

## 17 Ways to step back

- You are stepping back so your students can step forward and become independent. Keep this in mind.
- Assess how long it actually takes for students to start zippers, pick up dropped papers, or find page numbers. What is a few more seconds in the grander scheme of things?
- Sit on your hands for a whole task while you practice giving verbal instead of touch clues. Hands off the hands!
- Let your students make mistakes and get into trouble. It is part of the human experience!
- Sit further away. If you have been within an arm's reach, sit just within earshot. If you have been sitting just within earshot, sit across the room.
- Pat yourself on the back every time you help with seeing, not with thinking. Your job is to give information.
- Even though helping can feel right, be aware that too much assistance is short-sighted. Sometimes less is more, less is better.
- Think before you correct your student's work. Do not cover for them. This is about their skills ...not yours.
- Commit to no intervention for a whole activity. Take data instead. Things might not fall apart as much as you had expected.
- "What page are we on?" "What's for lunch?" Have students ask their classmates instead of you, both during school and on the telephone.
- Assign student learning partners and sighted guides where appropriate.
- Teach students to decline assistance, "Thanks, but please let me try it by myself".
- Whenever you add prompts, include a plan to phase them out.
- Let the teaching staff know that you need to step back so that your students can be more independent. You are not shirking your responsibilities.
- Collaborate with other adults to break your habits of helping too much. Agree to remind each other to step back.
- Try helping only when classroom teachers give you a signal. They may prefer to respond directly or to give students longer to work it out alone.
- Post a sign, "Are there any other ways I could step back?"

*Adapted from Classroom Collaboration, by Laurel J Hudson, Ph.D.*  
 • (Perkins School for the Blind)

Other Resources:

W: [berkshiresensoryconsortium.co.uk](http://berkshiresensoryconsortium.co.uk)