

Shared/Joint Attention Activities

- Shared and joint attention is when a child shares attention with an adult or another child. There may not be any spoken language and is an important skill learnt before verbal expression. Children can use signs and gestures, eye contact or other body movements.
- Share and joint attention activities help a child to notice when either an adult or child to engage and learn how to respond.
- These activities support parallel play, (following their interest, being next to them and copying their actions).

Activities for gaining attention and developing shared attention.

Starting activities.

- Tickle play. Call child's name and then tickle, pausing before tickling again. Repeat.
- Join in with child's play, copy their actions and sounds.
- Play making funny faces and sounds.
- Play peek-a-boo games.
- Play dancing together.

Building anticipation.

- Use two balloons, assorted colours. Show the balloons blown up but not tied, offering a choice. Encourage the child to point to one of the balloons. Say 'ready, steady, go' and let go of the balloon. See if the child watches the balloon whiz around the room and then asks for more. Adult to model 'more' by using Makaton and repeat the activity.
- Play other 'ready, steady, go' games; Spinning top, hoop, blowing a feather, bubbles, tissue paper, cars down a ramp, teddy down a slide etc.



Use simple pretend play.

- Using a doll/teddy with both adult and child having one. Adult to model pretending to give doll/teddy a drink, putting doll/teddy to bed, feeding doll/teddy, washing doll/teddy. Only use one action at a time.
- When child can complete a few individual tasks, adult to model a sequence. For example, feed doll/teddy and then wash doll/teddy's face.
- Encourage child to use the role play area with adults modelling suitable language to suit language development (sounds, single words, or short phrases).



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Shared/Joint Attention Activities continued ...

Using music.

- Dancing together, singing a commentary to what the adult is doing. "[key person] is jumping, jumping (in a singsong voice).
- When dancing try, "[child's name] do this, do this, do this [child's name] do this, just like me."
- Provide treasure baskets of objects that make different noises.
- Prepare a bag of objects to represent songs/rhymes and encourage the child to make a choice from two objects.
- Encourage musical interaction songs. Try different songs to encourage shared/joint attention. An example of a song (see tip sheet for Musical Interaction Songs for further examples). "It's windy, it's windy, who likes it windy? (Wave a fan in front of the child.) "[Name of child] likes it windy."



Using small equipment.

- Throw balls or sponges into a bucket, shouting "splat."
- Roll balls down a slide, using "ready, steady, go."
- Spin a hoop, catch it suddenly and say "stop."
- Use ribbons and scarves, running/spinning with them or floating behind.
- Race around with a pull along toy.
- Encourage taking turns to go through a tunnel/slide/trikes, using language such as "your turn." "My turn."



Water play and creative activities.

- Use funnels/water shoots to move water from one place to another.
- Splashing in puddles and popping bubbles, introducing new words and vocabulary as you play, splash, splosh, pop, drip etc.
- Bathing a doll, washing face, using vocabulary for facial features and body parts.
- Use lot of sensory materials, such as, cornflower/water, shaving foam, dry flour, rice, wet spaghetti, wet/dry sand. Other textures can also be used, broken up Weetabix (rough texture).

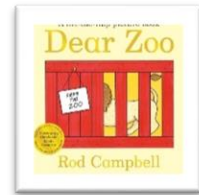


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Shared/Joint Attention Activities continued ...

Books and photos.

- Use lift-up flap books to develop building anticipation.
- Make a photo book of important people. Ask parents to provide to provide some photographs of who is important to them. Also add photos of the key staff in the setting. Put these into a book that the child can sit and look at while at nursery.
- Use games – matching real objects with photos, posting activities with objects/photos/pictures.
- When it is 'story time' give the child, an object related to the story to hold when he/she is sat on the carpet area.
- Build up a bank of simple picture and repetitive language books such as 'dear Zoo,' 'Peek a Boo,' 'Each Peach Pear Plum.'



Snack Time.

- At snack time use Makaton, gestures, and single word.
- Offer a choice of two foods. Using foods which the child is interested in will motivate the child to join snack time.
- Encourage the child to indicate their choice. This could be through glancing towards, pointing, Makaton or single words.
- Repeat this process when offering milk or water.
- Give the child small amounts of food to encourage the child to request 'more,' by using Makaton. The adult to model this to the child if no request for 'more' is made.



Links to EYFS: Communication & Language, Personal, Social, Emotional Development, Physical Development, Expressive Arts Design.

SEND Code of Practice: Communication & Interaction, Cognition & Learning, Social, Emotional Mental Health.

Parent Section:

- All the above activities are suitable for being conducted at home.
- Use a quiet environment and turn off all background noises (television/radio).
- Arrange a time during the day so parent/s can follow child's interest and join in their play.
- Enjoy and have fun 😊