

Section 1.1

Encouraging the child to respond when his/her name is called



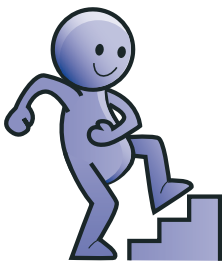
Why is this important?

It's the first stage along the way to being able to attend to increasingly more complex things as children learn the skills of social interaction. Responding to human speech is a very important step towards becoming a competent communicator. Turning to sound is a key skill because it is part of the foundations for building listening and attention skills.

What to do

- Call the child's name using exaggerated intonation.
- When the child turns to (look at) you, praise the child, smile and give some kind of a reward – a toy, a piece of food, a tickle or perhaps a kiss.

N.B. The reward is important because it shows that there is a *reason* for responding. Eventually we want the social contact to be reward enough.



Step up

- Reduce the prompts (i.e. don't turn the child's head towards you or use toys alongside name calling). Make sure you still reward when the child responds.
- Move a little way away – more concentration is required in order to focus on you.
- Place yourself so that the child needs to actively turn to find you.

Step down

- Use a 'noisy' toy (e.g. bells following the calling of the child's name). Gradually reduce the use of the 'noisy' toy and encourage responding to name only.
- Prompt by gently turning the child towards you as you call the name.

