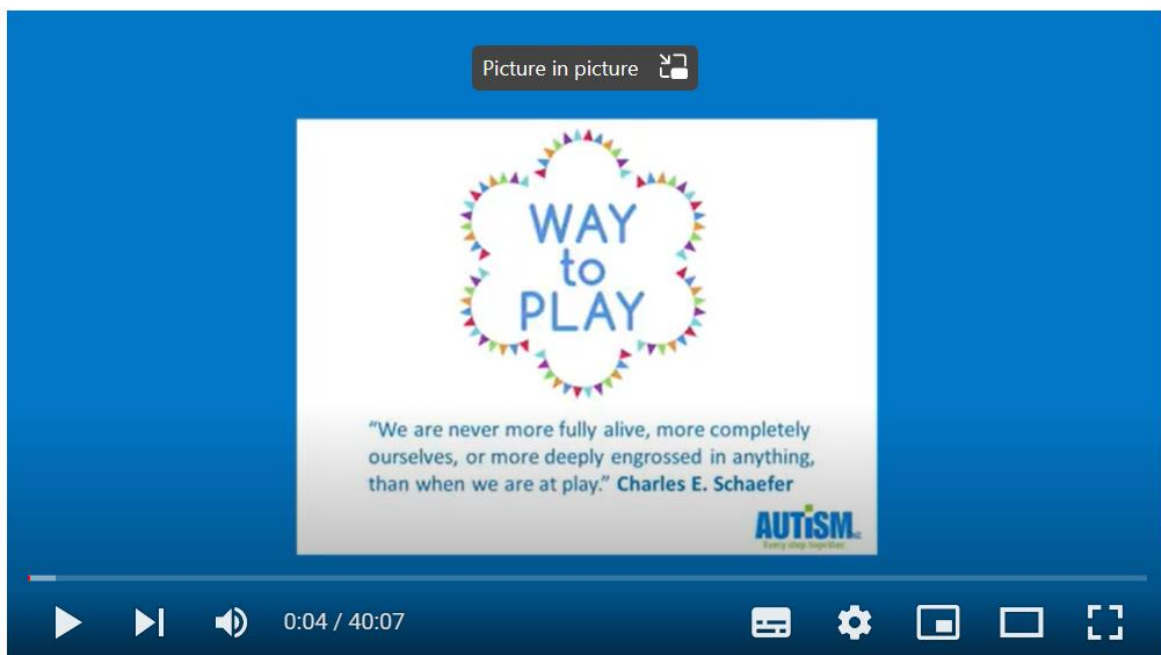


MODULE 2

Module 2 is reviewing the Way to Play strategies- **Pattern memory and Variation** and **Adult is the guide**. These strategies were discussed during the workshop. Here you will find more videos to consolidate your learning

Pattern, memory and variation is the start of you becoming the trusted person to guide your child over the bridge. Your aim is to guide your child into more dynamic 'changeable' situations. The 'pattern, memory and variation' strategies are our first tools to help you do this, and the basis for all our play interactions in *Way to Play*.

Way to Play Introduction Video



https://youtu.be/D4LQ_Iy7wA4



Pattern, Memory and Variation in action

Pattern

A pattern has a series of steps that have some predictability. Patterns and routines are some of the first things children learn. Pattern games are simple and easy to repeat and have frequent opportunities for the child to take part. They are fun for both the adult and the child.

“Peekaboo” is a good example of an early pattern game in which babies interact with adults. The adult puts their hands over their face and says “Peek aaaaBOO”. The child learns to watch the adult in anticipation of the “Boo!” and they both giggle together, sharing natural eye contact.

The adult can repeat this activity often using different things to hide behind and the baby never seems to tire of it. As the baby develops, they take a more active role, putting their own hands over their face or pulling the adult’s hands down. Both of them are having fun together.

Why do autistic children like patterns?

In the Introduction, we discussed your child’s needs to stay in ‘same-same’ situations, and how play can cause anxiety because it is usually changeable. One of your first steps crossing the bridge together is to make yourself more predictable so that your child feels comfortable playing with you.

