

The Social Tango: The Foundations of Communication & Exchange

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The Social Tango

Reciprocal Exchange:
body clues, feelings, intentions, words & ideas



"Scientists in
the crib"

Gopnik

"Language is a
window into the
mind"
-Pinker



Innate sense to be social



6-9 months of age: coordination of attention between
caregiver & an object of mutual interest emerges



Nonverbal communication: gaze, gestures, & pointing



10-18 months: back & forth emotional signaling and
sharing of attention, reciprocal communication (E.g.,
social exchange)

(Wetherby & Prizant, 1992; Prizant et. al., 2006)

**Sensation + Perception
= Making Sense of
Social World**

Perspective-Sharing

Internal Experience

- Activation
- De-activation
- Arousal
- Alertness
- Readiness to Exchange

Cognitive States

- Physiological
- Mental

Affective States

- Emotional



Tango





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Cultivating Conditions

Fostering Language, Communication
& Play



Joint
Attention

Mutual
Engagement

Intention

Sharing
Affect

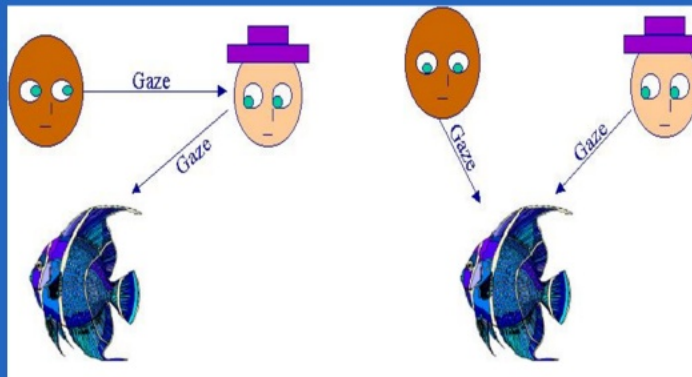
Language

Exchange

Joint Attention

- Sharing eye gaze, a gesture, or verbalization toward an object, event or person of interest
 - Initiation (directing, inviting)
 - Response (following, accepting)

(Wetherby & Prizant, 1992; Prizant et. al., 2006)



