

Speech and Language Therapy

Social Play

Lesson number 6 of 14 on Interaction and Communication

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Social Play

Social play begins early with smiling and games like peek a boo.

Children then learn to share toys during play with others and they continue to develop social skills that involve turn taking and following the rules.

As children grow and develop their play moves from solitary to parallel play (where children play alongside but not with each other) then onto cooperative social play (where children share and interact directly).



Promoting Social Play

Try and create as many opportunities to observe your child in play with others.

Begin by reflecting on your play with them.

What stage of play are they?

Are they able to play parallel to you or even cooperatively with you?

Are there opportunities to observe them with other children?



Promoting Parallel Play

If your child is currently at the solitary level of play it is important to join them in their play **regularly, and in a fun filled way.**

- Play with matching sets of objects alongside one another. Once you know the child is aware of you, try and share a toy.

For example creating an action with an object, and then passing it to the child for a turn.

- Copying you is a key way for children to learn. Encourage imitation of your play by playing alongside the child with an object of high interest.
- When the child is playing alongside you, copy what they do. Watch the child closely and if he glances, offer a reward and lots of positive praise and reinforcement.
- It is important to offer highly motivating toys to keep interest and concentration high.



Getting the most out of Play Time!

Stop, Look, Listen

What are they **focused** on, **interested** in and/or **telling** you?

Observe silently, watching to see what the child does with objects.

Wait

Wait for any **lead** from the child.

Wait 1 ½ -2 times your usual waiting time.

To give your child time to come up with their own play ideas wait without speaking, suggesting or instructing. Look interested though.

Respond

Respond by showing interest in whatever the child initiates.

Avoid questions or instructions though.

Join in

Find a way to join in **playfully**. Try and **copy** whatever the child does with the object. **Build** on what they do by commenting on it and adding something to their play. Don't change the focus or direct the play in another way. Then **wait, observe** copy again to start building turns.



Promoting Cooperative Play

If your child is able to play parallel to others, you can support them to become more cooperative in their play by being more **interactive** in the way in which you play alongside them.

- Encourage turn taking by playing simple games that involve give and take or your turn/my turn.

For example, roll a ball or push a car to him and ask for it back, or pushing buttons on toys.

- Provide and model repetitive turn taking in play such as buying items from a shop or filling up petrol in toy cars. Encourage the child to take on different roles.

The best way for children to learn social skills is to have them interact in groups and use the teachable moments that are created - either purposefully by you or naturally just by interacting with others.



Social Play Time Diary

Date:

We learnt about

When my adult

I...

Insert picture

