

Goal and Activity Sharing Form

from School Staff to Parents

Date: _____

Dear _____,

This week, we are working on the following social-communication and play goals with _____.

Social-Communication Goal: _____

Here are some activities we are trying with your child in the classroom to target this goal:

Here are some suggestions for you to try in targeting this goal at home:

Play Goal: _____

Here are some activities we are trying with your child in the classroom to target this goal:

Here are some suggestions for you to target this goal at home:

Goal and Activity Sharing Form

from Parents to School Staff

Date: _____

Dear _____,

This week, we are working on the following social-communication and play goals at home with _____.

Social-Communication Goal: _____

Here are some activities we have found to be effective in targeting this goal at home:

Here are some things we are struggling with or would like more information on:

Play Goal: _____

Here are some activities we have found to be effective in targeting this goal at home:

Here are some things we are struggling with or would like more information on:

Social Interaction Goals

Social interaction describes the back-and-forth exchanges between you and your child. When you engage in these face-to-face games, your child is learning to communicate.

Social Interaction Goal 1. During face-to-face games, physical activities, or routines, your child watches you closely

The purpose of this goal is to help your child interact with you more often and more consistently. It will also teach your child that when s/he looks at you and shows interest in a fun game or routine, you will continue to play the game or routine with him/her. Play any of the games listed below with your child (or similar games that you and your child enjoy). In the middle of the game, pause to see if your child will look at you. If your child doesn't look, wait a few seconds before doing the action again. The idea is to get your child to show you s/he wants to keep going by looking at you. Even if your child doesn't look, keep doing the action and waiting in between actions to try to get him/her to look. Continue to play the game as long as your child is interested. If your child does not seem interested in a certain game or does not like it, try another game.

Suggested activities:

- Peek-a-boo
- Tickling
- Pushing child on a swing
- Itsy Bitsy Spider
- Ring-around-the-Rosie
- Lifting child over your head

Notes/Suggestions:

Social Interaction Goals

Social interaction describes the back-and-forth exchanges between you and your child. When you engage in these face-to-face games, your child is learning to communicate.

Social Interaction Goal 2. During face-to-face games, physical activities, or routines, after a brief pause your child shows wanting the game to continue

The purpose of this goal is to help your child learn to look at you and say a sound or word(s), or make a gesture to let you know that s/he would like you to keep a fun game or routine going. For example, after bouncing your child on your lap and stopping, s/he bounces to show you to do it again. Or after you take a turn in peek-a-boo, your child pushes the blanket toward you (or pulls on your arm) to do it again.

Suggested activities:

- Use activities similar to those used in Social Interaction 1 (e.g., peek-a-boo, tickling, pushing child on a swing, Itsy Bitsy Spider, Ring-around-the-Rosie, lifting child over your head), but pause in the middle of the activity before continuing to encourage your child to look at you, vocalize, use a word, or gesture.
- Play Ring-around-the-Rosie two times. Once you know that your child is having fun and engaged in the game, start the song and movement a third time, but stop in the middle of the song and pause for several seconds. As soon as your child looks at you, speaks, or gestures, finish the song and movement. If your child does not look at you, speak, or gesture, provide a prompt such as, “Hey!” (to get your child to look at you) or “Do you want to play more?” or placing your hands in a position to play the game and wait to see if your child will touch or move your hands.

Notes/Suggestions:

Social Interaction Goals

Social interaction describes the back-and-forth exchanges between you and your child. When you engage in these face-to-face games, your child is learning to communicate.

Social Interaction Goal 3. Your child plays back-and-forth games with objects or actions

This goal will help your child engage with you through sharing objects and copying actions. You can use just about any activity or toy that your child likes to try to encourage back-and-forth exchanges of objects and imitation. The main idea is to get your child to take turns with you playing with objects or in imitation.

Suggested activities:

- During bath time, push a boat over to your child then encourage your child to push the boat back to you. Make fun motor noises and make waves for the boat. You can also use other bath toys like animals or bath crayons to take turns and encourage your child to imitate your actions.
- Take turns making faces in a mirror that is large enough for both of your faces. Stick out your tongue and wait to see if your child will also stick out his/her tongue. Put your thumb on your nose and wiggle your fingers. Wait to see if your child imitates you. Put your thumbs in your ears and wiggle your fingers. Wait to see if your child repeats after you. Suck in your cheeks and make fish lips, and see if your child will do the same thing. Any kinds of actions, sounds, or gestures will do.
- Toss a ball or bean bag to your child from 1-2 feet away. Encourage your child to throw the ball or bean bag back to you. Continue to toss the ball or bean bag back-and-forth for several minutes. Sometimes having another child or person join the game may help your child see how to do it.