Observation:
Joint Attention
Noeliah, 15 Months

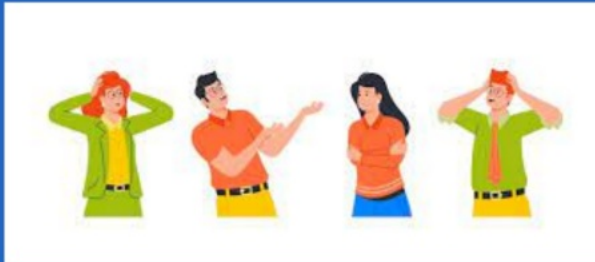
GeneticaLens®

Observation:
Joint Attention
Noeliah, 15 Months

GeneticaLens®

Mutual Engagement

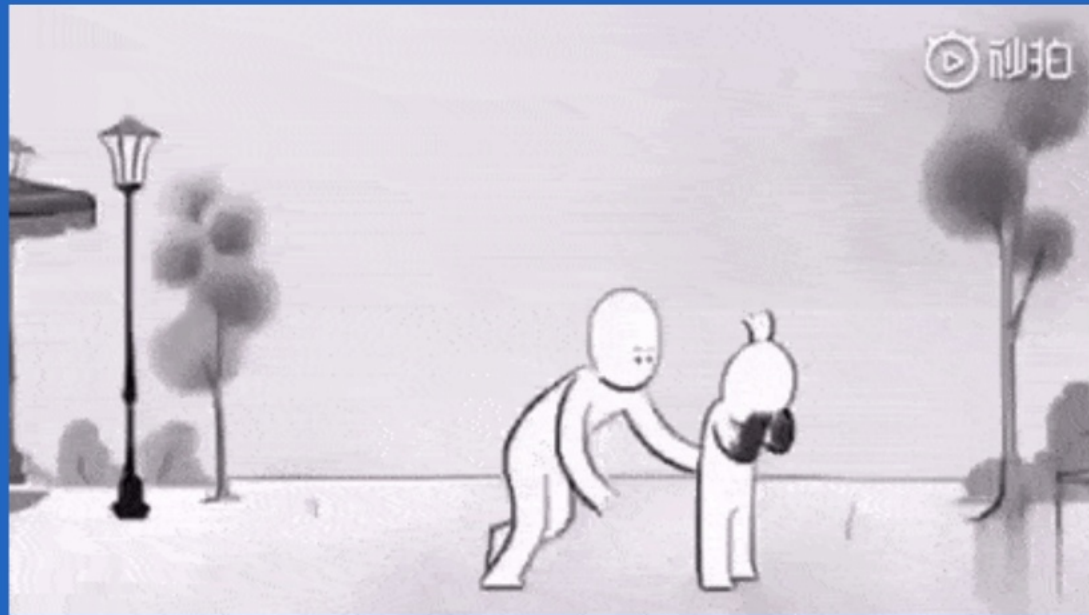
- Sharing an experience
- Personal & interpersonal interaction
- Different perspectives



Purposeful Communication

- Intentional
- Directed towards a partner
- Non-verbal
- Verbal
- Paraverbal

Emotional Signaling



The Reciprocal Dance



Joint (shared) attention
+



Mutual engagement (experience)
+



Intentional (purposeful) communication
+



Emotional signaling
+



Language (exchanging words, thoughts, & ideas)

=



Communication

Exploration + Flexible Thinking





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Neurodivergence

- Communication Modality
- Preferences & Tendencies
 - Proximity
 - Engagement
 - Eye Gaze
 - Verbal/non-verbal
- Style
 - Observing, sharing, asking
- Interests
- Rigidity/Flexibility
- Effective/Ineffective

Think & Apply

Strengths & Preferences

Ready to Recieve =
Ready to Connect & Communicate





Attune to differences



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Create the Conditions

- Connection vs. Correction
- All attempts are meaningful
- 'Bounce back' or restate message
- Get Curious
- Bridge intentions between peers

Notice
Interests

Attune

Mutual
Engagement

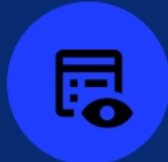
Preferences & Tendencies

- Seeking
- Avoiding
- Arousing
- De-activating

Invite! Don't Force



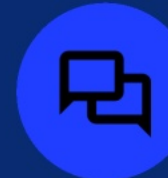
Face to Face



Objects across view (face)



