



Social Communication: Joint Attention 5 [JA5]

Child follows gaze of another person to objects/events just to share interest

Purpose

- To teach your child to look at something that you are looking at.

Description

This occurs when another person looks at an object or event in the immediate environment and the child looks at the person and then looks at the object or event. Following the gaze of another person shows the child is beginning to understand that simply looking at an object or event can be used to share interest or engagement with another person.

- While playing in the block area, the teacher says, "Look what she is building" and then looks in the direction of a peer. The child follows the gaze to look at the peer and his/her tower.
- While on a nature walk, a peer says, "Look at the big bird" and looks in the direction of the big bird. The child follows his/her peer's gaze and looks at the bird.

Activities

- *Outside Time:* While playing outside with your child or going for a walk, name an object and turn to look at the object. For example, say "Look at that big red bird" then turn your head and eyes to look at the bird. Encourage your child to follow your gaze to the bird. You can do this with various objects outside including a squirrel, cat, mailbox, flag, car, bike, person, flower, color, leaf, etc.



- *Shopping:* While in a store, name an object and turn your head and eyes to look at the object. For example, say “Look at those Elmo shoes” then turn your head and eyes to look at the shoes. Encourage your child to follow your gaze to the shoes. You can do this with various items including clothing, food, toys, or a baby.
- *Playtime:* In an area where your child frequently plays, place some favorite toys within sight but out of reach at a time your child is out of the area. Then, when your child is next playing in the area, name one of the toys and turn to look at the object. For example, say, “Look at your train” then turn your head and look at the toy train. Encourage your child to follow your gaze to the toy. When your child does so, reward your child by getting the train down so he or she can play with it.

Strategies

- *Be animated* – widen your eyes and make surprised faces when looking at something you’d like to share with your child
- *Reward your child* – whether it is giving the child the object or helping the child participate in the event (e.g., playing hide-and-seek with other children, getting picked up by grandpa), while exaggerating your response (e.g., yes! It is a PINK ball!)
- *Consider what your child likes* – select objects and activities that are likely to attract your child’s interest

Suggested Toys

- Dress up clothes
- Flowers
- Blocks
- Toy foods
- Craft supplies

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