


THE TOOLBOX



THE EVER-IMPORTANT "PAUSE"

Have you ever thought that our lives are made up of a series of pauses? We need to pause when we cross the street, or do a crossword puzzle, eat or drink, sing or dance — or just THINK. A PAUSE is also a major "tool" to ensure that children with deafblindness and/or multiple severe disabilities have the opportunity to understand, to respond, and to be motivated to listen.

"Rests" are pauses in a piece of music — and these can vary in length, some being simply take-a-breath-type of pauses. Without these, the music will sound different and will be really difficult to play or sing — like stringing together a whole lot of words in one long sentence or several. Difficult to read or understand! So the "silences" — or pauses — provide meaning and sense. Dance is comprised of movement — and PAUSES between movements. And then we have this button on our equipment —  and we know how to use it.

A pause in speech is used to achieve some "effect". We pause because we are trying to gather our thoughts and match these to what we are saying, or to emphasize a point, or to give listeners a chance to absorb what we are saying. Having a conversation with someone who talks non-stop is not just annoying, but we will probably not understand the communication. We need to think, breathe, leave a gap where another person can "jump in". We also need to be aware of how to pause in the right place, and how long to pause — since these vary between languages, cultures, or even areas of a country such as the USA.

With a child who is deafblind and/or multi-disabled some of the reasons we need to pause:
To give a child time **ADDITIONAL TIME** to take in what was "said" in the first place —
AND to allow this to happen uninterrupted;
So that there is time for a response (from the child), no matter how subtle it is;
To encourage the child to be a part of this "conversation";
To find interests in common — and therefore, motivators.
So, train yourself. PAUSE!
More next time....

THE EVER-IMPORTANT PAUSE (2): It's a matter of TIME

Have you ever "lost your voice"? It's a frustrating experience. Here are some of the things that happened to me:

- I could not respond when someone addressed me - not in a conventional way
- I tried to "mouth" words - but most people around me couldn't lipread - and either misunderstood me, or did not get what I was saying
- I gestured and waved my arms more than usual - and also attempted to put body language and facial expression to better use
- I looked for a pen and paper - but found that people around me wouldn't wait for me to write things down
- I lost control of many things around me - like checking the kids, sharing with my husband what happened during my day, ordering pizza over the phone
- Most of all - I found that I wore down the patience of those around me!

Each one of us is so accustomed to running around and doing things quickly, that it becomes

difficult to slow down, and to WAIT for someone who cannot keep up. It would have helped if people around me had:

- a. given me more TIME to express what I was trying to express
- b. allowed me to use alternatives and taken the TIME to understand these
- c. Given me TIME to chat - via the written word (inevitably slower..... whether hand-written, or on on a computer).
- d. Understood the "time = patience" formula!

Transfer what happened to me to a child who is deafblind or has multiple severe disabilities - and you will find that issues are not that different:

- A child may not have conventional speech/language - but the urge to communicate is embedded in our very being. So - take time to learn how a child communicates -- or teach a child how to do this.
- STOP and watch - and see if you can detect subtle, and not-so-subtle communications - the blink of the eyes, stilling of the body, lift of a single finger, a smile or frown, a bounce or a stomp.
- A child may have an unconventional system that is being used - objects, pictures, touch cues - and we need to tap into these and make sure we use them - even when it takes more time.
- Provide the child with more "control" just by waiting for a response to each thing you say - or do. Being able to participate in the give-and-take of a conversation provides satisfaction.

STOP.

Take TIME.

PAUSE.

Learn PATIENCE!

Thoughts to ponder

A child may need to move head, hands, arms — before pausing to attend (e.g., a child with Fragile-X syndrome who flaps his hands, walks around his chair, while he ponders "4 + 2 = ?" and then stops, picks up his pencil, and writes "6").

Pausing sometimes may be a way for a child to create "sensory integration" for himself, or to "regroup" (e.g., when a child with CHARGE lies down flat on his back).

