

Copy Boxes

Strategies / Interventions.

A '**copy box**' is an identical set of toys, one box for the child and one box for the adult. The duplication of items allows an adult to **mirror and model** interactions with the child, in a gentle manner through play. Use the child's interests and development level as an indicator in what to place in the boxes.

Through copying, a child can learn and practice valuable new skills such as eye contact, facial expressions, sounds or movements. By watching and imitating the behaviour of others, children can learn how to interact with others, build confidence and navigate social situations. But before a child can copy on adult, they first need the adult to copy them first, to show them how it is done. Acknowledging and mirroring a child's play allows the child to see the adult can see, hear and value them and build up a level of trust and connection with the adult.

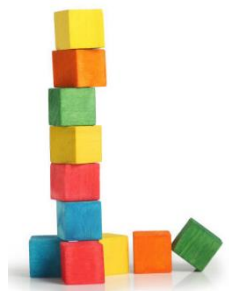
Offer the child the box, wait to see what they use and how they use it and the adult to copy the actions with the duplicate piece of equipment, being down at their level and sitting opposite to encourage eye contact (for a child who finds eye contact difficult the adult can sit alongside them).

The adult should match the level of play, limit their language and not ask questions. Over time adult to use gestures or simple language to narrate some of the actions happening such as 'stirring cup', 'brushing hair'. Always allow the child to lead play.

A copy box is particularly useful if a child tends to play on their own and does not respond to an adults/child's attempts to join their play.

Examples of what a copy box could contain:

- 2 toy cars
- 2 play spoons
- a selection of matching bricks
- 2 dolls/teddies
- 2 balls
- 2 tambourines and 2 shakers



What to look for:

The child may react to show they have noticed the adult copying them (smile, look, point)
Once used to the adult copying, the child may keep watching what the adult does.
They may begin to pause and wait for adult to copy – This is the beginning of **turn taking**

What next: Once trust has been built, adult can gradually enhance play by adding something to new play, modelling and scaffolding new skills.

Links to EYFS: Communication & Language, Personal Social & Emotional Development

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