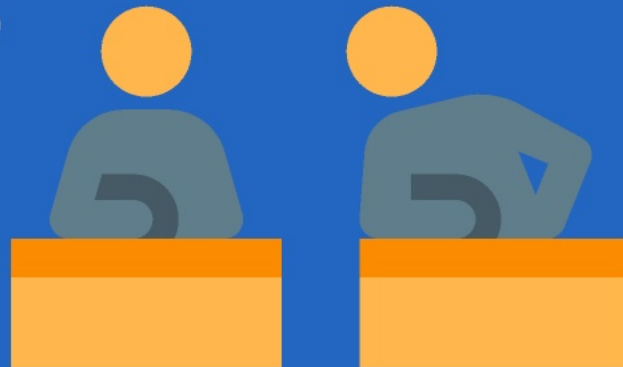
Wait for communication



Respond to intentions

Engage

- Synchronize (copy)
 - words
 - nonverbals
 - actions
- Imitate
- Add



Low
Arousal

When attention is low

- Add sensory to gain attention
 - noises
 - tickles
 - squeezes
 - action toy

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Sharing Minds

INCREASING ENGAGEMENT & EXCHANGE



Intentionality

purposeful



Sharing of Affect

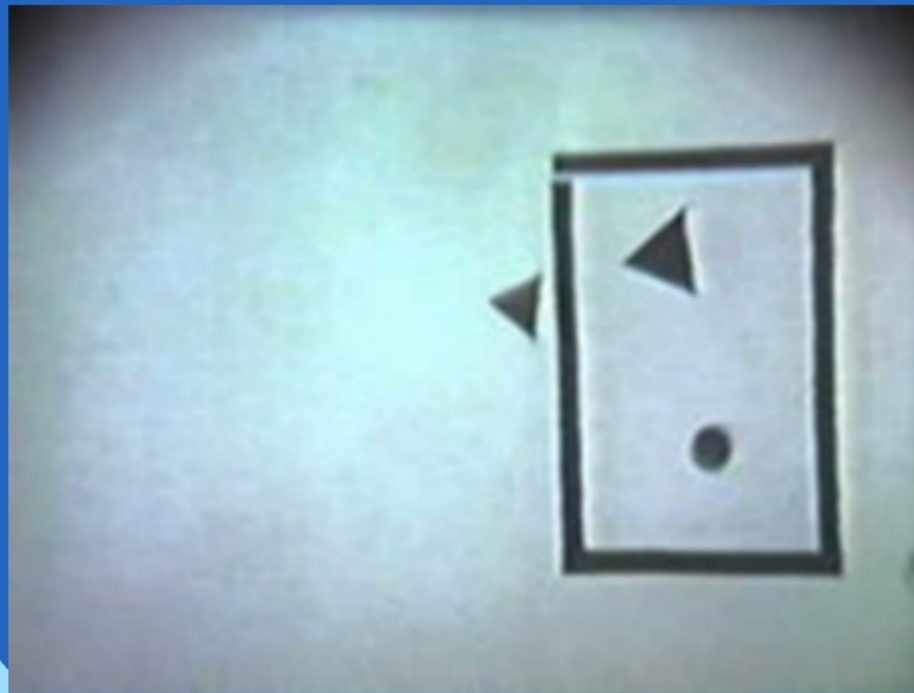
expressing emotional states to others
nonverbally

Think & Apply

Feelings

Narrate
Mental
States

Heider & Simmel





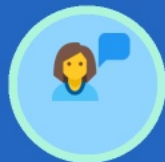
Signaling with Emotions



Attention to face



Label & Accept Feeling



Bounce Back Feeling

MENTAL STATE TALK



Insert mental & feeling words

Mental State Talk: want, think, believe, know



Narrate your thoughts & actions

Describing your thinking & actions



Narrate your child's actions

Validate emotional states of self & others



Label feelings

Label "body clues" & connect them to emotional states



Joint book reading

Add mental & emotional states



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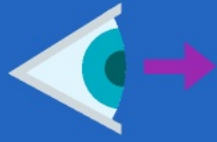
Speech, Language, and...

- Inviting **Exchange:**
 - sounds
 - words
 - eye gaze
 - body language
 - emotions
 - ideas

Narration

Declare!

Notice & Label



Notice



Magnify



Minimize

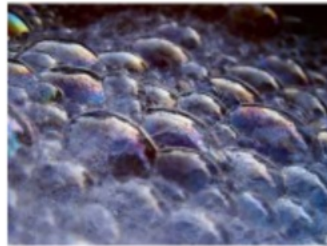
Mental
States

Do you wonder?

