

Pre-verbal Communication - Anticipation

Information for patients, relatives and
carers

December 2023

What is anticipation?

Anticipation is being able to expect what is going to happen next or what might be said e.g. getting excited when putting on a coat because it means going out.

Why is anticipation important?

Anticipation is an important skill for your child to develop as they grow. This shows that your child is able to get excited about events before they actually happen.

However, some children may not be able to anticipate an event and instead act *after* the event rather than before. Below are advice and general strategies that can help to develop your child's ability to anticipate:

- When playing with your child repeating movements, actions, words, or signs as many times as possible will help your child learn what is happening and what will come next – so repeat, repeat and repeat again!
- When you think your child might have become familiar with the game, try adding a short pause to give them an opportunity to ask for more or communicate that they want you to continue
- Keep it fun – if your child is enjoying the interaction then they are more likely to want to keep playing!

Activities to try at home:

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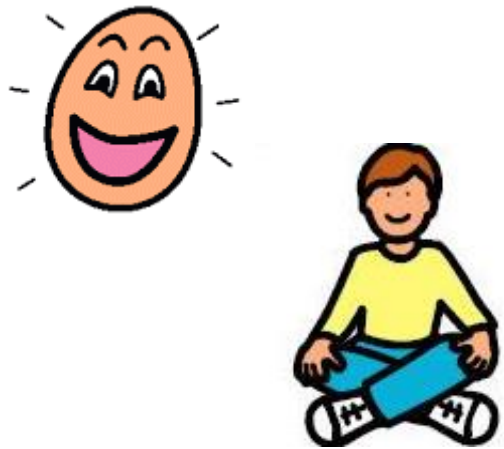
1. Tickle Games

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2. Ready... Steady... Go! Games

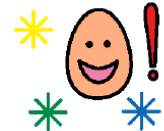
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3. Nursery Rhymes



Tickle Games

- Choose a time when your child is not distracted and try to get their attention (you can use their name)
- Play a tickle game like “1... 2... 3... tickle!” or “I’m coming, ready or not...” or “ready... steady... tickle!”
- Your child will become happy and excited to play these short repetitive tickle games once they learn the rules and start to expect what will happen next
- Try leaving a short pause between each tickle game to see how your child responds – if they enjoy it they might try to request more!



Ready... Steady... Go! Games

- Games like this help develop anticipation skills as children learn what happens at “go”
- Pick a fun game to play with your child e.g. playing on a swing, knocking over bricks, rolling a ball or even bubbles again
- Start saying “ready... steady...” then leave a short pause and encourage your child to look at you when you say “GO!” and then start the action
- You can use their name to get their attention



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**
- Try to build up excitement and anticipation of the fun part of the rhyme and give your child a big smile or cuddle when finished
- Remember – repeat, repeat and repeat! This will help your child learn the rhyme
- When your child becomes familiar with the rhyme, try adding a short pause. Wait for an indication that they want you to continue and then continue!

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

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.

This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats upon request