**PRECISION TEACHING**

1. **Why use precision teaching?**

A child with learning difficulties tends not to learn skills easily or ‘incidentally’ in the way other children do. They do not make the steps through the learning hierarchy as easily as other children and therefore require more structured teaching and assessment techniques.

A precision teaching approach ensures that the child has reached a level of accuracy and fluency in a particular skill that will enable them to maintain that skill over a period of time and generalise it to new situations and contexts – it also prevents them moving onto a new skill before they have mastered the current one.

# What is it?

1. A way of finding out which skills a child knows ‘very well’
2. A programme linked to teaching a child new skills in small steps.
3. A programme for testing exactly what a child has learnt and how well they have learnt it.

# Who is it for?

Often children move onto new skills before they have mastered existing ones. This can result in their learning slowing down. Precision teaching can help these children to get going again.

# What are the benefits?

1. You will know that you are teaching a child exactly what they are ready for.
2. It will help you decide when to move onto new work
3. You can talk to parents, colleagues and others in precise terms, eliminating phrases such as, ‘they have improved a little’, and ‘progress is slow’.

# Why does it work?

Many children move onto new tasks before mastering existing ones. Precision Teaching ensures that they are being taught the right skills and that they have understood them. It involves ensuring that they

succeed in their learning, after possibly long periods of failing. This increases motivation and self-esteem.

**PRECISION TEACHING FOR READING**

**Precision Teaching needs to be delivered a minimum of three times per week for a period of approx 10 minutes.**

**The Procedure**

***Step 1:***

***Find out what the child can do****:* You can use a set of high frequency words or a set of year based curriculum words, for example, to identify which words the child can and cannot read. Note what they can and cannot do as this can form part of your baseline assessment.

***Step 2:***

***Select Items****:* Choose three words that they can read and two that they are weak on. These are the five words that you will work on in the teaching sessions.

***Step 3:***

***Teaching (approx 10 minutes)****:* Teach the 5 selected words explicitly and in as multisensory a way as possible. Try using magnetic letters, plasticine, whiteboards, lots of colour etc. Discuss the words so that the child knows how many syllables it has, what the word means, how to use it in a sentence, what may be the tricky bit and so on.

***Step 4:***

***Test***. After each teaching session, administer a 1 minute test. You are measuring how many correct and incorrect responses the child achieves in the 1 minute. To carry out the test, create a probe (test) sheet containing the 5 selected words which should appear randomly and repeatedly. See appendix 1 for an example of a probe sheet.

A probe sheet can be created quickly following the steps below.

1. Go to the home page of [www.johnandgwyn.co.uk](http://www.johnandgwyn.co.uk)
2. Select the tab Precision Teaching and Phrase Frequency near the top of the page.
3. Select which font size you would like (large comic sans usually works well).
4. The spread sheet may open automatically but if it doesn’t do this, just open it up yourself.
5. At the bottom of the spreadsheet you will see tabbed numbers. Select 5 as this is how many words you will be working with.
6. You can now type in your 5 words in the highlighted boxes. As you move along to the next box, you will see that each word is randomly placed throughout the sheet.
7. Once you have typed in all 5 words, you can select print. It is helpful to print two copies, one for your learner and one for yourself.

When testing, it can be useful to have a **duplicate** probe sheet for you to mark as the child goes through the test. The procedure for testing is to ask the child to read each word on the probe sheet as accurately and quickly as possible. Tell them that you are going to see how many they get right in a minute. If they finish the probe sheet before the minute is up, carry on, starting from the beginning again. Record where correct responses and incorrect responses are given. If they pause for more than five seconds, or if they make an error, move them on to the next word.

See Appendix 2 for a sample script of how to test.

***Step 5:***

**Chart the child’s progress:**

After testing, you will know how many correct and incorrect responses there were in a minute. You can

* transfer both the number of correct and the number of incorrect responses onto your fluency chart. See appendix 3 for a sample chart.
* join the week’s results up with a straight line.
* involve the pupil in charting their progress.

***Step 6:***

**When to move on to a new set of words**:

Once a child has mastered the words, create a new probe sheet. You will know you have reached this stage when child has had a 90%+ success rate with the same words over 4 consecutive sessions.