A child creating a "quiet time" for himself — turning away, closing his eyes momentarily, holding a book over his face — may be the child's way to say, "I'm overwhelmed and need to stop for a moment."

When we work with children who are deafblind, the pause become critical. Here are some techniques that persons working with children who are deafblind commonly do, but often without being conscious of the pauses and stops involved.

- When we approach a child, we must do so gently, allowing for time to pause - and for the child to figure out who it is. For example, if I hold out my wrist to a child, he needs time to feel the bead-bracelet I wear to confirm who it is. You don't just shake hands and walk away as you might do if the person could both see and hear. You would WAIT until you know you have been identified.
- Turn-taking would look quite crazy if it was done without a pause. "Your turn-my turn- your turn-my turn-your turn- my turn" . It should be paced: "Your turn. PAUSE. My turn. PAUSE. Your turn. PAUSE" etc. Each person participating needs

to pause before and after a turn — to reflect, to think, to transition.

- When trying to teach a child to indicate they want “more” of an activity, we create an artificial pause in an activity. For example, if you are bouncing a child on your lap or a trampoline, you would PAUSE and wait until the child indicated that he wants “more” bouncing — either through body-language, vocalizing, or sign language. In this case, the pause takes the place of a question — or is accompanied by it.
- When a child has completed an activity or a series of tasks within an activity, we teach him to indicate that it is “finished”. This is a good way to create a pause that will help the child to transition to the next activity or series of tasks. Sometimes this “pause” may include a reward (“well done!”, pat on the back, rub of the head, etc) or even a period of “down time” — a pause in routines.
- As educators, we learn that repetition is very important. But that too would become confusing if there were no pauses between repetitions. We have to stop and think BEFORE we repeat something. It could be repetition of a series of movements (such as riding a bicycle), repetition of a word or a sign, or even just repetition of a response to a toy.

We pause to create or ensure anticipation. How often have you been a part of a story-telling session where you pause for “effect”? Those ghost stories would be so much less effective without the pauses that create the drama — and the anticipation! We essentially do the same thing when we play “peek-a-boo” games.

The wolf huffed and puffed, and huffed and puffed and
[PAUSE] — the house fell down! [PAUSE] and the three
pigs had to scamper away really fast. [LONG PAUSE]

- Tickling games, games such as “incy-wincy spider” would have little effect if we did not pause. In fact, they would be no fun at all! Imagine playing “This little piggy....” without pausing at the end before the last little piggy cried “Wee wee wee — all the way home”!

THE EVER-IMPORTANT PAUSE (3): It's a matter of TIME

Pause in Massage

Anyone who has been trained in giving infant and child massage, or instructing parents on how to do this will know how important pauses are in this routine. Before the routine begins, there is a sequence of events - and pauses:

- ❖ The child learns that s/he is transitioning from what they were doing - to the massage routine. The person tells the child this through voice, sign, gesture, or other cue.
- ❖ This cuing may need a **pause** after - or even a repetition of the same information, while the child is being moved to the location for massage.
- ❖ Then, from the child's viewpoint, there is a **longer pause** - while the massager makes sure that everything is in place - clean sheet or blanket for the floor, massage oil, towels, aromatherapy materials (for some), music (for some). This is "mental" prep time for the child as well!
- ❖ Then the massager "asks permission" of the infant or child. For some children, the massager may just put oil on her hands, rub them together, and be sure the child is aware of her doing this.
- ❖ Another **short pause** --- for the infant/child to process this information and to respond. If the experience has been enjoyable in the past, there will be a response after the pause! Usually it is a "happy" response.