Notes/Suggestions:

Social Interaction Goals

Social interaction describes the back-and-forth exchanges between you and your child. When you engage in these face-to-face games, your child is learning to communicate.

Social Interaction Goal 4. Your child initiates familiar games or routines

The purpose of this goal is to encourage your child to show you that s/he wants you to play a familiar game with him/her. You can play games like those used in Social Interaction 1, such as tickle and peek-a-boo. For example, first play peek-a-boo using a blanket to cover your head and your child's head. After several turns covering your head and covering your child's head, put the blanket next to you on the floor or sofa and start a tickle game. After a few moments of playing the tickle game, stop tickling your child and pause to see if s/he will pick up the blanket to initiate the peek-a-boo game. Sometimes having another child or person pick up the blanket and start the game with you may help your child see how to do it.

Suggested activities:

- Peek-a-boo and tickling game
- Swinging and Ring-around-the-Rosie
- Playing with cars and building with blocks

Notes/Suggestions:

Social Interaction Goals

Social interaction describes the back-and-forth exchanges between you and your child. When you engage in these face-to-face games, your child is learning to communicate.

Social Interaction Goal 5. Your child expands games or routines

The activities for this goal will help your child interact socially in more varied ways, that means your child will learn to play a variety of games and activities with several different people (e.g., you, your spouse, siblings, grandparents). For example, it is important that your child is able to play social games with you and also with other family members and peers. To target this goal, you will need to enlist the help of others in your family including your partner, other children, and grandparents. Your child should also be able to take part in games in different ways—for example, be able to start a game as well as to join in a game that you start, or be able to chase you as well as to run when you chase him/her.

Suggested activities:

- Ring-around-the-Rosie: Begin a game of Ring-around-the-Rosie then have another person join in the song and dance. Or, if you are the one who usually starts the song and dance, wait for your child to start the song and dance.
- Encourage your child to push you (or another child/person) on a swing.
- Chase game: First chase and catch your child. Then change the game and run away from your child, looking back and encouraging your child to chase and catch you. Make it easy for your child to succeed (for example, by not running too far before you let your child catch up to you), and make the game fun either way (for example, give your child a hug or a swing or a tickle when one person catches the other one).

Notes/Suggestions:

Social Interaction Goals

Social interaction describes the back-and-forth exchanges between you and your child. When you engage in these face-to-face games, your child is learning to communicate.

Social Interaction Goal 6. Your child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue

The purpose of this goal is to encourage your child to ask for games and activities by using higher level ways of communicating. This includes encouraging your child to look at you while also using gestures such as pointing, using sounds, using word approximations (such as “ba” for “ball”), or using two words instead of just one like “more swing.” Even if your child is able to use words effectively to show interest in a game (e.g., “more tickle”), it is important to encourage your child to also look at you when communicating. Helping your child to use eye contact and gestures will make your child’s communication clearer and improve understanding for both you and your child.

Suggested activities:

- Ring-around-the-Rosie: Begin a game of ring-around-the-rosie then stop. Wait for your child to start the song and dance and encourage your child to use a higher level way of asking to restart the game. For example, coach your child to look at you and say “play” or “start again.”
- While pushing your child on a swing, grab the swing and hold it to stop the swing. Wait for several seconds to see if your child will look at you and use a higher level of asking (saying something to ask to keep swinging, or gesture to swing). Once your child has let you know that s/he would like to continue to swing, let go of the swing and continue pushing. Stop the swing 3-4 times to continue to encourage your child to let you know s/he wants to keep swinging through looking at you in addition to saying something and/or gesturing to you.
- Chase game: When it is your turn to chase and catch your child, pause for several seconds and encourage your child to ask to restart the game through the use of eye contact and gestures, words, or sounds.

Notes/Suggestions:

Requesting Goals

Requesting is an important skill. When your child learns to request, your child is beginning to communicate what s/he wants and needs. Your child is also sharing attention with you. Your child may request with words, however, your child may also make requests by reaching for toys or objects or snacks, giving toys objects to you, and to pointing to toys or objects to tell you that s/he wants, or to ask for your help. Teaching your child to use gestures (e.g., reaching, pointing) to make a request is a very important skill and a foundation to learning social-communication.

