

Gravesham Early Years Specialist  
Teaching & Learning Service



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**Joint Attention**

Joint attention is the ability to focus on the same thing (object, person, event) with another person. This means that three parties are involved in joint attention, the child, the object of focus and another person.

Therefore in order for joint attention to happen, the child needs to be able to gain, maintain, and shift his attention.

**Attention and Listening**

Including Ready, Steady, Go.

### Why is attention and listening important?

It has an effect on all areas of learning; if a child has difficulties listening and paying attention, they will be unable to process information they are given.

### How does attention and listening help language development?

It forms the basis of understanding; if a child has difficulties listening and paying attention, they will be unable to understand what is said to them. A child must learn to listen to the spoken language in order to understand and use words and sentences.

### What can I do to help?

Gain eye contact with the child before giving them an instruction

Get down to the child's level

Say the child's name to gain their attention

Slow down your rate of speech and use pauses.

Minimise noise and visual distractions

Use gestures and objects as cues to gain the child's attention and help them to understand

Use simple sentences; break down instructions into smaller parts

### What activities can I use to help?

Ready steady go games - encourage the child to listen to a verbal instruction, sit and wait for 'go' before they do an activity.

These are key skills to support communication and language by encouraging gesture, a look towards the other person or child to use the word 'go'. This helps child to learn that they can use gesture, a look or words to request and supports social skills and encourages turn taking.

### How to Play:

Have a wind up toy, car, pop up toy, musical instruments, balloon, bubbles or ball. Anything which can create an action.

Gain interest by allowing the child to see the toy and the action.

Get the toy ready saying, "ready..."

Build anticipation with your voice and facial expression "steady..."

Wait for the child to notice, before saying "go!"

Release the toy. Repeat.

Use toys and activities that the child enjoys, keep the game exciting and most of all, have fun.



### Other activities to play ready, steady, go:

Roll a ball/car between you and your child

Build a tower of bricks or stacking cups together and knock it over

Blowing up and letting go of a balloon

Click-clack track

Blowing and popping bubbles

Chasing a child

Tickle games



### Other attention and listening activities:

Action Songs and stories - encourage the child to sit in a group and join in with songs or stories. Pause before the ends of sentences and wait for the child to fill in the gaps. "The wheels on the ...(bus)", "We're going on a .....(bear hunt)".

