

Understanding Touch Points

Touch Points: Determining When a Child Is Ready for a New CAFE Menu Strategy

How do we determine if a child is ready to move to a new strategy on the CAFE menu? Touch Points!

We call it a “touch point” when we see a student correctly execute a strategy while reading. We either make note of the date the child successfully used the strategy or put a check mark in the margin of the conferring sheet. Once these total four or five, we determine whether or not the child has competently added it to the repertoire of strategies they have control of. If so, we place a check mark and date next to this strategy on their CAFE menu, indicating they have command of the strategy. We also place a check mark and date in the date/touch point box on the conferring form and/or the strategy group page, signaling the end to the teaching and coaching support for this particular strategy. Before the conference ends, we look at the CAFE menu and determine which strategy to highlight and focus on next.

An alternative to check marks would be actual grades. For example, if a child’s goal is comprehension and their strategy is check for understanding, the first day we meet with them to introduce this strategy we would write a “1” in the touch point box on their conferring sheet since they are a below standard with this skill. The next time we meet we might notice they are starting to understand and use the skill, so we give them a “2”, meaning they are approaching standard. We assess their knowledge and application of the skill each time we meet together, putting the correct number (or letter grade) in each time. For our district, a “3” denotes the child is meeting standard and a “4” is exceeding standard. As we look over our record sheets, we know we can move a child on to another strategy when they have accumulated four or five 3s and 4s.

Whether you use check marks, alphabetical grades, or a numerical system, when a child has successfully demonstrated the skill four or five times, and you feel they have really internalized it, you can phase out of direct instruction, continue to monitor periodically, and move to a new skill or strategy.

