

## Section 1.4

# Following the movement of an object and an adult's gaze

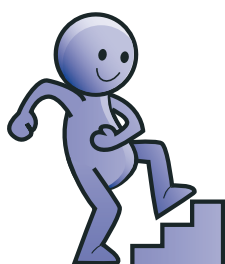


### Why is this important?

It helps children begin to focus on something of the *adult's* choosing (e.g. if the adult points to a 'cat' in the garden). This is critical for the development of joint attention. Joint attention is essential if children are going to learn new words and develop their language and communication skills. In this way, children become aware of where adults are looking and they look at the same thing too. Then adults name, describe and explain. It enables children and adults to talk about things that are a distance away too.

### What to do

- Start by using objects that move and are eye-catching or make a noise (e.g. a brightly coloured ball or a car that goes 'brrmm').
- Roll the ball/car slowly across the floor.
- If the child follows the movement, give lots of praise.
- If tracking the object is difficult, help by prompting the child to turn towards the object.
- When the child is following the movement, put something just out of reach. Get attention by calling his/her name – then look to the object. When the child looks, praise and reward by handing over the item.



### Step up

- Use less pointing.
- Encourage the child to follow your gaze to things further away or less obvious.

### Step down

- *Point* to the object as you look at it.
- Pointing could begin as touching the object and then moving your finger away a few centimetres.
- Don't put the object too far away from the child.
- Move the object slightly to encourage looking, or make the toy make a noise.
- Use brightly coloured objects or those with strong contrasts (e.g. black and white).

