

Other things to try: 1b

Being a social play partner!



Why is this important?

Besides demonstrating how much fun this can be, social play provides valuable opportunities for imitating, learning new skills and being able to practise those skills in a safe and natural environment – all significant foundations for developing good communication.

What to do

- Sit the child on your lap facing you when you:
 - ★ Sing nursery rhymes.
 - ★ Look at picture books together.
 - ★ Play hand games/finger rhymes (e.g. ‘Pat a Cake’, ‘This Little Piggy’, ‘Round and Round the Garden’).
 - ★ Have cuddles and tickles.
 - ★ Talk about what you’re going to do today.
 - ★ Play ‘Peek-a-Boo’.
- Copy any movements/noises, etc. that the child makes. Gradually the child should begin to respond and become an active partner in play.
- Sit on the floor and play with a toy together. It doesn’t matter what you choose/let the child choose. Use lots of enthusiasm and simple language related to what he/she is doing or looking at to capture his/her interest.
- Play on a swing – this is an excellent use of proprioceptive and kinaesthetic senses.



Step up

- Stop every now and again to watch what the child is doing (e.g. whilst playing peek-a-boo, pause after each turn. Does the child make a noise which you could interpret as ‘again?’). This is an important use of communication.

Step down

- Do familiar activities often: some children need lots of repetition before they begin to respond.
- Actively encourage copying of your simple actions and intonation.
- Provide physical help and gestural support if necessary.
- Simple sentences and lively intonation help to keep things interesting!

