



## **Social Communication: Joint Attention 6 [JA6]**

**Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event**

### **Purpose**

- To encourage your child to share an object or event with you by pointing at the object/event or telling you about the object/event AND looking at you.

### **Description**

This occurs when the child uses gestures, vocalizations, or verbalizations while making eye contact with another person to share an object or event of interest. Combining these various modalities with eye contact shows that the child is furthering his understanding of sharing engagement with others' by combining multiple forms of communication.

- The child looks at another person, points to his/her peer, and says, "Look at Tommy's new shirt"
- The child looks at another person, points at a picture of a "scary" animal and gasps to share attention and his feelings about the animal

### **Activities**

- *Outside Time:* While playing outside with your child or going for a walk, name an object and wait for your child to respond. For example, say "Look at the rabbit." Encourage your child to either point to the rabbit or comment ("I see the rabbit") and to look at you. If your child looks but doesn't respond after a couple of seconds, then model pointing and commenting as you want your child to do. You can do this with various objects.



- *Special Event:* While at a special event, like fireworks, say, “Look at the pretty fireworks,” then wait for your child to respond. Encourage your child to either point to the sky or comment (“it’s big”) and to look at you. Other examples of special events when you can work on this skill are: a restaurant, an amusement park, farm, county or state fair, zoo, etc. Again, if your child doesn’t respond, first try modeling pointing and commenting, as you want your child to do. If your child still is not responding, then try prompting the child to point and give him or her a verbal directive, for example, “Say, ‘I see a pig.’”
- *Around the House:* As your child’s skills improves, you can wait for something exciting to happen or make it happen (“accidentally knock an object/toy of the table”) and see if your child will point it out to you. If s/he doesn’t, point and comment and look at the child (“uh oh”).

### Strategies

- *Wait with anticipation* – make faces and gestures to show your child you are waiting for them to show you something. Model pointing to an object that you observe your child attending to
- *Expand to show your child the next developmental step* – when your child makes a gesture or sound to share something, model pairing the communication with looking and/or additional language
- *Reward your child* – whether it is giving the child the object or having the child participate in the event that they pointed to. Exaggerate your response.
- *Use follow-in directives* – using your child’s interests and/or items your child is playing with, direct your child to vocalize about and look at another person to share items with you and/or another person

### Suggested Toys

- Toy animals/dinosaurs
- Dolls/action figures
- Toy foods
- Bubbles
- Spinning toys

### 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