

Developing joint attention

Joint attention is focusing on the same thing at the same time as your child. When we focus on the same things we can share fun experiences and model early communication skills. These skills include using eye contact, facial expressions, body language and our voice.



Early communication skills often develop before more complex forms of communication like gestures, signs, symbols, photographs or spoken words.

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TOP TIPS

- Remove distractions. Turn off the TV, radio and phone.
- Get down to your child's level. You could sit or lie on the floor beside them.
- Join your child in their choice of play. Use your facial expressions to show that you are interested and are having fun too.
- Introduce single words or exciting sounds to comment on what you are doing. 'uh oh' when the tower falls or 'woosh' as you spin a toy across the floor.

More information

Anticipation Games

Build anticipation of an activity or a game by pausing before you finish.

You could use 'Ready, Steady...Go' and pause before you say 'Go'. You can play this on the swing, pushing a few times and then holding onto the swing and saying 'ready, steady . . . go' before you let it go again.

Peek-a-boo games can also be fun. Place a scarf over your head and slowly pull it off, pause and wait before you remove the scarf completely.

Sing a favourite song and pause just before you reach their favourite part. Do they look up at you to ask you to keep singing?

Use a favourite light up or musical toy. Activate the toy a few times before pausing to building their anticipation of the toy starting again.

Listening Games

Stop what you are doing and draw their attention to sounds that you can hear around you.

Get down to their level, call their name and comment on what you can hear 'ohh car' or 'washing machine'.