By creating patterns that your child can predict, they will view you as someone who it is safe to interact with, and hopefully have fun as well.

Choosing a pattern

The pattern you choose must be interesting to your child – there is no ‘one size fits all’. If you notice your child likes moving around lots, make your first patterns active rather than sitting down. If your child jumps a lot, create a pattern with jumping in it. Or if your child often sits down quietly on the floor to play, join them there. By being interested in what the child is interested in, we start to build engagement.

When choosing a pattern, it is also vital that it includes something for you to do as well as something for the child to do. We need to teach the child that you both take an active role for the pattern to continue. You both have a role to take.

Roles for both

Sometimes your roles can be doing the same action at the same time, or the same action one after the other. We call roles with the same action **synchronous**. Sometimes each person can have a different role that both need to do together. We call these **exchange** roles.

The following stories illustrate examples of both types of roles.



Parent Story: "1, 2, 3, blow"

Gerry's Mum blows bubbles. She shows Gerry how she pops them with her finger and says "Pop" each time. Mum blows bubbles again, each time saying "1, 2, 3, ... blow!". This time Gerry pops them with her finger. Mum repeats "1, 2, 3 ... blow!" and Gerry pops them again. Since Gerry and her Mum doing different actions, these are examples of exchange roles.



Parent Story: Banging blocks

Gracie is banging two blocks together. Mum picks up two blocks and bangs them in time with Gracie. When she stops, Mum stops. Then Mum bangs the blocks over her head and Gracie copies her. Since their actions are the same, they have synchronous roles.

Variation

Once the pattern of play is established, the child becomes comfortable with you as you are being predictable. Now is the time to introduce a variation. The reason we introduce variations is because we do not want the child to become too used to ‘same-same’ games. We want to show the child that a pattern can be much the same but also a bit different and yet still be fun. Such a variation encourages the child to think again about

what they are doing. This is called **productive uncertainty** and is important for developing thinking skills.

If we do not vary the pattern, the activity will soon become very 'same-same' and your child will only want to do the pattern in that one way, or just with you. To prevent this and to encourage learning, we introduce some small variations as soon as you are sure that your child is involved in the pattern. Variations in play patterns are the beginnings of flexible thinking.

Here is an example of small variations being introduced to a pattern.



Parent Story: Rolling cars with variations

David and his Mum were rolling cars down a slope together. Mum made sure that the cars they rolled kept changing. First Davey had a blue car, then a red one, and then a green one. Mum collected them at the bottom of the slope and put them back into a container. They then chose two more cars and released them together at the count of "1, 2, 3, go". Next time they released the cars, it was at the count of 5, and then a count of 7. Later still, Mum moved the slope to different places in the room and expected David to move with the slope and keep playing.

Types of variations

Here are some of the variations you could make. There are lots more!

- Change the tone and volume of your voice
- Change your position
- Change the speed
- Change the height

Note that small changes are better to start with. You don't want to scare your child back over the bridge!

Memory

During the time we are playing the pattern and introducing the variations, try to be aware of, or to create a memory catchphrase for that pattern. A memory catchphrase is something that stands out from the interaction to make it memorable and can be used to start the pattern again.

Think of an advertisement on television that you cannot get out of your head. Usually, it has some catchphrase that is repeated often so that it sticks in your memory. There is often a catchy tune or declamatory

pattern in it that works as a catchphrase. Whenever you hear that catchphrase, it reminds you of the product. (For example, do you know the jingle that ends "... where everyone gets a bargain"? I bet you do!)

A memory catchphrase does not just have to be words. It could be a tune, a gesture, an object, or even a smell. Those same tricks that advertisers use will now be used by you to hook your child into pleasurable interactions.

You can use **memory catchphrases** to:

- help your child recall the fun you had together with the pattern play
- build up a bank of patterns to have pleasurable interactions with you
- connect your child's memories of playing with you to positive emotions
- help your child feel safe to "go down the dark alley" and start to "cross the bridge" with you.

Following are two examples of memory catchphrases.



