

# Parent Language - Pausing

Information for patients, relatives and  
Carers

December 2023

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## What is pausing?

Speaking and interacting with your child is very important for developing their language and communication skills. However, as adults we can sometimes talk too much and forget to leave gaps for our children to fill in.

## Why is pausing a good strategy?

Adults tend to use full sentences when they talk. However using so many words without any pauses can sometimes be too much for children to take in. Briefly pausing and leaving a gap can attract your child's attention. They will be curious about why you were talking but then you suddenly stopped. It also gives your child opportunities to join in on the communication any way they can. This might be reaching out, gesturing, pointing or making a noise. Any of these will show that your child is trying to communicate.

## How do I use pausing?

If you are playing simple anticipation games like "Ready... Steady... Go!" or "Ready... Steady... Tickle!" repeat the language 5-10 times without any pauses. Once you feel your child has learnt the 'rules' of the game, try leaving a short pause before "Go!" or "Tickle!" to see how your child responds – they may try to fill the pause any way they can! Here are some other ways you can use pausing to help your child.

## Activities to try at home:

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Ready... Steady... Go! Games

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Nursery Rhymes

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Reading a Book



## Ready... Steady... Go! Games

- Pick a fun game to play with your child e.g. playing on a swing, knocking over bricks, rolling a ball or even bubbles
- Start by modelling “ready... steady... go!” 5-10 times without any pauses
- Gradually build up the excitement in your voice and face which will encourage your child to join in
- Then say “ready... steady...” but don’t say “go”, instead, pause and stay still, to give your child the opportunity to say “go”
- If they say “go”, act excited and allow the game to continue
- If they reach out, gesture, point or make a noise, act excited and allow the game to continue
- If they do or say nothing, simply say “go” yourself and allow the game to continue
- Keep modelling what you want your child to do or say and try again later

## Nursery Rhymes

- Pick a nursery rhyme that your child will enjoy such as *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*, *Round and Round the Garden*, *Peek-A-Boo*, or *This Little Piggy Went To Market*
- Remember – repeat, repeat, repeat! This will help your child learn the nursery rhyme
- When your child becomes familiar with the nursery rhyme, try adding a short pause before the last word of the line
- This will give your child a chance either to say the last word or to reach out, point, gesture or make a noise in order to communicate that they would like the nursery rhyme to continue

## Reading a Book

- Read a book with your child
- Point to the pictures and say “I can see (a)...” and then pause
- This will give your child a chance either to say the word for what you are pointing to or to reach out, point, gesture or make a noise in order to communicate that they would like you to keep reading and to say the word for the picture you are pointing to

## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have.

If you have any suggestions or comments about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (PALS) on 0191 445 6129 (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday).

You can also email PALS at [ghnt.pals.service@nhs.net](mailto:ghnt.pals.service@nhs.net)

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Mrs Trudie Davies,  
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust,  
Trust Headquarters,  
Queen Elizabeth Hospital,  
Sheriff Hill,  
Gateshead,  
NE9 6SX

The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

## Data Protection

Any personal information is kept confidential. There may be occasions where your information needs to be shared with other care professionals to ensure you receive the best care possible.

In order to assist us to improve the services available, your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews and Statistics.

Further information is available via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website ([Privacy - QE Gateshead](#)) or by contacting the Data Protection Officer by telephone on 0191 445 8418 or by email [ghnt.ig.team@nhs.net](mailto:ghnt.ig.team@nhs.net).

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