



ADJUST THE PACE

Sometimes we need to slow down! The goal is time spent together, connecting and engaging with one another. Although it often feels like the goal is the outcome of whatever activity we are doing (playing catch, throwing and catching, baking – the muffins, etc.), however, if a ball is never caught or the muffins taste terrible, it is okay.

ASK YOURSELF:

1. Did my child and I both enjoy our time together?
2. Did I connect with my child?



THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PREPARING FOR, AND ENGAGING IN ACTIVITY WITH YOUR CHILD

A) Starting off regulated and without distraction is a great way to establish connection. Make sure you are both feeling calm from the beginning. Try to ensure that there are few chances for distraction or interruptions. This can look like making sure neither of you are hungry, you are both well rested, the environment isn't too loud or busy, and you aren't expecting any interruptions such as a visitor or needing to leave for work in a few minutes.

B) Back and Forth: Consider the balance of the interaction – each participant should have the chance to take a turn or share information.





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C) Flexibility is key! When you are ready to start playing or doing a joint activity, join your child in whatever activity they are already engaged in, or consider their interests before starting something. Give your child some time to accept your presence or the idea of a joint activity. If they show interest in a different activity or demonstrate a different idea, be willing to do that.



D) Give your child time to join in, participate and keep up. Once play, or an activity has begun, remember to go slowly. Before you take the next step, change the play, or add new ideas to the activity, pause. This pause gives you the opportunity to notice where your child's attention is.



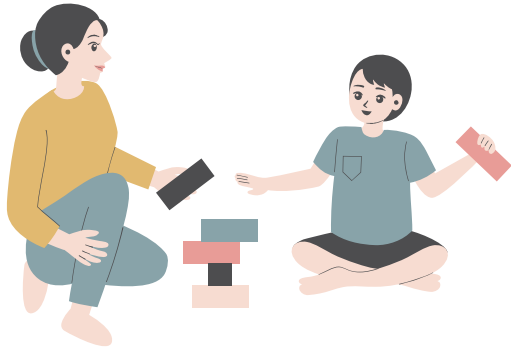
E) Establishing the connection happens by joining them where they already are. Allow time to establish a connection, coregulate, and become in-synch with your child, before giving instructions or expecting them to play with you. They might accept you in their space but not be ready for you to join their play. If you invite them to play or do a joint activity with you, they may need a few minutes to process the idea.





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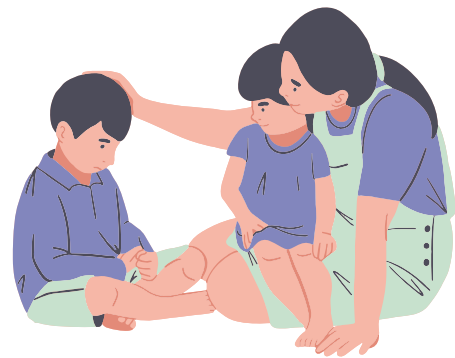
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F) When your child's sensory cup becomes empty or starts overflowing, dysregulation may occur. Read your child's cues. Watch to see if your child has given you information (words, gestures, visual referencing) so that you know how to respond. Pausing to be a detective helps you to understand your child better. By being cued in, you can make sure their sensory needs are met and the play/activity can continue. Reading your child's cues will also give you clues on what to do or say next without overwhelming them with too much information or causing distress.



G) Pacing is about slowing down at the right moments, but there might be times when you can also speed up. Some things that are already easy or parts that may be too tricky are worth speeding up before you take a pause. *The most important speed is following your child's pace, meeting them where they are at.*



H) *Helping your child feel valued in the interaction creates a meaningful connection. Make sure there is time to develop a play pattern, and you are not rushing to the next task or to finish it. Allow space and time for your child to respond, wonder, or come up with new ideas.*