

Joint/Shared Attention Teaching

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Barnet EYSEND

**This resource has been developed by members of the
Barnet EYSEND Advisory Team**

Joint/Shared Attention Definition



Definition:

Joint attention or **shared attention** is the shared focus of two individuals on an object or activity.

It is achieved when **one individual alerts another to an object by means of eye-gazing, pointing, verbal or non-verbal indications.**

Joint/Shared Attention Targets

Some sample targets for children in Early Years

Target: To join in with a social game such as “row row your boat”, with adult support, 3 out of 5 times across the session

Target: To respond with a vocalisation or a shift in eye gaze to a prompt Ready Steady Go 3 out of 5 times when played

Target: To request more of a favourite activity with a vocalisation a gesture or eye gaze 50% of the time

Target: To respond to the voice of a familiar adult by turning when a name is said, 3 out of 5 times daily

Target: To comment on a shared story or a shared activity across a variety of activities 3 - 5 times during the nursery session with adult support

Target: To shift gaze from object to the adult in a game or activity, 3 times daily

Joint /Shared Attention Strategies



Use motivating toys

Wait & give time

Say child's name

Follow child's interest & join in child's play



Use simple language

Use exaggerated expression & gesture

Play games that are predictable



Use Bucket Time activities

Hold items near your face to encourage eye gaze

Joint /Shared Attention Activities & Tips

Gaze-shifting

- Encourage the child to shift their gaze towards you or a motivating object
- When you notice the child really likes something you can hold the object close to your face
- Gradually move the object further away, saying “look!” as you do so.
- Keep language simple
- Place bubbles away; say “look! Bubbles” and point at the bubbles



Joint Attention activities

- Build a tower and knock down
- Ready, steady go activities using balloons, bubbles or helicopter spinners
- Stop! Go! games: musical instruments, clap hands, stamp feet, splash in water tray ...and STOP!

Joint Attention activities

- Anything the child finds interesting!
- Try spinning tops, wind up toys, squeeze balls, light wands.
- Rolling a ball between you and the child
- Swinging in a blanket
- Tickles and peekaboo
- Car and ball runs



Songs

- Sing songs with predictable parts to allow the child to anticipate the actions or chorus. Pause to give them a chance to vocalise or make a gesture to indicate they want you to continue:
- Row the boat
- Zoom, zoom
- Humpty Dumpty
- Incy Wincy Spider
- All of us are playing together!



Tips

- Follow the child in their play.
- Join the child and repeat a motivating game or activity they are doing e.g. Jumping and other movements
- Copy their sounds and vocalisations.
- This may feel strange at first but just have a go!
- Remember to have fun together!