Parent Story: "Chaaaaaanging chairs"

Dad and Toby are sitting opposite each other playing a game where they jump up and swap chairs. Dad and Toby together sing "Chaaaanging chairs!" just before they jump up to swap seats. This memory catchphrase is infectious as they both chant it together. The next day Dad calls the "Chaaaanging chairs!" chant and Toby comes over to start playing the game all over again.



Parent Story: "Sofa throw!"

Sara likes playing rough and tumble with her Dad. She squeals with delight when he picks her up and throws her onto the sofa. However, she does not have to do anything herself. Dad changes this by moving to one side of her, holding his arms out, calling 'Sofa throw' and waiting. Sara then moves to his arms so the game can continue.

People often say that autistic children have good memories. However, there are different types of memory, and remembering emotion-based experiences is usually harder for autistic children than for others. Instead, we create a memory catchphrase to help them remember your fun games.

Finish on a high

Always try to finish your play on a high and leave them wanting more. The memory of the interaction is at its strongest at that moment. To prevent meltdowns, try finishing by saying "Three more then finish ... two more then finish ... last time ... and finish!", or depending on the child you may even wish to offer them a choice "3 more turns, or 5 more turns?". This helps them with decision making and can also help them feel more in control.

Sarah- May talks to us about using PMV with her son Jasper and how the strategies helped to support his learning and overall well-being.



<https://youtu.be/JiUsO4R0LZc>

Summary

The following diagram summarises how the pattern, memory and variation process works.

Play that follows patterns (repeating sets of actions) is predictable. Autistic children respond well to predictability.



Patterns can involve you both doing the same action at the same time, or you can each have a different role, repeated one after the other.



Create a pattern where you both are taking an active part. This fosters a sense of connectedness.



Variations can be slight changes in your position, voice, speed, or direction - anything that makes the pattern a little different and keeps the child engaged with you.



Introduce slight variations as soon as your child knows a pattern.



Catchphrases are used to help your child remember the pattern, so you can play the game another day.



Create a memory catchphrase (words, sound, gesture) that is part of the game and can be used to remind the child next time.

Pattern, memory and variation - the process

Reflect on three activities you have played with your child

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Pattern: What are the repeating actions?</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> | |
| <p>Memory: What memory catchphrase did you develop?</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> | |
| <p>Variation: How did you introduce slight variations?</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> | |

Being the Guide - Making Yourself Interesting

Once you've got the pattern, memory and variation strategy going, you will notice that your child is paying more attention to you. This is one of our primary aims in *Way to Play* – for you both to feel more connected through play.

This attention is important because autistic children generally pay less attention than other children to human voices and faces, other people's movements, and the things that hold others' interest. Through adapting your play style by using the techniques in this lesson, you can help your child become used to paying more attention to people than objects. This is a vital step to developing communication and sociality skills.

The following story illustrates why autistic children may have difficulties with communication.



Parent Story: Mum's concern

Davey spoke a few words but I noticed that he never looked at me. It was as if I wasn't important to him. I wanted him to look at me so he could see how much I loved him.

Making yourself interesting

'Making yourself interesting' is what we call our overall strategy of adapting your style of playing to attract and engage your child. Making yourself interesting covers a group of techniques to help you to stand out from the environment so your child connects with you rather than the objects around you. By adapting your style using these techniques, you are helping guide your child across the bridge to new learning.

Techniques for 'making yourself interesting' include:

- Being the child's guide
- Animating voice and facial expressions (Affect)
- Zooming in and moving away
- Exaggerating body gestures
- Keeping moving, so you can't be ignored
- Giving total attention
- Reducing language
- Waiting for response
- Enabling eye contact
- Encouraging, not instructing
- Playfully obstructing.

The key is to make everything bigger than you would with adults, so that your child notices.

1. Being the guide

The autistic child needs the help of a more capable person to take risks and accept new challenges. You are that person. You are interested in what the child is interested in but you also know you have to present new challenges. You know what to ignore and you know when to finish.

Always finish on a high! If you leave them wanting more, they will be keen to play with you again.