MENTAL STATE TALK

THINK & DO: WONDER, THINK, BELIEVE, KNOW

■ Soapy Gum



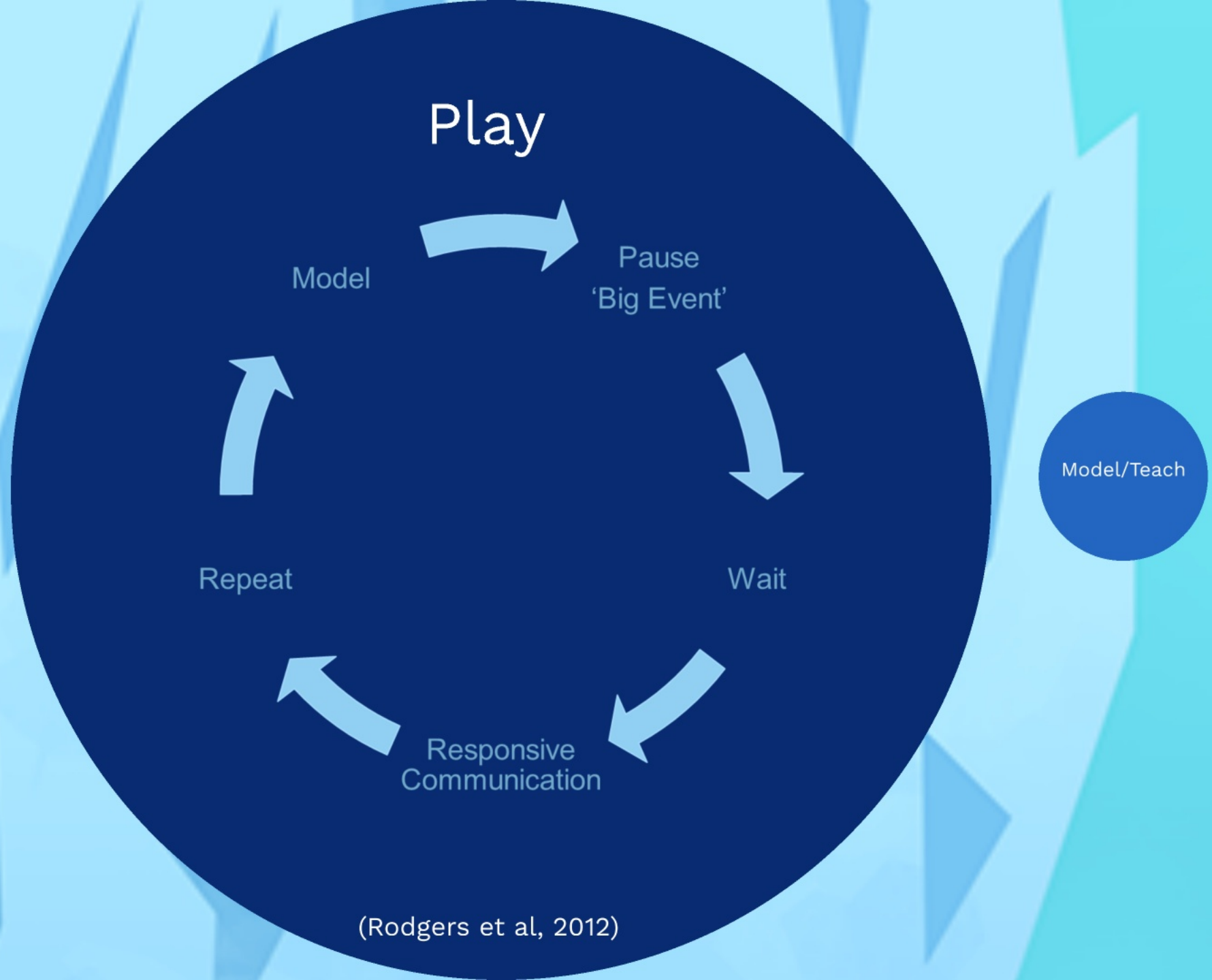
Building Language

- Declarative Language
 - Observational (Notice)
 - Connections & Outcome
- Expand
 - Build it up
 - Break it down

