

**ABM® NeuroMovement® FROM FIXING TO CONNECTING**  
**Week 5 Exploration Tools**

**The Tools for Subtlety**

- 1. Experiment with each of the forms of forcing versus greater subtlety:** You can choose in any situation to vary and modulate the intensity you are using in the interaction with your child. It can be feeding, working on homework, getting ready for school, bedtime, etc. the same for the therapist, for any of your interventions you can vary the intensity and observe what happens with the child and for you. Here are some of the dimensions you can experiment with:

Intensity of voice

Intensity of touch

Intensity of movement

Speed

Repetitions

Single mindedness

Emotional

The intensity of your own need for the child to perform

- 2. When stuck, know that there is a difference to be made:** Whenever your child is stuck, unable to progress despite all your and your child's efforts, it is almost certain that she is not perceiving *enough* differences or *any* differences whatsoever in the areas of her limitation.
- 3. Empower your own ability for subtlety through reduction of force:** Focus on your ability to feel more and to be able to perceive finer and finer differences. A way we do it in ABM®NM® is through our NeuroMovement® lessons. There are many other disciplines that can promote your own brain's ability for enhanced subtlety such as playing a musical instrument, drawing, meditation. Subtlety calls on you to grow and evolve. Any investment you put into learning how to reduce unnecessary efforts in your own actions will immediately reflect in your child's ability to learn and change.
- 4. Subtlety in Movement:** It is easiest for most people to learn to reduce excessive efforts in body movements. Find safe situations, initially away from your child, such as when you wash dishes, or any other activity, and experiment with doing it with less force in different parts of your body. Notice whether as you reduce force, you feel more and get better at what you are doing.

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5. **Subtlety in Movement with Your Child:** As you familiarize yourself with reducing unnecessary intensity, begin using your emerging Subtlety skills with your child. Experiment using less for with everything you do with your child. Just remember that using less force does not mean getting less clear. You are always the leader in the relationship with your child.
6. **Subtlety and Emotional Expression:** Next you can apply Subtlety in your emotional expressions. Your emotions and feelings are important sources of information for you, use them as guides. Look for opportunities to reduce the emotional intensity that you bring to the interactions with your child. And again, as you experiment with bringing subtlety to your emotional communication with your child, remember, you are the “mama dolphin”, the leader with your child.

**Focusing more directly on your child’s subtlety:**

7. **Guiding your child into subtlety:** As you get more familiar with subtlety in yourself, you will be able to detect excessive efforts in your child and can look to guide and support your child in reducing such efforts:
  - A. **Comfort in Movement:** If your child has difficulty doing a certain movement and is trying to do it with excessive force, find ways to *gently* guide your child to use less force. Look for ways to reduce the demand, to change the environment or the conditions to make it easier to perform the intention. And if it is out of reach, shift to doing something else. Remember, the brain, that is your child, is learning their experience, not what we hope they are learning.
  - B. **Lazy Land:** To help your child reduce excessive force and effort while trying to move, you can encourage her with your words to try less hard. Reassure her that it’s okay to do less. You can play the Lazy Land game with her if you like or invent any other game that will help her reduce her efforts as she moves. For example, have a contest to be the last one to cross the room.
  - C. **Emotional Ease:** If your child tends to use excessive emotional force, first of all know that it is very challenging for anyone. Look to find times when your child is calm and through gentle story, or a game, play with them and you expressing more intense emotions and then more gentle and soft emotional expressions.

**Another way for your child to learn to modulate their emotional expressions is if you become more skillful in perceiving more subtle emotional changes in them and acknowledging and interacting with them before the child’s emotions get more extreme.**

- D. **Cognitive Ease:** when your child has a difficult time comprehending, know that they are unable at that moment to make sense, cognitively, of what is presented to them.

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Their brain needs new information with which to get there. Lots of repetitions at that moment are not a good idea. Remember, if they could, they would, and the brain learns its experience including getting good at experienced failure. This is a great moment to reduce your and your child's intensity of wanting for it to work, and a great time, within this subtlety, to bring in lots of variations that start at where things do make sense for your child.

- E. **Social Ease:** if your child has difficulty playing or connecting with other people, if they show anxiety around social expectations, or if they are unbeknownst to them socially inappropriate, this is a call for first of all for you to create social situations that are very gentle and safe for the child. Reduce the demands, such as the number of people attending, what is asked of the child to do, making it very safe, staying connected with the child, doing it where your child's needs are the focus, not proper social behavior. And when that is accomplished, you can bring very gentle and subtle variations so that your child's brain can begin to make sense of it all.

The Essentials work together to upgrade the functioning of the brain. As you focus on and practice Subtlety, feel free to include any of the other Essentials and observe how your child is responding. Most importantly, remember to be gentle and kind with yourself in the process.