Requesting Goal 1. Your child reaches for an out of reach object to show wanting the object

These activities will help your child learn to reach toward objects to let you know that s/he wants the object. You can do this by holding up two objects, one in your left hand and one in your right hand, and asking your child, “Which do you want?” Make sure that you hold the objects far enough away from your child that s/he cannot simply grab the object from your hand. If your child does not reach for the object, playfully say “show me which one?” and wiggle the items in your hand. You can also move the items within reach to see if that will encourage your child to move his/her hand toward one of the objects. If your child indicates what s/he wants by just naming the object but does not reach toward it, pretend that you still are not sure what s/he wants, and say, “Show me which one.” Be sure not to let your child get too frustrated and if the child doesn’t do what you ask after some playful encouraging, move on and try again later. You can also get others in the family to show the child what you expect.

Suggested activities:

- **Meal Time:** Hold up two similar food choices and ask your child which s/he would like. For example, two different boxes of cereal or two types of juice. Even if your child is a picky eater, you can still work on requesting using food. As long as your child likes one of the two foods, it does not matter that your child will not choose the other food.
- **Shopping:** When making a purchase for your child at a store, hold up two items and ask your child to select one. For example, if you are buying a toy car, hold up a red car in your right hand and a green car in your left hand. If you are purchasing a snack, hold up goldfish in one hand and graham crackers in the other hand.
- **Play Time or Bath Time:** During play or bath time, hold up two toys and ask your child which s/he would like to play with.

Notes/Suggestions:

Requesting Goals

Requesting is an important skill. When your child learns to request, your child is beginning to communicate what s/he wants and needs. Your child is also sharing attention with you. Your child may request with words, however, your child may also make requests by reaching for toys or objects or snacks, giving toys objects to you, and to pointing to toys or objects to tell you that s/he wants, or to ask for your help. Teaching your child to use gestures (e.g., reaching, pointing) to make a request is a very important skill and a foundation to learning social-communication.

Requesting Goal 2. Your child pulls a person's hand toward objects to show request for help

These activities will help your child learn to pull your hand to an object to let you know that s/he needs help with the object. This can be done by giving your child an object that s/he can't use without your help. For example, give your child a favorite toy that s/he cannot operate without assistance, such as a bubble gun. Your child will not be able to use this fun toy until s/he gets your attention and requests help to operate the bubble gun. You can also give your child a snack that is in a difficult to open container, such as zip-lock bag, and then make your hand accessible as your child realizes s/he needs help. Be sure not to let your child get too frustrated and if the child doesn't do what you ask after some playful encouraging, move on and try again later. You can also get others in the family to show the child what you expect him/her to do (putting your hand on the object to operate or open it).

Suggested activities:

- Meal Time: Give your child food in containers that s/he can't open. For example, give your child a juice box without a straw or crackers in a container with a screw-on top.
- Brushing Teeth: If your child has difficulty opening containers with twist tops, give him/her the toothpaste tube with the lid on so that s/he has to ask for help.
- Bubbles: Use a bubble gun that your child can't operate without assistance and then hand it to him/her to take a turn.

Notes/Suggestions:

Requesting Goals

Requesting is an important skill. When your child learns to request, your child is beginning to communicate what s/he wants and needs. Your child is also sharing attention with you. Your child may request with words, however, your child may also make requests by reaching for toys or objects or snacks, giving toys objects to you, and to pointing to toys or objects to tell you that s/he wants, or to ask for your help. Teaching your child to use gestures (e.g., reaching, pointing) to make a request is a very important skill and a foundation to learning social-communication.

Requesting Goal 3. Your child gives objects to show request for help

These activities will help your child learn to hand objects to you to let you know that s/he needs help with the object. This can be done by giving your child an object that s/he can't use without your help. For example, give your child fruit in an unopened can for snack or a meal. Your child will not be able to eat the fruit until s/he gets your attention and requests help to open the can. If your child asks for help only by using words, encourage him/her to also hold the can of fruit toward you, so that the gestures match what your child is saying with his/her words. Be sure not to let your child get too frustrated and if the child doesn't do what you ask after some playful encouraging, move on and try again later. You can also get others in the family to show the child what you expect him/her to do (handing you the object they want help opening).

Suggested activities:

- Meal Time: Give your child food in containers that s/he can't open. For example, give your child grapes in a container that has a screw-on top or give an unopened juice box with a straw in its plastic sleeve.
- Bubbles: If your child has difficulty opening containers with twist tops, give him/her the bubble wand and a container of bubble 'juice' with a tightly fitting lid.
- Art: Give your child a piece of paper and a container of markers with difficult lids.