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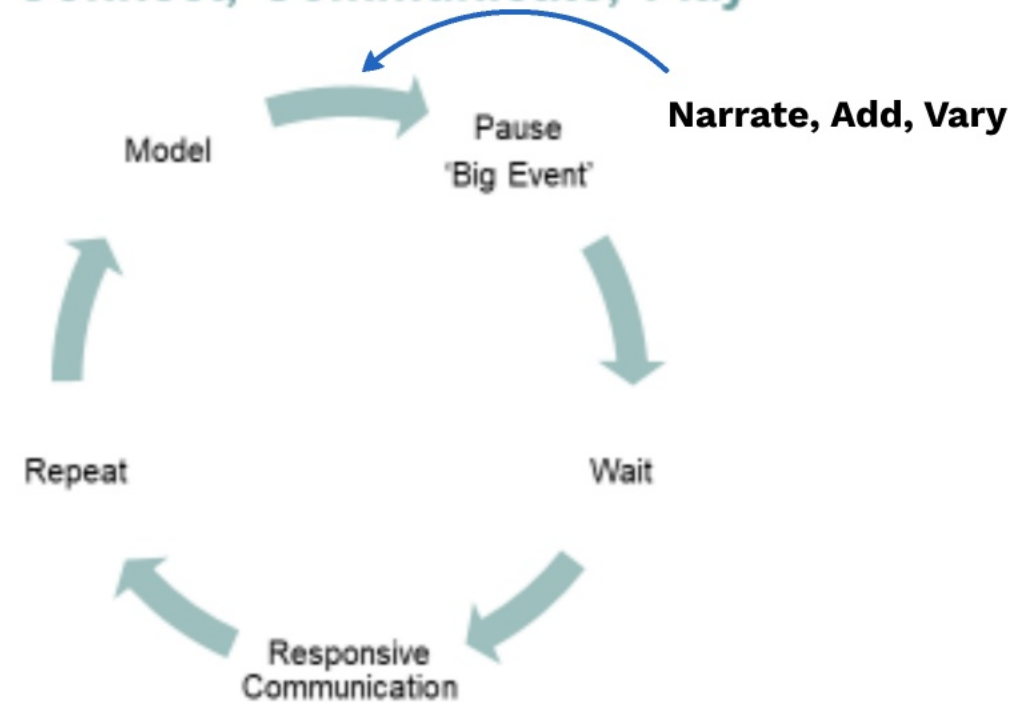
(Rodgers et al, 2012)

Variations & Expansions

Offer Opportunities

- Narrate
- Add objects
- Vary schema
 - Verse
 - Sounds
 - Actions
 - Steps

Connect, Communicate, Play



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...And Tango

- Facilitate, don't fix
- Highlight salient clues
- Offer ideas
- Stimulate perspective-sharing
- Coaching the 'tango'

Engagement

Balance

Exchange

Active Engagement

- Declarative vs. direct
- Engagement vs. compliance
- Children as 'Active Agents'
- Balance guided & unguided
 - flexible structure

Power & Choice

- Engagement
 - curiosity & novelty
 - agency
 - active thinking
- My choice/plan vs. Your choice/plan
- We chose 'what,' they choose 'how'

Negotiation & Collaboration

- Bumps or "tricky times"
 - Reset & Repair
- Pause
 - Notice & Narrate
- Recast
- Highlight outcomes
 - "That won't work..."
 - "I wonder what would work?"

Ideas

Mixing Ideas

- Put an 'idea' visual own thought bubble
- Each adds idea to separate thought
- Highlight one visual from each thought bubble
 - 'mix' them together

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Connect & Communicate

- **Follow Child's Lead**
- **Share Attention**
 - **Attune**
- **Emotionally Signal**
- **Notice & Narrate**
 - **Exchange**

Sensory

Thought
Stimulators

Collaboration



Sensation → Thought → Action

- Guided Snack
- Mindful Eating
- Touch Exploration
- Guess without a sense



Appreciating Perspective

- Unexpected contents
- Illusions
- Magic tricks
- Engineered bumps

Negotiation & Exchange

- Guided Build
- Limited Resources (enticing, low stakes)
- Collaborative & Competitive Games
- Deals
- Convince the teacher

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