



Speech-Language Pathology

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Establishing Joint Attention

- Joint Attention is the sharing of an experience between a child and a partner (Mawhinney, L & McTeague M.S, 2004). Sharing is established by looking at or bringing your communication partner's attention to an object /activity.
- Here are some ideas to help your child respond to your intentions for joint attention.
 1. First choose activities that are motivating to your child (i.e. bubbles, musical toys, action toys such as remote control cars etc).
 - a. If your child does not respond to his/her name independently start here:
 - i. First gain your child's attention by calling their name and tapping them on the arm. Hold the desired item at your eye level and say "Look".
 - ii. Once your child looks at the toy, activate it/or give it to the child.
 - iii. Use excitement in your voice to show that you are enjoying this activity!
 - b. If your child responds to his/her name but does not follow your eye gaze (look in the direction that you are looking), then start here:
 - i. Place the desired item a few feet a way from you, but within view of your child
 - ii. While standing close to your child, call your child's name and say "Look (child's name)" while you look and point in the direction of the toy.
 - iii. Once your child turns his/her head, then activate the toy. Continue to use excitement in your voice to show that you are enjoying this activity!
 - c. If your child responds to his/her name start here:
 - i. First call your child's name and say "Look ____" while you look in the direction of the toy.
 - ii. Once your child looks at the toy, activate the toy (i.e. .blow the bubbles, turn on the music, activate the remote control car).
 - iii. Continue to use excitement in your voice to show that you are enjoying this activity!
- Try a variety of different activities until you find one that best motivates your child. If the child is most interested in physical games (i.e. such as tickling), you can also substitute a family member for the object in the above mentioned activities. Then when your child turns attention to the family member they can run over and tickle them. Remember teaching social interaction needs to be fun.