

Other things to try: 2c

Developing eye contact

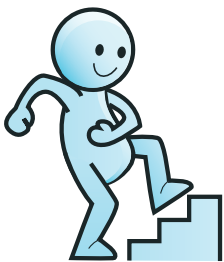


Why is this important?

Eye contact is important for the development of social interaction. It is important to look at people when they are talking as this shows that you are listening. As a speaker, it is important to use good eye contact as it enables you to monitor what the listener is feeling. Using the right amount of eye contact is a learned skill.

What to do

- Use one of the following materials:
 - ★ Finger puppets
 - ★ Bubbles
 - ★ Party blowers
 - ★ Silly hats/glasses/face masks
 - ★ Pop-up cone dolly
 - ★ Squeaky toy
 - ★ Making funny faces/noises
- Encourage the child to look at you by holding one of the above materials near to your face. Call the child's name and when he/she looks at you, give a reward (e.g. bubbles, party blower, pop-up dolly).
- Praise verbally by saying 'Good looking!'



Step up

- Encourage longer periods of eye contact before rewarding.
- Encourage looking at you and looking at the toy/game in turn.

Step down

- Make sure the reward is instant following eye contact.
- To begin with, praise fleeting eye contact and reward.
- Use the reward to gain eye contact (e.g. holding the bubbles in the child's gaze and then moving the bottle up to your face. A child may follow the bottle to your face with his/her eyes and then you can use the bubbles as a reward immediately).
- Always play face-to-face with the child, on his/her level (i.e. if they're sitting on the floor, do the same).
- Gently lift the child's chin to bring his/her face in line with yours.

