



Social Communication: Joint Attention 4a [JA4a]

Child follows a point to more distant objects/events just to share interest in the objects/events

Purpose

- To teach your child to follow your point to an object that is out of reach in order to pay attention to you and the object.

Description

This occurs when another person points to an object that is out of reach, and the child follows the other person's point to the more distant object and looks at the other person. Following a point to a more distant object shows the child is learning to follow the line of sight in pointing and beginning to understand that pointing can reference objects that are farther away.

- Child looks when someone points to a firetruck driving by
- Someone points to a squirrel in the yard and the child looks
- Child looks at a painting the teacher is pointing to at the museum

Activities

- *Around the House:* Put one of your child's toys out of reach. Point to the toy and comment about the toy. For example, "Look at your train! How did your train get way up there?" Encourage your child to follow your point to the train. You can also point to other common household items like a photo on the wall, a pet eating, an appliance on the kitchen counter, etc.
- *Outside Time:* While playing outside with your child or going for a walk, point to objects that are out of reach. For example, point to a dog and say "Look at that cute dog."



Encourage your child to follow your point. You can do this with various objects outside including a bird, squirrel, cat, mailbox, flag, car, bike, person, flower, leaf, etc.

- *Shopping*: While at the store with your child, point to his or her favorite foods to show him/her. You also might see “silly” items that you can point out to your child in order to share interest.

Strategies

- *Accompany your communications with intonation, pointing, and non-verbal gestures* – add extra emphasis on sounds, facial expressions, and gestures when pointing something out to your child to share interest
- *Be animated* – be loud and silly when pointing to something for your child to look at
- *Reward your child* – whether it is giving the child the object or making the child participate in the event (for example, playing hide-and-seek with other children) and exaggerate your response (“yes! It is a PINK ball!”)
- *Consider what your child likes* – select objects that are likely to attract your child’s interest

Suggested Toys

- Kite
- Bubbles
- Paper plane
- Playground equipment

Goal Mastery

An ASAP Goal is mastered if your child meets ALL of the following criteria:

- Shows the skill at least three times
- Shows the skill during different activities or in different settings such as during snack time, during playtime, or at the grocery store.
- Shows the skill with minimal help or support from an adult