

Supporting Regulation: Pausing



Pausing is when we stop doing something for a short period of time. For example, when someone asks you a question, they will usually pause and wait for your answer. If they keep asking you the same question without pausing, you won't be able to share your answer.

Another example of pausing and waiting is when we are downloading something electronically. Typically, we need to start the download and then pause or wait for it to finish. If we keep clicking 'refresh' or tapping the screen repeatedly, the file might take longer to finish loading or the device might freeze and we'll have to start all over again.

How does this apply to children and supporting regulation?

Think about all of the things that we 'process' in any given moment: The sights around us (lights, décor, people moving around), the sounds of others talking, environmental sounds (footsteps, doors opening/closing, traffic, dogs barking), sensations from our bodies (ex. feeling sweaty, itchy, hungry), memories, plans, emotions, etc.

Now think about all of this happening, AND being a child who is more easily overwhelmed, overstimulated and/or distressed. Can we give them a little more time and space to organize all of this "noise"? Can we stop talking for 10 or more seconds before giving a reminder or re-prompting? Can we wait before intervening or over-helping with a task that a child is trying to do on their own?

- Pausing gives the child time to think or to process.
 - Pausing slows down the interaction.
 - Pausing is respectful of differences in processing speeds.
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- Pausing can be hard to do and takes patience and practice.
 - Start with counting to 10 silently and see what happens.
 - Challenge yourself and your team!