



Ready, Steady, Go! – Anticipation games

Why are anticipation games important?

Anticipation games are important to support:

- The development of relationships and socialisation
- Shared interactions and joint attention within an activity
- The child to predict, anticipate and engage in an activity
- Independent and active learning
- The child to learn a pattern of events and develop memory skills
- The development of early concepts such as object permanence and cause and effect
- The development of early communication

Suggested activities:

1. Develop use of a consistent phrase, e.g. "are you ready?" then either "1, 2, 3... or ready, steady, go!"

2. Allow the child plenty of time to explore the objects that you are going to play with, establish a game, then build in opportunities to anticipate by following this suggested structure:

Pour water from a height

- Establish a pleasurable game with the child using water and one brightly coloured container (picking up on any colour preference)
- Raise the full container above the child's head, does s/he track it? Does s/he become excited? Does s/he reach up for it?
- Say, "are you ready?" wait for the child to look (encourage them by tapping the container), then "1, 2, 3,..... go!" and pour the water. You could: wait for the child to vocalise, reach, look after you have said 3 then continue to pour the water once s/he has let you know!

Set off a party popper/blower

- Allow the child plenty of time to explore the blower
- Tell him/her "get ready for a big noise!"
- Say, "are you ready?" wait for the child to look (encourage by tapping the party blower), then "1, 2, 3,..... go!" and blow the party blower. On the first occasion, s/he is likely to be a bit shocked as this maybe a new experience. Provide reassurance

and praise for listening, looking etc. Then repeat the sequence (explore, get ready, blow!)

- Things to look for: expression of preference/dislike. If s/he really does not like the experience, tell him/her that you have noticed this and stop the game.

Knocking down a tower of noisy blocks (old sweetie tins make a great sound when they tumble)

- Support the child to explore the blocks/tins
- Help him/her to build a tower ((you can use simple language to support this, such as 'up,up,up')
- Say, "are you ready?" wait for the child to look (encourage him/her by tapping the top of the tower), then "1, 2, 3,..... go!" and knock down the tower.
- You could: wait for/encourage the child to knock it down themselves (s/he may need you to do this on the first few occasions)

Let go of an inflated balloon

- Involve the child in blowing up the balloon: let him/her explore the empty balloon, then whilst you are very close inflate it
- Encourage the child to explore the inflated balloon
- Move the balloon from his/her right to left, above their head and below, encouraging him/her to relocate it visually or through use of their hands
- Say, "are you ready?" wait for him/her to look (encourage by tapping the balloon), then "1, 2, 3,..... go!" and release the balloon
- Repeat the sequence

Tickle the child with a feather duster

- Establish a pleasurable game with the child using a brightly coloured feather duster (e.g. shaking it, stroking his/her face/hands)
- Allow him/her time to explore it independently
- Move the duster from the child's right to left, above their head and below, encouraging him/her to relocate it visually or through use of her hands
- Say, "Are you ready?" wait for him/her to look (encourage by shaking the duster), then "1, 2, 3,..... go!" and tickle his/her face, head, hands, tummy etc.

Other examples, following a similar routine include:

- Spray water
- Blow bubbles
- Rumble on the resonance board
- Toss a big collection of autumn leaves/shredded paper/ cheer leader pom-poms

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