Notes/Suggestions:

Requesting Goals

Requesting is an important skill. When your child learns to request, your child is beginning to communicate what s/he wants and needs. Your child is also sharing attention with you. Your child may request with words, however, your child may also make requests by reaching for toys or objects or snacks, giving toys objects to you, and to pointing to toys or objects to tell you that s/he wants, or to ask for your help. Teaching your child to use gestures (e.g., reaching, pointing) to make a request is a very important skill and a foundation to learning social-communication.

Requesting Goal 4a. Your child looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request

This activity will help your child share attention with you to an object that you want, and to respond to your requests. The goal is for your child to look at an object that you point to. You can also get others in the family to show the child what you expect him/her to do (looking at the object you're pointing to and saying "There it is" or "I see it").

Suggested activities:

- **Dressing:** If your child needs help dressing, lay out his/her clothes some place within your reach and your child's reach. Start by pointing to his/her shirt and saying, "Give me your shirt." The goal is for your child to look at the shirt then hand it to you. After you have helped your child put on his/her shirt, point to his/her pants and say, "Give me your pants." You can do this with each piece of clothing as you dress your child. If your child is able to get dressed independently but has difficulty putting on his/her shoes, you can point to his/her shoe and say, "Give me your shoe?" Then do the same with the other shoe. As the child's skill increases, you can use pointing alone without the name of the object ("Give me that").
- **Play Time:** While putting a puzzle together, point to a piece (giraffe) and say to your child, "Give me the giraffe." As the child's skill increases, use pointing only "Give me that piece."

Notes/Suggestions:

Requesting Goals

Requesting is an important skill. When your child learns to request, your child is beginning to communicate what s/he wants and needs. Your child is also sharing attention with you. Your child may request with words, however, your child may also make requests by reaching for toys or objects or snacks, giving toys objects to you, and to pointing to toys or objects to tell you that s/he wants, or to ask for your help. Teaching your child to use gestures (e.g., reaching, pointing) to make a request is a very important skill and a foundation to learning social-communication.

Requesting Goal 4b. Your child points to nearby objects to request them

This activity will help your child use pointing to let you know that s/he needs your help. This goal is for your child to request objects that are nearby by pointing to them. If your child requests only by using words to ask for an object, pretend that you still are not sure what s/he wants, and ask your child, “Can you point to it?” or say “This one or that one?” If the child doesn’t point, it is helpful to show your child how to point to the desired object. You can also get others in the family to show the child what you expect him/her to do (pointing to an object desired).

Suggested activities:

- **Play Time:** Roll a ball back-and-forth with your child. After passing the ball several times, hold the ball and wait. Encourage your child to point to the ball to request that you pass the ball back to him/her. Be sure that you also model pointing to the ball when your child has the ball. You can also work on requesting with train cars or blocks. For example, if your child likes to hook train cars together, give your child a couple of cars to connect and leave the others off to the side, out of your child’s reach. This may encourage your child to point to request them.
- **Shopping:** While shopping at a store, ask your child which item s/he likes. Wait for him/her to point to the object. For this activity, it is important that your child is near to the object, maybe even able to touch the object. For example, “Which pair of shoes do you like, the brown pair or the black pair?” Wait for your child to point to either the black pair of shoes or the brown pair of shoes. You can also do this activity with objects in the store that you do not plan to purchase. For example, you can encourage your child to point to a book s/he would like to look at for a few minutes before putting it back.
- **Refrigerator:** When it is time for a snack, take your child to the refrigerator, open the door, and ask what he/she wants. You can always model pointing and saying “The yogurt or the cheese?”

Notes/Suggestions:

Requesting Goals

Requesting is an important skill. When your child learns to request, your child is beginning to communicate what s/he wants and needs. Your child is also sharing attention with you. Your child may request with words, however, your child may also make requests by reaching for toys or objects or snacks, giving toys objects to you, and to pointing to toys or objects to tell you that s/he wants, or to ask for your help. Teaching your child to use gestures (e.g., reaching, pointing) to make a request is a very important skill and a foundation to learning social-communication.

