

Section 1.8

Learning to reach and point



Why is this important?

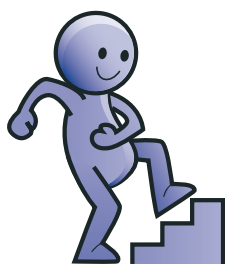
Reaching and pointing are an essential part of early language development. They are not only early ways to ask for things but also part of understanding cause and effect (e.g. if children reach for the mobile it makes a noise).

What to do

- Put a mobile or activity arch above the child and encourage him/her to reach for the toys.

N.B. remember to place the toy close enough as his/her reach will be limited.

- Reward the effort with lots of praise!
- Encourage pointing by watching what interests the child – point and name it yourself.
- If the child reaches for something, try to mould his/her hand into a pointing shape (closed fist with index finger out) and then make sure you reward by passing across the desired item!



Step up

- Sit on the floor – support the child if necessary – and put out an array of sound-making toys.
- Encourage the child to reach for the toys and then reward by making the toy squeak, jingle, etc.
- Gradually increase the distance (put the toys further away) so the child is encouraged to either reach further or point.

Step down

- If the child doesn't reach out, encourage him/her by showing what the toy can do.
- Alternatively, gently guide the child to reach out (for the mobile, etc.).
- Tie a ribbon to the child's wrist or ankle so that every time he/she moves the mobile moves.

