



Daily experience of playing alongside other children at home or in a playgroup.

## Turn-taking Games

- These are games where your child learns to share and make timely responses with an adult.
- Singing rhymes where rhythmic body movements are involved, e.g. row the boat - facing each other.
- Games with anticipation - 'peek a boo', 'ready, steady, go'!
- Encourage shared vocalisation. Initially you may imitate your child's babbling sounds while you are playing together. Your child may stop and listen first. Eventually, s/he will learn to babble back and you can establish a sound turn-taking game by the sounds you make.
- You can do the same kind of game with pairs of musical instruments so try and buy two of several things.
- Sharing a toy:
  - Like rolling a car or a ball to and fro
  - Sharing blowing bubbles in the bath water
  - Sharing a photo album of important people in him/her life
  - Sharing a game of picture lotto with a 'friend'



## Pretend Games

Help your child understand what pretend means by pretending yourself. You can:

- Pretend to fall asleep. Child can be seen to wake you up.
- Pretend to drink out of toy cup. It is hot?
- Encourage your toddler to do the same. Can s/he offer a drink to you or teddy?
- Can s/he feed teddy with a play dough cake?
- Can s/he extend this to develop a story line and can s/he vary it with different props.



## Exploratory Play

Encourage your child to feel comfortable handling a variety of sensory play materials. You may need to show him/her first.

- Play dough, water, lentils, shaving foam. These can be used with more sophisticated toys to develop pretend.

- Make different noises with musical toys and household equipment.
- Have two sets of the following: keys, a spoon in a cup, scissors and paper, a bell, etc. Put a screen up, separate the toys so there are 1 of each on either side of the table. Can s/he match the sound you make?



## Sharing Eye Contact

Invent physical games which help to extend shared eye contact to indicate pleasure and request for any activity to continue.

- Look at each other in a mirror.
- Swing your child in your arms and wait for eye contact before repeating.
- When your child indicates s/he wants something which is out of reach, confirm / reinforce the request by pointing and directing him/her gaze to the object.

## Tuning into Voice

Provide a quiet time in a special room when you and s/he are together with a few toys for about 15 minutes each day. You will allow your child to lead the play. You will copy him/her and add on to what s/he is doing. Gently adapt him/her play if it becomes repetitive.

Use toys which are of interest but will not encourage repetitiveness or solitary play.

Use toys which invite you to share, e.g. water play, musical toys, ball, car, books, box, bricks, etc.

Let your child choose without your help then you may respond by joining him/her and copying what s/he does.



Comment directly on him/her every action and need. We call this verbal mapping.

Use 1, 2 or 3 word sentences, e.g. "\* is pouring", "\* says "Go away"".

Avoid questions unless your child is looking for a toy then say "Where's the ball?".

If you develop a verbal mapping approach in these settings you will find you will use it more generally. This encourages your child to listen and copy what you say. It also takes any anxiety away from speaking because s/he knows you are no longer insisting.

## Gesture and Pointing

When your child is confidently looking and sharing your attention, you may accompany your speech with pointing, exaggerated gesture and signs. By repeating gestures at appropriate times, e.g. signalling 'drink', your child will learn to understand both the meaning of the word and the significance of the gesture. Children often start to use gestures to help them share attention and to overcome word finding and articulation problems when they first learn to talk.

## Making a Real Impact on the World Before Sentences Appear

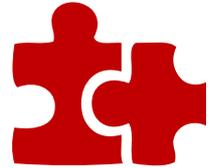
Provide opportunities for your child's every movement or action or sound to have maximum impact on you and others. This will help your child's signals to become meaningful and should encourage more intentional vocalisation and real words, e.g.

1. Child bangs drum - adult jumps
2. Child 'screams' - adult wakes up.
3. Child claps or stamps floor - adult copies.
4. Child says stop - adult stand still or stops playing musical instrument.

## Helping Understanding

Help your child understand the world by:

- Make your instructions visual
- Keeping to a routine.
- Introducing any changes by using objects of reference, e.g. hold your child's coat if you intend to go out. Bring a book if you want your child to join you for a story.
- Let him/her watch other children before taking part, e.g. group activity, toileting, etc.
- Use gesture and short sentences as before. Photos sometimes help.
- First gestures could be - more, drink, car, home, soon, stop, dinner, sleep, etc.
- Limit choice to two. Hold up bottles and say "do you want orange or blackcurrant?"
- Make a visual timetable. Take photos of all your child's daily activities like breakfast, toilet, bath time, shopping, park, visitors, etc. Put the photos on a wall so your child can see what is going to happen. As each activity finishes take down a photo and put into a 'finished box'.



## Encouraging Cooperation

Because your child cannot predict what is going to happen s/he will try to impose routine on him/her own life. S/he may resist change:

- Acknowledge him/her anxiety and comfort him/her.
- Make it clear that you know what s/he wants before insisting otherwise. It is not helpful to have too much control but s/he will be less distressed if s/he knows you have understood his/her request.
- Use phrases like 'NOW' and 'NEXT'
- Tackle one problem at a time.
- Children are often more anxious and more resistant to co-operation in over stimulating environments. You may need to change the environment rather than the child, e.g. to a smaller playgroup.
- Give your child a few minutes to adjust to change task, e.g. count to 5 first, etc.

## Drawing

Children with language problems may find representational drawing difficult so:

- Choose objects of importance and draw round them together.
- Impute meanings into your child's own 'scribbles' by adding on, e.g. two lines can make a tree.
- Copy draw a favourite toy twice. Colour one in, encourage your child to help you with the other.
- Draw two pictures of a familiar object. One will have a missing part, e.g. car without wheels which s/he will try and fill in. Repeat with different parts missing.
- If you share a diary between home and nursery this should include photocopied small photos of activities ticked off. These will indicate exactly what your child did at nursery which s/he can share with adults.



### **For more advice and activities:**

Please contact your own Speech and Language Therapist.

### **For more information read about:**

TEACCH Programmes

InTensive Interaction – David Hewitt

Hanen Programme

Sunrise Programme

Social Stories – Carol Gray