Now for the massage process itself:

- ❖ The first massage stroke **incorporates a pause** too. The massager places his/her hands on the child's body and just "rests" there for a second or two.
- ❖ The massage usually begins with one leg - and several different strokes for the one leg. There is a **brief pause** between each stroke, and maybe a "communication" with the child. After all the strokes for the one leg are done, there is another **pause** while the massager just holds the child's leg without doing anything. This pause will indicate to the child that that leg is "done" - and the massager will be transitioning to the other leg.
- ❖ The massage continues to the other leg, each arm, abdomen, chest, back, face etc - and each segment has the same or similar sequence for pausing.
- ❖ When the massage ends, it ends like it began, with the last stroke **incorporating a pause** - while the massager "rests" his/her hands on the child's body.

Massage would not be the same - or have the same benefits - if the pauses and rests were not a part of the sequence. It cannot be rushed through. The pauses are really important because of their communicative value as well.

The Concepts of "Wait-Time" and "Think-Time..."

The concept of "wait time" as an instructional variable was invented by Mary Budd Rowe (1972). The "wait-time" periods she found were periods of silence that followed teacher questions and students' completed responses that rarely lasted more than 1.5 seconds in typical classrooms. She discovered, however, that when these periods of silence lasted at least 3 seconds, many positive things happened to students' and teachers' behaviors and attitudes.

Courtesy of Joni Courtney from the Arkansas Deafblind Project

Complete article at:

<http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/pages/1884.shtml>

Pauses in routines

Build pauses into routines that are scripted for the children you work with! This works like a road-map, when you take into consideration the signs along the way that say "stop" or "yield" or something similar. The pauses that are scripted should:

- ❖ Be part of a natural routine where the pause is a natural prompt
- ❖ Include an embedded communication routine
- ❖ Involve peers and others
- ❖ Begin with the pause time needed - and be faded to shorter pause times
- ❖ Be motivating to a child - and make him/her feel included and successful

Arrival time routine:

Gina gets off bus.

*Stacie greets her and **pauses**.*

Gina responds with a lift of her right hand.

*Stacie cues her, "Let's go!". **Pauses**.*

*"Are you ready?" **Pause**.*

Gina rubs wheel of wheelchair to say "OK".

Stacie pushes wheelchair.

They meet the "greeter" (a classmate) at the door.

*Greeter offers a Hi-five. **Pauses** with hand in position where Gina can reach.*

Gina, "Hi-fives" back.

Greeter opens door and Stacie wheels Gina inside.

*Stacie turns Gina around to face greeter again and says, "Thank you, Beth". **Pauses**.*

Gina says "thank you" by hitting her switch.

*Stacie takes Gina to the classroom. **Pause** at the door.*

Gina reaches for "greeting switch" and says "Hello, I'm here" as she goes in.

*Gina **pauses** — and someone in the classroom responds, "Hello Gina!"*

Educators Corner

I wanted to share some information from an article I read on the *A to Z Teacher Stuff* website. The following is an excerpt from an article titled: *Using "Wait Time" and "Think Time" Skillfully in the Classroom* by Robert J.

Stahl. Even though the article is referring to general education it is very pertinent to those of us working with children who are deafblind.

To attain these benefits, teachers were urged to "wait" in silence for 3 or more seconds after their questions and after students completed their responses. (Casteel and Stahl, 1973; Rowe 1972; Stahl 1990; Tobin 1987).

For example, when students are given 3 or more seconds of undisturbed "wait-time", there are certain positive outcomes:

- The length and correctness of their responses increase.
- The number of their "I don't know" and no answer responses decreases.
- The number of volunteered, appropriate answers by larger numbers of students greatly increases.
- The scores of students on academic achievement tests tend to increase.

The article discusses the effects of allowing time for student responses and how information processing involves multiple cognitive tasks that take time. It discusses how children need uninterrupted periods of time to process information. It breaks down periods of silence into eight categories.

The whole concept of "Wait Time" is sometimes very hard for people to remember when working with children that are deafblind. Although these children usually require more than 3 seconds, and sometimes up to 20 seconds or more to respond, I found that the information in this article was interesting and insightful.

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