

The Power of the Pause: Overview

The Pause That . . . Encourages!

WHAT AND WHY: Pausing as a tool that is suggested throughout the literature on working with people who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). So why do we see constant examples of rapid-fire directives and questions, with minimal pause time? This is likely because we as communication partners haven't taken the time to really pause and think about the importance of pausing – and to *practice* pausing.



WHO IS THIS FOR: This is for anyone who communicates with people who use AAC, including parents and other family members, peers, teachers, paras, and therapists.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN:

Pausing requires practice! Some very easy tools include:

- a) **Count to 5 . . . or 25.** In the 80s, we developed a chart to remind everyone of 'Goldilocks' pause time for each student – that sweet spot that is not so short that the student needs more time to process, but not so long that s/he gets distracted.

Pause Times	
Rachel	5 seconds
Timothy	22 seconds*
Luke	11 seconds
Sammy	12 seconds
Ashley	10 seconds*
Chuck	7 seconds

* = Repeat prompt

- b) **Video the Interaction.** Sometimes it's hard to count in the middle of an activity. And sometimes watching the entire interaction helps us figure out that 'sweet spot' for each student.



Below are sample tools to influence perspectives and hopefully increase pausing:



The video, [The Power of Pausing – Child Language Development](#) by SLT Sophia Cormack of 'Speech in a Second.'

The helpful tip sheet [Ideas for Encouraging & Supporting AAC Users](#) from SLP, Lauren Enders Gonzales, available as a free download from her Teachers Pay Teachers site.

