

Information Sheet

A reminder about Establishing Joint Attention:

The first stage to establishing joint attention is intensive interaction.

This will support the child to:

Learn how to share personal space; learn how to be with another person and then how to attend to another person. This can lead to the child developing concentration and attention, which in turn can lead to learning how to do a sequence of activities with another person.
Remember that this is all dependent on the child's capabilities.

It is important to remember:

This must be led by the child and their interests.

You must join the child with what they are doing.

This process must to be done over a period of time - Remember, there is no rush.

You will know how long to do this for by the response, or lack of response, from the child.

1. To start with you will be copying what the child is doing, exactly - at first this will be for very short periods of time and at a short distance away from the child. This could be copying any physical movement, copying any vocal sounds or any use of language.

For example:

- If the child is silent, then the adult is silent.
- If the child is humming, then the adult is humming.
- If the child is waving their arms, then the adult is waving their arms.
- If the child is sorting and lining up different animals, then the adult will do the same, etc...

Remember - be subtle; look engrossed and happy in what you are doing.

2. After several sessions of copying the child, you may change something that you are copying, only very slightly, to see if the child gives a response in some way. This response could be anything from a tiny verbal sound to turning their head towards you.

For example:

- When sorting and lining up the animals you may put a cow in a different place in your line.
- When you have run out of animals to line up, you may want to name an animal or make an animal noise.
- Maybe remove one type of animal altogether, e.g. sheep, prior to the child arriving. You can hold onto one sheep to see if the child indicates that they want it. The child may, for example, try to take it from you or just look at the sheep, and then you can say 'sheep' as you give it to the child.



Did you get any response, no matter how small?

No - Continue copying. Then choose a different opportunity to change something that you are copying, only very slightly - Did you get any response?

Yes - It is tempting to add more language and more actions - but it is important not to at this stage. Continue copying what the child is doing and include what you did to get this single response - Remain at this stage until the child's response, to your change, is consistent.

Remember: If the child gets frustrated with you, then this is still a response and the child has noticed you are there - which is the beginning of what you want to achieve - if the child continues to get frustrated, step back a little and try again another time.

3. When the child's response to your change is consistent, you add include more - remember to do this gradually overtime, so as not to overload the child. Maybe comment on what the child is doing, e.g. when lining up the animals you can name them, or if the child is interested in numbers you could count the animals.

Continue with this until the child is consistently accepting this stage (remember - not just a one off) - then you can move on to 2-Part Joint Attention.

It is good for the child to engage in this stage within different situations and with different adults.

2-Part Joint Attention

2-Part Joint Attention is when there is just one adult and the child - **without any resources**.

It is important to remember:

This must be led by the child and their interests.

You must join the child with what they are doing.

This process must to be done over a period of time - Remember, there is no rush.

You will know how long to do this for by the response or lack of response from the child.

The adult starts the activity and then pauses and waits a few seconds for the child to respond to show they are giving some form of attention, even for a brief second. This response could be anything from a tiny verbal sound to turning their head towards you. This response shows the adult that the child is interested in the adult and/or what the adult is doing. The adult can then continue with the activity.

Remember - if you don't get a response at this time, continue with pausing every now and then.

This will lead onto purposeful communication from the child.

For example:



Adult sings 🎵 'The Wheels on the Bus Go....' and then pauses and waits a few seconds for a response from the child, before continuing with the song.

Adult sings 🎵 'Incy, Wincy Spider' while gently walking their fingers on the child's arm. Adult to randomly stop singing and pauses their fingers on the child's arm to wait for a response before continuing.



Adult joins the child in the garden when the child is running around. When the child stops, the adult says 'Ready, Steady...' in an exciting voice and then pauses and waits for a response before the adult says, 'Go'. Both adult and child could then run.

At the end of a short activity, if the child is still interested, maybe encourage the child to request 'more' - this could be verbally, with a gesture or maybe using the sign for 'more'. You may need to model hand over hand initially.



Continue with this until the child is consistently accepting this stage (remember - not just a one off) - then you can move on to 3-Part Joint Attention.

It is good for the child to engage in this stage within different situations and with different adults.

3-Part Joint Attention

This is the same as 2-part attention, but you include a resource.

Within this stage, the child is encouraged to focus on both the adult and the activity and this will be noticeable from them looking between the object and the adult to communicate their shared interest.

It is important to remember:

This must be led by the child and their interests.

You must join the child with what they are doing.

This process must to be done over a period of time - Remember, there is no rush.

You will know how long to do this for by the response or lack of response from the child.

Reminder - The adult starts the activity and then pauses and waits a few seconds for the child to respond to show they are giving some form of attention, even for a brief second. This response could be anything from a tiny verbal sound to turning their head towards you. This response shows the adult that the child is interested in the adult and/or what the adult is doing. The adult can then continue with the activity.

Remember - if you don't get a response at this time, continue with pausing every now and then.

This will lead onto purposeful communication from the child.

For example:

When playing the Ready Steady Go game, an adult would join the child playing with a car. Adult says 'Ready, Steady...' in an exciting voice and then pauses and waits for a response before saying, 'Go' and pushing a car towards the child.



When the child is looking at a book. Adult joins the child and when the adult is reading or describing the pages in the book, the adult will pause and wait for a response before continuing.

It is good for the child to engage in this stage within different situations and with different adults.

Remember:

- ❖ **You must always join the child with what they are doing.**
- ❖ **A response could be anything from a tiny verbal sound to turning their head towards you.**