

Speech and Language Therapy

Joint Attention

Lesson number 5 of 14 on Attention and Listening

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Joint Attention Vs Joint Engagement

In lesson 1 we focused on Joint Engagement. We know joint engagement refers to a period of time when an adult and child are interacting together while focussed on the same object.

Joint attention is the next step on from joint engagement. Joint attention is a specific skill that involves being able to attract and direct another's attention to an object or activity.



Communicating Joint Attention

There are two key messages we are likely to see during play that will show us the child is engaged in joint attention and trying to direct us (the adults).

These are detailed on the next page with some descriptions of how a child might communicate these messages.



Communicating Joint Attention

I like this, more please, I want that	I don't like this, no more please, I don't want that
Eyes - looking between you and the object or fixing their gaze on the object	Eyes - not focusing or looking away
Hands - reaching or touching	Hands - withdrawing or pushing the object away
Face - smiling or nodding	Face - frowning, turning head away
Mouth - making sounds or words	Mouth - making different sounds or words, clamping mouth closed
Body - moving arms and legs with excitement OR being very still because I'm thinking!	Body - keeping still, wriggling more, trying to move away
A combination of the above or something completely different (you know the child best!).	A combination of the above or something completely different!



Extending Joint Attention through Play

- Create as many fun and exciting **opportunities for looking** as possible.
- Add bright, colourful and **interesting objects** into your play.
- Encourage the child to **look towards you** and track the **objects** with their eyes.
- Use lots of **excitement** and enthusiasm in your **voice**.
- **Respond** and reward the child's gaze by interpreting their message. E.g. if they are looking to the object and then to you, are they asking for more.



Adding activities into Special Time

Anything that is going to be of high interest to your child!

- Bubbles
- Flashing toys (if appropriate)
- Spinning objects
- Objects that produce interesting noises
- Objects that move in interesting ways



Golden Rules

Position yourself so you are facing the child, at their level.

Say the child's **name** to gain their attention.

Keep **objects near your face** and in the child's line of sight so that they learn to look to you for more.

Use your **face, voice** and **simple words** to build interest.

Stop, look and listen. **Wait** for the pupil to take the object/organise a response. **Observe** any messages they are giving.

ALWAYS **respond** to the child's bid for joint attention (if they look towards the object, name it and give praise with a smile and warmth and repeat the action with the object e.g. blowing more bubbles).

Say something about the activity (one or two simple words).



Special Time Diary

Date:

We learnt about

When my adult

I...

Insert picture

