

Joint Attention

(Rogers, S.J., Dawson, G., & Vismara, L.A., 2012)



What is joint attention?

The ability to share your attention to objects or an interesting event with another individual.

Why is it so important?

Joint attention allows us to share emotions or interesting information about an event with each other. Joint attention is an important building block in communication and language.

How can I increase my child's joint attention skills?

1. Teach your child to give you objects
2. Teach your child to show you objects
3. Teach your child to point to objects

GIVE OBJECTS:

1. Hand your child a container with a favorite toy or snack that they are unable to open by themselves.
2. As they try and open it themselves extend your hand and ask "Need help?"
3. Prompt your child to give you the container, open it, and give it right back to them.
4. Once your child reliably gives you objects to help, start asking them to give you other objects (puzzle pieces, food items)
5. Extend your hand and say "give me". Praise them for giving you the object.

SHOW ME:

1. Chose an object your child will be interested in and say "__ (Child's name) __ look!"
2. After the child makes eye contact with the object do something fun with the object and/or give it to them.
3. Once your child reliably looks at objects have your child show you objects.
4. When your child is playing with an object say "show me" and extend your hand as you did for "give me".
5. When they show you the object do not take it away from them and give lots of praise.

POINT:

1. When your child wants an item start pointing to it and labeling the item before giving it to them.
2. Once your child is following a point, help them practice pointing. Put an object just out of their reach. When they go to grab the object, mold their grab into a point then give them the object.
3. To practice this you can give your child choices and have them point to which item they would like.
4. To practice pointing to show an object point to pictures in books/during routines. Next, start to point without speaking. Wait for eye contact then label. Next, prompt your child to point to pictures then label the item.