aggressive or destructive behavior
- DC the absence of disruptive behavior or complaints
- RP the absence of resistance to prompts

-SA -DC -RP

...to, **when situations are avoided or no longer avoided because problem behavior occurs**

- Egg situations are avoided because problem behavior occurs
- Egg situations are no longer avoided because problem behavior occurs

Egg -Egg

...to **exhibiting a specific skill with less and less prompts (during acquisition)**

- FP when a full physical, full demonstration, or full echoic prompt is required or when there is contact with a specific item or activity
- PP when a partial physical, partial demonstration, or partial echoic prompt is required or when there is brief contact with a specific item or activity
- MP when a minimal physical, minimal demonstration, or minimal echoic prompt is required or when there is very brief contact with a specific item or activity

FP PP MP

or to **exhibiting a portion of a skill or tolerating a portion of the customary duration of an activity**

- 1/4, 1/2, 3/4 when a portion of a multiple-response skill has been completed or a portion of the customary duration of an activity has been tolerated

1/4 1/2 3/4

...to **exhibiting a skill or tolerating an activity independently and fluently (when acquisition and fluency are achieved)**

- Ind when no prompts are required and an entire skill occurs without hesitation or the customary duration of an entire activity is tolerated without problem behavior

Ind

...to **exhibiting a skill or tolerating a situation for specific periods of time**

or to **the amount of time it takes to complete a skill (when fluency is achieved)**

- \_s, \_m the extent to which 'waiting', 'tolerating', responding as a listener, or performing another skill continues to occur without problem behavior for designated periods of time (seconds, minutes), or the amount of time it takes to perform a specific skill

20s 1m

2m

...to, **when learners, because of physical limitations, cannot perform a skill, or one or more responses that are part of that skill, without assistance**

or to, **when learners require an environmental adaptation or prosthetic device to perform the skill**

- PPA [ some or all of the responses (steps) that are part of this skill require permanent partial assistance ]
- APD [ some or all of the responses (steps) that are part of this skill require an environmental adaptation or prosthetic device ]

PPA

APD

...to, **when the critical (most important) outcome of a skill has occurred**

- CO the critical outcome of this skill has occurred

CO

...to **exhibiting the skill in situations other than those in which it was originally taught (the extent to which generalization has occurred)**

- 2E the occurrence of this skill with two or more examples of the same item or activity
- 2S the occurrence of this skill in two or more settings
- 2P the occurrence of this skill with either of two persons
- <M when motivating events have occurred, but are weak
- >M when motivating events have occurred and are strong
- NI the occurrence of 'a request' when the learner does not have sensory contact with the requested item or activity

2E

2S

2P

<M

>M

NI

...and, to **indicating that a specific performance level is no longer occurring consistently at previously achieved levels (maintenance is no longer occurring)**

- Det [ this skill is no longer occurring consistently at previously achieved levels ]

2S 2P <M NI Det

**Examples of Precise Learner Performance  
during an Initial Skills Assessment with Essential for Living  
and after Instruction has Begun**

**R7. Requests 10 highly preferred snack foods, drinks, non-food items, or activities that can be made available frequently and immediately**

1. cookies	IA	IM	-SA	-DC	-RP	FP	PP	MP	Ind	2S	2P	<M	NI	Def
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During the initial assessment of 'requesting cookies', this learner exhibited disruptive behavior, but no aggressive or self-injurious behavior. Since instruction began, the learner has demonstrated the following improvement with respect to this skill:

- (1) he has learned to request cookies without exhibiting problem behavior and without resisting prompts,
- (2) he currently requests cookies with only a minimal prompt, and
- (3) this performance has been maintained.

**DLS-EDF9. Drinks from a cup or glass**      **CO:** drinking a beverage from a full cup or glass without spilling until the beverage is gone

IA	IM	-SA	-DC	-RP	FP	PP	MP	Ind	PPA	APD	CO	2S	2P	Def
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During the initial assessment of 'drinking from a cup', this learner did not exhibit problem behavior, but did resist prompts. The occupational therapist determined that the learner would require an adapted cup to perform this skill, which was obtained and used. Since instruction began, the learner has demonstrated the following improvement with respect to this skill:

- (1) she has learned to drink from an adapted cup without resisting prompts, and
- (2) she is doing this with a partial prompt.

This improvement in performance, however, has not been maintained; the learner is currently waiting for a full, physical prompt. Staff are currently trying to fade this prompt to a different form of partial prompt.

**DLS-EDF9.** [Tolerates] Touch, physical guidance, or physical prompts

IA	IM	Egg	-Egg	10s	1m	1/4	1/2	3/4	Ind	Def
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During the initial assessment of 'tolerating physical prompts', it became evident that the learner exhibited severe self-injurious behavior -- in the form of hitting his head to hard objects -- whenever prompts were applied. As a result, staff had been largely avoiding these prompts, only applying them when the learner had to be moved from one place to another. After further discussion with the parents, staff decided to 'begin to desensitize' the learner to these prompts. When, they began trying to do this, the learner immediately hit his head and the assessment was concluded.

Then, instruction began with a very gradual desensitization procedure. As a result of this procedure, the learner has demonstrated the following improvement:

- (1) he is tolerating physical prompts for the first minute of an instructional session designed to teach him to make requests without hitting his head, and
- (2) this performance has been maintained.