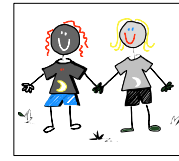
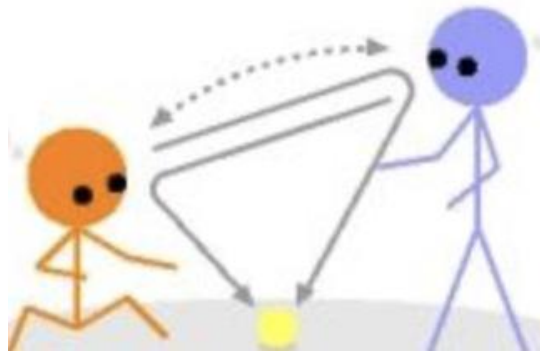


Information and advice from:



**Early Development and
Inclusion Team**
Supporting Inclusion at the
Early Years Foundation Stage

Joint Attention



Joint attention occurs when two people share interest in an object or event, and they *know* that they are *both* interested in it.

Joint attention should emerge at around 9 months of age and be very well-established by 18 months of age.

Joint attention is important for social, cognitive, and language development.

When we think about joint attention, we think about it in two ways:

Responding:

A child might respond to her parent pointing at, for example, a toy car. The parent looks at and points to a toy car and says “look at that car!” The child responds by following the parent’s gaze and point, and so looks at the car. At about 12 to 14 months of age, the child will start to check back with the parent, alternating her gaze between the car and the parent, confirming that they are both still interested in the car.

Initiating:

A child might initiate joint attention. For example, a child is holding a toy. She uses gestures (points to the toy, holds up the toy) plus gazes (looks at the parent and then back at the toy as if to say to the parent “hey, look at my toy!”) to encourage the parent to look at the toy too. As the child grows a little older, she may add a vocalisation as an additional way to capture the parent’s attention so the parent will look at the toy.

How to help your child develop joint attention:

Focus on faces and developing eye contact.



This can be hard for some children. Try:

- as much as possible, be at the child's eye level.
- stand in your child's line of sight
- hold objects up to your eyes when preparing to give them to your child – two inches from your face, right in front of the bridge of your nose. Try this using exciting toys and objects – maybe a toy that spins or lights – to catch your child's attention

Focus on play and turn-taking

Work on becoming a play and turn taking partner with your child -

- with toys such as marble runs or balls
- with you – in physical 'people games' like 'round and round the garden', tickle games, peek a boo.

Focus on 'matching' your child.

Do what your child does and say what your child says.

- play as your child does – move as your child moves, make sounds like theirs.