**Important:** On the new probe, use **3** of the **old** test items and **2** new ones**.** This will ensure success is maintained. Remember to make a note on the fluency chart when a new probe is introduced.

## When to Make a Change…. Two ‘Rules of Thumb’

# The Three Day Rule:

The first 3 days’ data will tell you if the task is too hard.

*Implied Change: Go back to earlier / simpler skill. Make sure that there is not too great a range of difficulty in the probe*

# The Eight Day Rule

If the child is not at, or close to, your targeted rate of success after 8 days on the same probe, you should not proceed without a change.

*Implied Change: You may need to reconsider the teaching method you are using, or the task as in the 3 day rule.*

## APPENDIX 1

## SAMPLE PROBE SHEET

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**APPENDIX 2**

**Sample Script and Procedure for the 1 Minute Test**

Instructions for pupil:

*Here are the words you have been learning on a grid. Some of them might be hard, but I want you to show me how many you know in one minute. Let’s go through them as quickly as we can. If you want to you can point to each one as you say the word. If you don’t know it straight away, we’ll go on to the next word.*

Procedure:

1. Provide a copy of the probe sheet for the pupil and one for yourself.
2. Sit beside pupil.
3. Pupil reads each word in turn on their sheet, working across the grid, pointing to the words if they want to.
4. Pupil responds or says ‘don’t know’. Record and move on *immediately* (don’t teach or correct at this point).
5. If no response from pupil, wait 5 seconds, as accurately as you can, and then point to the next word, saying, ‘Try this one’.
6. On your copy of the probe sheet, record as you go correct / incorrect / no response. You might want to do this with a ‘dot’ in the square to make recording of errors less obvious.
7. If you finish the sheet, go straight back to the beginning and carry on.
8. At the end of a minute, mark word reached.
9. Transfer results to fluency chart.
10. You can start at different points on the sheet each time if you want to avoid a mechanical remembered response.

# APPENDIX 3

**Precision Monitoring Record Chart for Reading**

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Key ● = correct answers

**X =** incorrect answers

**PRECISION TEACHING FOR SPELLING**

*Step 1:*

Follow the same procedure for selecting appropriate spelling words as for precision teaching – reading. These could be high frequency words, year based words or errors you have noted in their writing. Note what they can and cannot do as this can form part of your baseline assessment.

*Step 2:*

***Select Items****:* Choose three words that they can spell and two that they are weak on.

*Step 3:*

***Teaching (approx 10 minutes)****:* Teach the 5 selected words explicitly and in as multisensory a way as possible. Try using magnetic letters, plasticine, whiteboards, lots of colour etc. Discuss the words so that the child knows how many syllables it has, what the word means, how to use it in a sentence, what may be the tricky bit and so on.

*Step 4:*

***Test***. After each teaching session, administer the 1 minute test. You are measuring how many correct and incorrect responses the child achieves in the 1 minute.

The child needs to write down the spelling of each of the 5 words given orally and randomly for a period of 1 minute. After each 5 words are written, the child should turn a page in a small spelling book/ note book, for example, so that they cannot see what they have just written and they are still relying on recall.

*Step 5:*

**Chart the child’s progress:** as per precision teaching for reading

*Step 6:*

**When to move on to a new set of words**: when child has had a 90%+ success rate with the same words over 4 consecutive sessions.

**Important:** On the new set of spelling words, **use 3 of the old test items and 2 new ones.** This will ensure success is maintained. Remember to make a note on the fluency chart when a new set of words is introduced.

## When to Make a Change…. Two ‘Rules of Thumb’

# The Three Day Rule:

The first 3 days’ data will tell you if the task is too hard.

*Implied Change: Go back to earlier / simpler skill. Make sure that there is not too great a range of difficulty in the probe. Consider the teaching method you are using.*

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**Precision Monitoring Record Chart**

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Key ● = correct answers

**X =** incorrect answers

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**Precision Monitoring Record Chart for Spelling**

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| **X** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total |  |  |  |  |  |
| Date |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Key ● = correct answers

**X =** incorrect answers