



Hi and welcome back. In this video, I'm going to teach you the simplest and most important change you can make for your child: Slow Down.

Now I know some of you may be thinking "but I want to speed up". I want to speed up the process of helping my child. I want to speed up the progress that my child is making. What I'm going to share with you, I'm hoping will really help you to see and understand the benefits of slowing down in order to speed up with your child.

So let's look at how things move way too fast for most kids and individuals who have neurodevelopmental issues.

What you need to understand is that people with processing problems get overwhelmed easily. What is a processing problem? Processing is the act of taking in, making sense of and doing something with the information that comes in. So constantly every second my brain, your brain or your child's brain is taking in all kinds of information from the environment. Taking in the sounds, the smells, the sights, the feel; everything that's going on around them is information that's coming in.

The brain's job is to process that information. It is to take that information in and make sense of it or making meaning from it and then to do something with it, to respond appropriately to it. Well what happens in individuals who have neurodevelopmental disorders is their brain has anywhere from multiple severe processing problems to just more mild processing problems that make it difficult for them to appropriately and effectively and efficiently take in and make sense of things going on around them so they can respond appropriately.

So the world is a pretty fast moving place if you are a child who has a processing problem because things move very quickly and there is so much information to take in and make sense of. So the first thing you need to understand is the world moving at a fast pace is overwhelming for kids with processing problems.



Now I want you to think of the typical pace of your life. How fast do things move in your life? How about your family's life? What about for your child? Are you constantly flying around from place to place without much breathing room in between? Do you feel that you're rushed all the time? If that's how you're feeling, then I can guarantee that your child who has processing problems is feeling that to a greater degree because the regular pace of the world already feels so fast to them.

Imagine the transition from one thing to another - therapies, after school activities, all the stuff that goes on in a school day, and all the stuff that has to get done at home; it can feel very overwhelming! And it doesn't give their brain an adequate chance to take in and make sense of what is going on around them.

The typical pace of your life may not be very compatible with the pace of what is really going to help improve your child's processing.

I want you to also think about slowing down to improve processing and also reducing stress. One of the families I worked with for a number of years has a son who has made amazing progress. He was diagnosed with autism when he was a little over 4 years old. They came to me when he was almost 8.

One of the first things I remember about this family was mom and dad sitting at the table with me, and mom was just crying because of all the stress and frustration she was feeling. She was just feeling so overwhelmed. She said, you know I realized the other day that I spend so much of my time and energy and our family spends so much of our lives running around from one therapy to the next to the next for our son and we're seeing minimal results.

But even with all this effort that we're putting into it, I realized the other day that my 2 year old daughter is growing up in the back of our family care and in waiting rooms for therapist's offices. This is not the life I envisioned for our family. It's really gotten so stressed out and there has to be a better way to do this.



I know a lot of you can really relate to that because this family was just going, going and going doing all the things they were told to do and thought were the right things to do. Meanwhile, their son wasn't making any improvement and, in fact, in some areas because he was so stressed out he was going backward. And it just left her feeling like she didn't know what to do.

One of the things that I had to work with this family right away was to slow down their pace of life, and to get rid of some of the things that were going on and taking that time making them feel so chaotic and rushed. And in reducing all those demands and slowing down the pace in their life, guess what happened?

Their stress went down. Not only did the parents stress level go down so they were more effective and available for their child, but their child's stress level went down immensely. And when your stress level and anxiety level goes down, you're much more open and available to the learning experiences around you, you're much more receptive to things going on, you feel that you can cope better and your flexibility improves.

All those things began to happen for this family with their child just from the simple process initially of looking at the pace of life and slowing things down to reduce everybody's stress and to improve their son's processing. By slowing down he was able to start making sense of things and was able to respond more appropriately which opened up a huge new view on life to this family and their son.

