

How to help your child interact and play with you – Part 2

The following are only **suggestions** and will not necessarily apply to all children. Determining **if** or **how** to apply these strategies should be based on the child's age, communication skills, cognitive skills, and ability to handle frustration and anxiety. Work closely with your ASD Case Manager and/or other professionals to determine which would be appropriate.

Use Books to Create a Shared Social Activity

- 1. Sit your child in your lap or at a small table and show them a few books with simple, interesting pictures (e.g. books with colors, shapes, or animals are often favorites). Notice where their eyes go and what images/contrasts/colors, etc. grab their attention.
- 2. Put a word or sound to the picture(s) your child likes to look at. Touch and point to the picture repeatedly. Many children will respond with a smile and/or eye contact when they realize that you see the same thing that they see.
- 3. Use your voice in playful ways to make the book "come alive" (e.g. make animal sounds, crashing sounds, etc.)
- 4. Talk *only about as much as your child talks at first.* Most adults feel uncomfortable with this. Resist the temptation to:
 - Just read the story while your child passively listens.
 - Constantly ask your child questions about the story
- 5. If your child likes when you read and is familiar with the book or story, pause frequently at "key moments" in the story to encourage more interaction:
 - Pause during exciting moments or favorite lines in the story (e.g. adult says "I'll huff, and I'll ____, and I'll ____ your house down!")
 - Pause just before turning the page
 - Pause after you've made a sound or read a word or line in the book that made your child smile (e.g. "CRASH!"; "BOOM!"). They may try to vocalize or make the sound with you, or let you know that they want you to do it again.



6. Remember: Use books as a tool to help your child *interact with you* (rather than passively looking at the book and listening). You want your child to pay at least as much attention to *you* as the book!

Additional Resources

- Koegel, Robert L., Koegel, Lynn K. (2006). Pivotal Response Treatments for Autism: Communication, Social & Academic Development. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing
- MacDonald, J., Stoika, P. (2007). Play to Talk: A Practical Guide to Help Your Late-Talking Child Join the Conversation. Madison, WI: Kiddo Publishing Co.
- Mahoney, G., MacDonald, J. (2007). The Responsive Teaching Curriculum for Parents and professionals. Austin, Texas: PRO-ED, Inc.
- Potter, C., Whittaker, C. (2001). Enabling Communication in Children with Autism. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd.
- Prizant, B. M., Wetherby, A. M., Rubin, E., Laurent, A. C., & Rydell, P. J. (2005). The SCERTS Model: A comprehensive educational approach for children with autism spectrum disorders. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
- Quill, K. (2000) Do-Watch-Listen-Say: Social and Communication Intervention for Children with Autism. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
- Sussman, F. (1999). More than Words: Helping Parents Promote Communication and Social Skills in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Toronto, ON; The Hanen Centre. (Accompanying DVD also highly recommended). Available at www.hanen.org
- Wolfberg, P.J. (2003) Peer play and the autism spectrum: The art of guiding children's socialization and imagination. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Co.

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