2. Animating voice and facial expression

Both your voice and your facial expressions need to be filled with animation and emotion. This is to help the child begin to learn the importance of facial expressions and the expressiveness of speech that is not in words. You need to genuinely show your pleasure in the interaction. Your voice sounds should go up and down with exaggerated intonation, and your facial expressions must be clearly emotional. Let go your inhibitions!

3. Zooming in and moving away

The adult needs to lean forward often during the interaction, getting closer to the child. As you get closer, so your smiling face gets larger. Make moving away a dramatic gesture along with a loud intake of breath. That will draw your child's attention to you, and helps them to anticipate what you will do next.

4. Exaggerating body gestures

Body gestures include head nods and shakes, and the way we use our hands and arms. Make your body gestures bigger than usual and make them last longer. The aim is to make your gestures stand out more. Since our bodies are in constant motion, it is difficult for the autistic child to learn which of these movements is important unless they are exaggerated.

5. Keeping moving around

If you remain in the same place, the child need not look where you are. One of your variations can be moving slightly (up and down, or side to side) so your child has to re-orient themselves to you each time. This helps keep their attention on you.

6. Giving total attention

While you are playing, keep your eyes fixed on the child as much as possible. Try not to miss out on anything. Observing your child allows you

to notice what works and what does not and ensures you do not miss seeing your child look at you. (See also number 9.)

7. Reducing language

By reducing your language, you will actually be helping the child more in their own language development. By using fewer words, you also draw attention to your body language as your child will need to read your face and movements rather than just relying on hearing words. Try not to use more than five words at a time, a technique called the "Rule of 5".

8. Waiting for response

Along with using fewer words, waiting is a vital skill to develop. The "Rule of 5" says that we should use no more than 5 words and then wait 5 seconds for a response. It is also a good strategy to pause during our play interactions. This gives the adult time to think about what is happening but also allows time for the child to initiate an action.

9. Enabling eye contact

To make eye contact easier, the adult needs to be down at the child's level and be face to face. The adult needs to be aware that we look at each other for a variety of reasons, to share smiles and laughter, for information, in anticipation and in celebration. Create opportunities for this engagement and hold that look longer. You can also hold your hands either side of your head to "frame the face", and so help the child learn to focus there for communication.

10. Encouraging, not instructing

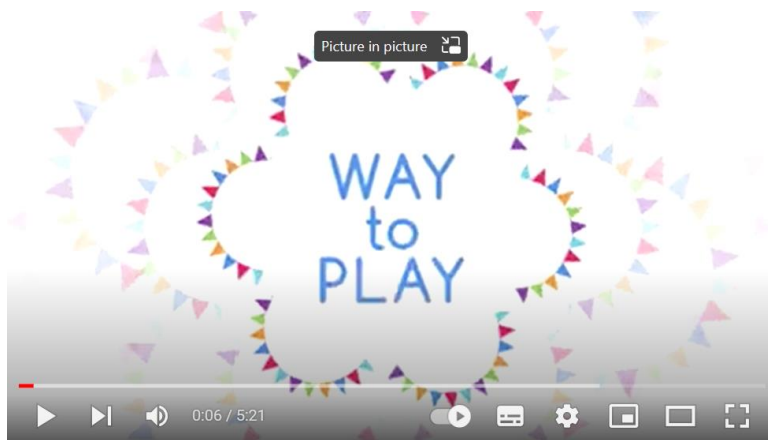
Try to avoid giving instructions and cut out closed questions (to which the child can only answer "yes" or "no"). Instead, make animated, encouraging comments. The simplest way is to comment on what the child is doing, or on what you are doing. Use emotional comments, such as "Wow!", and "We did it!".

11. Playfully obstructing

Playful obstruction (sometimes called 'Sabotage' or 'Throwing a curve ball') is taking an opportunity to mess things up just a little to tease out as much as you can from the interaction. By creating a problem to solve, you create an opportunity for the child to think about what to do next.

'Make yourself interesting' in action

<https://youtu.be/TKRNspAYZEs>



Using the techniques

The following stories show how two parents have used these techniques. See how many of the eleven listed you can identify.



