

Shared Attention

Shared attention activities provide opportunities to build relationships and enhance communication with a play based focus. These type of activities can be particularly useful for children with social and communication difficulties although are beneficial for all children.

When planning to undertake an activity it is fundamental that the play will motivate and engage the child. However, sometimes children have a specific way of playing with their favourite resource and may find it difficult to explore alternative methods of play. Examples of shared activities could include: bubble blowing and popping, building and collapsing towers, rolling a ball or car to each other, Mr Potato head, jigsaws etc. Staff should think of vocabulary they would like to highlight during the activity or the communication they want to achieve. This may start with the child looking at the member of staff before the member of staff rolls the ball or blows the bubble etc.

These activities work best when done frequently for less time i.e. twice a day for 5 minutes will be better than once a day for 10 minutes. Remember to encourage communication and interaction. Staff should encourage turn taking, this may need a visual cue at first i.e. passing the box of bricks or bubble wand. Remember to make the activity achievable and sign and say finished when at the end of the activity.