I want to talk to you about how to slow down. The first thing is to think about the pace of your life in general. Think about how much you have to get done in a day and think about the pace of life for your family as a whole. How many activities everybody has going on...and believe me I can relate to this. I have 4 children of my own and they all have activities and things. So I know it is a constant struggle to find the right balance of giving everybody what they need but still keeping the pace of life for the family as something that is appropriate and not too overwhelming.

I'd like you to think about that for yourself, your family as a whole, and also specifically for your child. What is the pace of life like for your child? Is there so much going on all the time that he or she can't really have the opportunity to effectively take in and make sense of what's going on around them? That is a really important thing to think about - pace of life in general.



The second thing I want you to consider is the pace of individual activities with your child. So whether you're doing the dishes together, helping your child get dressed or working on homework or going for a walk, whatever it is you might be doing together I want you to think about the pacing of that.

How fast paced are your activities with your child? Is it like pulling and dragging from one thing to the next? Do you feel that your child isn't doing any of the work or participating? Do you feel that you have to say things 5 times before they respond? Are you always in a hurry to get things done? Those are some of the things I want you to think about in individual activities and to consider slowing down just a little bit in those activities and taking them a little bit slower, a little more time to allow your child to have the opportunity to actively step up and to participate and to process and take and make sense of what's happening so they can participate.

The third thing I want you to consider is leaving wait time. Wait time is something that we talk about in education; leaving wait time for students to respond after we ask a question. I want you to think about it as a parent as well, because leaving wait time is a critical strategy for helping your child's communication to improve and for improving the amount of active participation that they are having in activities.

If you ask your child a question I want you to leave a few extra seconds of wait time just standing there waiting expectantly to see if they will respond. If you've given a direction, I want you to give the direction and then just wait a few extra seconds to see if that little bit of time will help them take in and make sense of things so that they can respond.

Now wait time is variable depending on the child involved. Most kids, if you give them a couple extra seconds of wait time, their processing will catch up and they will be able to respond. But I've had some kids who take anywhere from 2 seconds to 2 minutes to 15 minutes or longer to truly be able to work the information all the way around in their brain, to make meaning from it and to respond. Let me see if any of you can relate to this experience.



I had a child, a number of years ago, who was probably in 5<sup>th</sup> grade at the time and we were constantly having this experience where he would say something and it would seem so out of context and so unrelated. Then one day I realized that he was talking about and responding to something that happened more than 15 minutes ago. Maybe it was a question I asked or something that had happened and it was taking him that long to figure out what the meaning of that was and respond to it.

But I will tell you that was a huge discovery for me with that child because it enabled me then to in understanding that to really slow down the pace of things and to help him get practice and the opportunity to use his processing skills. And low and behold, what we've seen over the years is now his processing is much faster and much more effective. But it took really slowing down initially to help him learn how to take in and make sense of information in order to respond to it and now that process is a lot quicker.

So leave some wait time and play around with how much time you need for your child and then see what you notice about that.

I also want to encourage you not to tackle challenges when you're in a hurry. This seems obvious, but we do it all the time. I know it happens at our house and suddenly I realize I'm tackling this thing and it is a challenge and it's at a time when we have to get out the door and get moving. Let me give you a couple of examples.

If your child is just learning to tie his shoes, don't have him practice that when you're in a rush to get out the door and in the car to get to school. If your child is having difficulty with making sense of things in busier environments, say at the store or the park or whatever, don't try to tackle that in helping him cope better with that by taking him out when you're in a rush to get to the store to pick up these 10 things that you need before dinner. Those are going to be some of the worst times to tackle things that are most difficult for your child.

You need to slow down and choose appropriate times, places and pacing where you can effectively engage your child in the things that are challenging for them in a way you're not going to be rushed and you can give them plenty of time to work through and to make sense of what's happening.



Those are some tips on the first strategy, which is to slow down.

And coming up on the next video, I'm going to show you how to avoid reacting to your child in ways that make life more difficult. Who can't benefit from that, right? Watch your email two days from now for the next video. I'll see you there!

My Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole". The script is fluid and cursive.

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