

Section 2.7

Pointing to things or people which are interesting

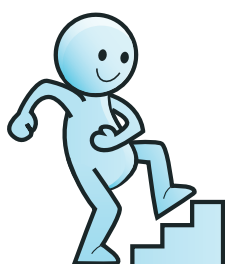


Why is this important?

Pointing is very powerful as children learn to 'ask' for what they want! Although non-verbal, pointing can serve a variety of communication functions – to initiate conversation, to make a request for something, or to draw another's attention to something which captures interest. As children point and adults name or comment on the object/event of interest, vocabulary and understanding can dramatically increase. Learning to point often signals a major step forward in asking for things and commenting on items in the environment.

What to do

- When out and about or playing at home, comment on what the child is looking at: *you* take the lead sometimes by encouraging him/her to look and point to things you name.
- Point things out in books: as you turn the page, pause to see if the child points to something, then name it immediately so that the child's understanding of words can be increased.
- Put something of high interest out of reach so the child has to point to get it. When you respond to the pointing, name the thing as you hand it over.
- Praise the child for 'asking' for the drink or 'showing' you the dog.



Step up

- As the child points to what captures his/her interest, pause to give an opportunity for a spontaneous attempt to name it as well.

Step down

- Be at the same height so you can adopt the child's eye view as you look and point.
- If the child finds it difficult to point, then take his/her hand and physically prompt to point to something interesting as you name it.
- Demonstrate by pointing to things yourself when out for a walk.
- Get the child's attention by calling his/her name and then pointing to something.
- Point to objects that are close to the child rather than an aeroplane far away in the sky.
- Stimulate interest by putting high interest items (bright and colourful or noisy) just out of reach.

