The Seven Stages of Switch Development

Information sheet

Stage 3

Playing with two switches – Making two things happen
Growing Gareth the Goat
Triangle/Yellow (Competent)

Definition

Growing Gareth is where you start to understand and use two switches to do two different things. You will have had plenty of practise with one switch, as well as using it with different parts of your body and for different activities. Now you have two switches at the same time, which are connected to two very different, simple activities.

This helps you to further understand what switches do. During this time, you can continue to have fun doing simple switch activities, but you have a new challenge of using your body to find and use two different switches that are in different places.

During this time when you play with switches, you learn about making choices. You also continue to learn what switches do and develop the physical/motor skills to use them.

Milestones

- Developing understanding of two switches: you will understand that two switches can do two different things

- Primary and secondary switch sites: there will be two parts of your body that you will mainly use to activate your two switches, with reduced levels of support/prompting

- You will have a good understanding of what other body parts work well or not so well when activating a switch

- Developing choice: you will show a preference between two different switch activities – pressing a preferred option more frequently and avoiding a disliked option

- Automating skills: you will have improved your motor skills, activating a switch with greater speed and efficiency

- Make sure the two switches do two very different things, one could be highly motivating, and the other might be less so (or even disliked) – swap the activities between switches to see if the activity or access is preferred

- Try not to influence the switch user to choose a particular switch, let them explore for themselves

- Introduce the second switch in a clear, obvious and structured way – using modelling to introduce

- Provide activities that enable the switch user to use both switches independently and together, for example, a bubble machine and a fan

- Use visual and auditory cues to help the switch user understand the relationship between the two switches and the outcomes

- Continue with foundational skills: use the hard/easy/hard principle regarding activities. The child will still spend time engaging in single switch activities
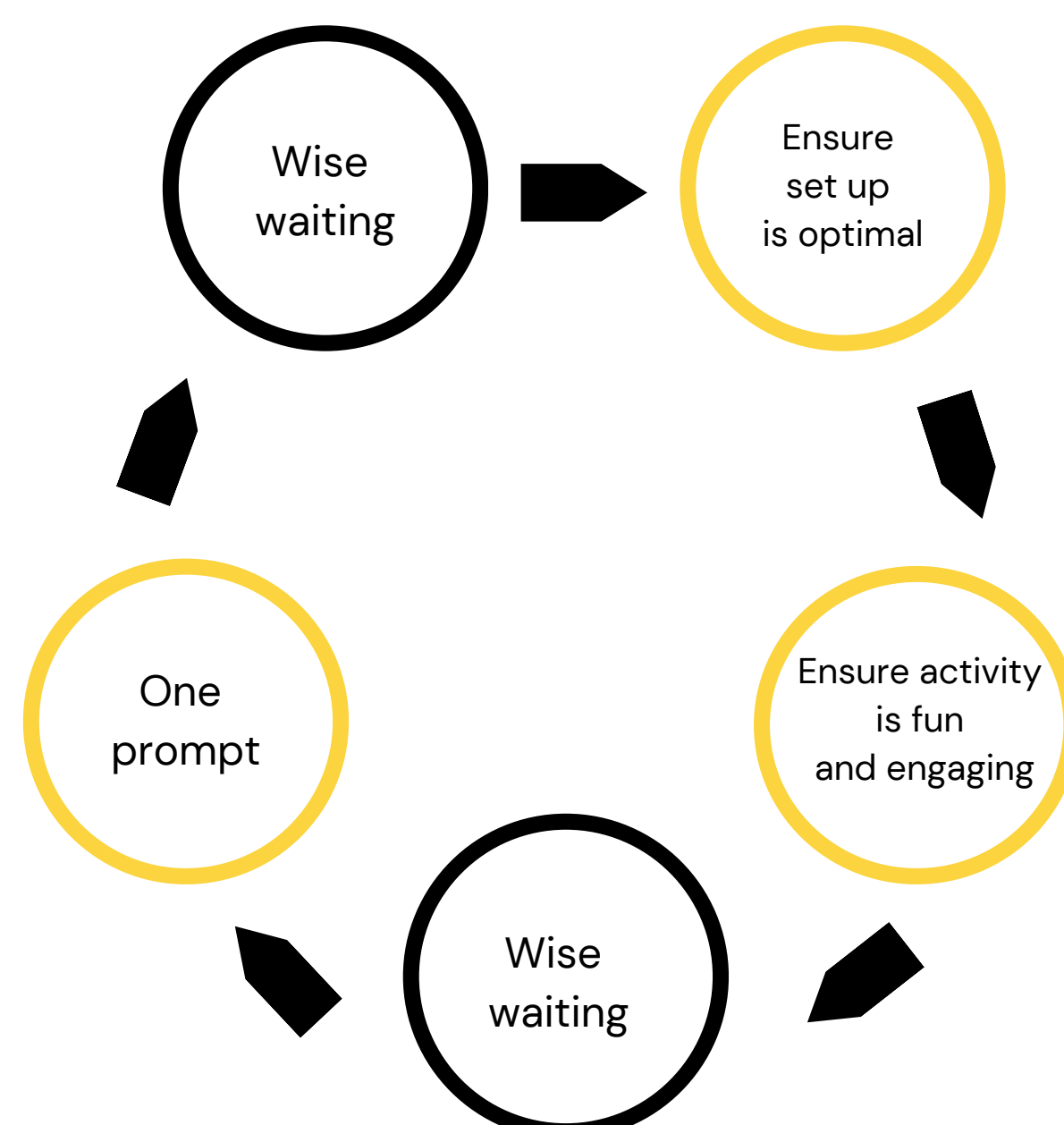
Activities

Try using two different switch toys; for example, one makes a switch toy move/dance/sing, and another blows a fan

Programme two voice output switches (or one with two switch options) to give different commands in a fun game (e.g., 'clap your hands' and 'do a star jump')

Computer games: there are lots of two switch computer activities. Try simple activities that allow each switch to play a different sound or function (The Pace MyWay can be set up to be used like this). You can progress to more complicated two switch activities where one switch works first and the second is redundant/plays a repeat action. Then when the steps are complete the first switch becomes redundant and the second switch finishes the activity

Instead of a prompt hierarchy where the type of prompt increases in support level, we recommend our one prompt switch session support cycle

Wise waiting → Ensure set up is optimal → Ensure activity is fun and engaging → Wise waiting → One prompt → (Wise waiting)

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