Parent Story: Where's Sammy?

Mum notices Sammy opening the DVD cupboard. Rather than say "Close that cupboard," she uses a memory catchphrase to lure him into a game they've played before. "Where's Sammy?" she says with an animated expression, while crouching down to his level. She hides her eyes with her hands (as in peekaboo) and he leaves the cupboard and comes to take Mum's hands away. When her hands come away from her face, she has a beaming smile and leans forward toward Sammy. They look at each other in delight. After a few more turns of this game, she pauses. She notices he is jumping, so she starts a jumping game with him.



Parent Story: Rolling balls

Luke's Dad gives him balls to roll down a tube. There are four balls. Dad counts each ball just before it goes down the tube. He moves around the room in between. When he gives Luke the fourth ball, the opening to the tube is out of reach and Luke can't put the ball in. Dad says, "Oh no!" Luke looks at Dad and then looks at the tube. Then he grabs the tube to pull it down to his level. Dad says, "Great thinking!"

Gaining confidence

One of the best things that will happen as you learn to use these techniques is that you will develop confidence in playing with your child. You will learn that the pattern, memory and variation strategy works as long as you choose an effective pattern and follow the 'making yourself interesting' techniques.

As your confidence grows, you will be able to slow down more, allow more initiations from your child, observe more of what they do, and be able to "think on your feet" when things need to change.

Remember that you will not be able to do this all at once. Your learning will take time just like your child's learning, but the more you practice, the more you will both improve.



Parent story: More laughs and hugs

Already I'm noticing a huge difference in the way my son and I are interacting, in my confidence with my approaches to connecting with him and, almost unbelievably, his subsequent development. My impression of the last four days is that there have been considerably more smiles, laughs, shared moments and hugs than ever before

Checklist for 'Making Yourself Interesting'

SCALE: 1 = Not a lot; 3 = Sometimes; 5 = Mostly

| Strategy statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| I lead my child's play | | | | | |
| I use an animated voice and facial expressions | | | | | |
| I use dramatic body movements | | | | | |
| I exaggerate my non-verbal gestures | | | | | |
| I move around the room when I am playing | | | | | |
| I concentrate totally on my child when we are playing | | | | | |
| I reduce my language | | | | | |
| I pause often to see what will happen and allow response | | | | | |
| I play at my child's level | | | | | |
| I use comments rather than instructions | | | | | |
| I deliberately create problems to solve | | | | | |
| I feel confident playing together | | | | | |
| | | | | | |



Reflect on how you used each of these strategies.

Is there something you are doing well?

Are there other situations you can use this strategy?

Are there some strategies you would like to improve on?

Choose two of the strategies you want to work on. Write them on a sign and put them somewhere to help remind you to practice them.

Taking a baseline video

As you will have seen by now, we use a lot of video in our work as it is such a great tool to review what is happening. It captures interactions that you may have missed during play and highlights what you are already doing that is working and how to expand on that.

At this stage you are going to take a **baseline (before) video** of you and your focus child playing- no PMV has been implemented yet.

Ask for your colleagues for their support to help film you and help keep other tamariki busy for a short time while you spend time with your focus child (trying to avoid getting other children on video).

The video does not need to be long, though you might be recording for a bit before you get something underway.

We all feel self-conscious on video and have all felt nervous with a camera being pointed in your direction. Try and relax and pretend it's not there.

It's only going to be used for PLD purposes only.

The video will be saved on your device and only shared over Zoom. It is up to you if you wish to delete it as soon as we have analysed it. Please inform the parents/caregiver of what is happening and for their permission.

Please upload the video to your device and have it ready to share with the other champions next week over Zoom.

How to share screen on zoom

Instructions on sharing screen on zoom

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362153-Sharing-your-screen-or-desktop-on-Zoom>

Activity:

This week please film your baseline video- no PMV has been implemented yet- you may capture yourself doing PMV and that is okay, we are at this stage looking at a before video. The video does not need to be long.

Have this uploaded and ready to share in your Zoom session next week.