

What Is It?

High-probability requests (HPR) is an individualized antecedent strategy. During HPR, the adult delivers a series of short requests the child is likely to follow—these are known as “high probability” requests. Then the adult immediately delivers a request the child typically does not respond to. Presenting requests in this way increases the likelihood the child will respond to the last (“low probability”) request.

When to Use It

- When a child uses challenging behaviors to avoid a task or activity.
- Across a variety of routines such as transitions and learning activities.

Steps to Implementation / How to Do It

After identifying a task or activity the child is trying to avoid:

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Identify low-probability requests (LPR). LPR are requests the child can respond to independently, but completes less than 40% of the time
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Identify several (5-7) HPR. HPR are brief requests the child will complete independently (e.g., clap your hands, give me a high five) at least 80% of the time.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Deliver 3-5 HPR and immediately provide brief reinforcement (e.g., positive descriptive feedback, token) after the child completes each request. Deliver requests quickly. (i.e., within 5 seconds of the child’s response to the previous request).
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Deliver the LPR immediately following the last HPR.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Provide reinforcement when the child completes the LPR. Select a reinforcer for the child that is specific and brief, such as positive feedback or a token.

Example

Marcus typically refuses to come to the carpet during circle time when asked to join the group. First, Miss Anna asks a colleague to assess her circle time activities to determine their developmental, cultural, and individual appropriateness for Marcus. Her colleague observes a few circle time routines and provides important feedback Anna uses to modify the routine. However, Marcus still refuses to join circle time after the changes are implemented. An intervention team conducts a functional behavior assessment and determines Marcus is trying to avoid circle time instruction. The educator and team decide to try HPR to increase his successful transitioning to circle time. The team brainstorms a set of HPR that Marcus usually completes.

Before circle time, Miss Anna delivers three HPR. She begins with, "Marcus, wiggle your fingers." When Marcus cooperates with her request, Miss Anna says, "Nice job wiggling those fingers!" She immediately delivers the next HPR, "Marcus, clap your hands." Marcus claps his hands three times. Miss Anna immediately provides praise by saying, "Wow, those were loud claps. Nice!" She immediately delivers the third HPR, "Give me five." When Marcus gives her a high-five, Miss Anna says, "Awesome giving me five!" Miss Anna then delivers the LPR and asks Marcus to "Sit on the carpet" for circle time. As soon as Marcus sits on the carpet, Miss Anna says, "Great job sitting on the carpet with your friends!" and offers him his favorite pillow to hold during circle time.

The next time Miss Anna uses this intervention with Marcus she makes sure to change the order or use different HPR that he's likely to perform.

How to Increase Effectiveness

- Deliver each request within 5 seconds of the child's response to the previous HPR.
- Generate a large set of HPR so you can use different requests and/or change the order when frequently using the strategy.
- Ensure you have identified positive, descriptive feedback or some other reinforcer that can be delivered quickly and immediately following the completion of each HPR.
- Deliver reinforcers that are used up quickly (e.g., positive, descriptive feedback) rather than a prolonged activity (e.g., listening to music) to help build momentum with completing requests.

Resources

Chambers, C. R. (2006). [High-probability request strategies: Practical guidelines](#). *Young Exceptional Children*, 9, 20-28.

IRIS Center. (2021). [High-probability requests](#).