Requesting Goal 5a. Your child looks at distant objects when another person points to the objects as a request

This activity is similar to the activity for Requesting 3. It will help your child to share attention to an object that you want and to respond to your requests for assistance. The goal is for your child to look at an object that you point to. The difference between this goal and the Requesting 3 goal is that you will point to objects that are out of your reach and out of your child's reach. Around the house, you can point to any object that is out of your reach and out of your child's reach and ask for your child to give it to you. You can also get others in the family to show the child what you expect him/her to do (looking at a desired object).

Suggested activities:

- Meal Time: Point to and request a napkin, a cup, a food item
- Bath Time: Point to and request a washcloth, a bottle of shampoo, a bar of soap, a towel, a toy
- Dressing: With clothes out of your reach and your child's reach, you can point to and request any piece of clothing while dressing him/her. For example, point to the shirt and say, "Give me your shirt?"
- Play Time: Point to and request any toy that is out of reach like a puzzle piece, a block, or a doll.

Notes/Suggestions:

Requesting Goals

Requesting is an important skill. When your child learns to request, your child is beginning to communicate what s/he wants and needs. Your child is also sharing attention with you. Your child may request with words, however, your child may also make requests by reaching for toys or objects or snacks, giving toys objects to you, and to pointing to toys or objects to tell you that s/he wants, or to ask for your help. Teaching your child to use gestures (e.g., reaching, pointing) to make a request is a very important skill and a foundation to learning social-communication.

Requesting Goal 5b. Your child points to more distant objects to request them

This activity will help your child use pointing to let you know that s/he needs your help. It is similar to Requesting 4 except that now objects are out of reach for you and for your child. You can also get others in the family to show the child what you expect him/her to do (pointing to a desired object).

Suggested activities:

- **Play Time:** Move a few of your child's toys to a location where s/he cannot reach them. For example, put the child's toys up on a shelf. Wait for your child to point to request your help with getting a specific toy off the shelf.
- **Shopping:** If you have your child at the grocery store seated in a shopping cart, ask your child "Which juice do you want?" then wait for your child to point to the juice on the shelf. You can do this with a variety of items.
- Hold up two objects well above child and say "Do you want cookies or crackers?" and encourage child to point to one desired.

Notes/Suggestions:

Requesting Goals

Requesting is an important skill. When your child learns to request, your child is beginning to communicate what s/he wants and needs. Your child is also sharing attention with you. Your child may request with words, however, your child may also make requests by reaching for toys or objects or snacks, giving toys objects to you, and to pointing to toys or objects to tell you that s/he wants, or to ask for your help. Teaching your child to use gestures (e.g., reaching, pointing) to make a request is a very important skill and a foundation to learning social-communication.

Requesting Goal 6. Your child combines a gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to request

After your child has successfully requested objects that are nearby and farther away using pointing, it is time to work on adding “looking at you” to the request. For example, children with autism will often point to an object and look at the object when help is needed, but not turn to look at someone else. The goal for this activity is to encourage your child to point to the object and look at you, both of which provide a clearer signal that s/he needs assistance. Your child may also make a verbal request such as, “I want that car please,” but we still want to encourage the child to look at you when requesting. You can also get others in the family to show the child what you expect him/her to do (pointing at the desired object and looking at you to get it).

Suggested activities:

- **Meal Time:** Keep items that your child will need out of reach such as silverware, a cup, or food that s/he likes. After your child points or makes a verbal request (such as, “I want milk”) wait a few seconds to encourage your child to look at you. If the child doesn’t look, hold out just a bit longer, but don’t allow the child to get too frustrated. Overall, you want the experience to be positive.
- **Dressing:** If your child is able to get dressed independently, hold his/her shirt and wait for him/her to ask you for the shirt. If your child makes a verbal request (“Can I have my shirt?”) or points at the shirt, wait a few seconds to see if your child will look at you.

Notes/Suggestions:

Joint Attention Goals

Joint attention is a very special skill. Joint attention happens when you and your child focus your attention on the same thing just because it is interesting and you want to share it with each other. The shared attention to an object or event should be purposeful and socially motivated. Some examples of joint attention are when your child shows (or gives) you an interesting object by holding it out (giving it) to you or when your child points to an interesting object and tries to get you to look at it.

Joint Attention Goal 1a. Your child responds to another person giving objects just to share interest in the objects

The purpose of these activities is to encourage your child to look at an object that you are giving to him/her and/or to look at you. Extend your hand with the object in it. Before you let your child take the object out of your hand, pause to see if s/he will look up at you or the object. You can also get others in the family to show the child what you expect him/her to do (look at the object someone else gives them and/or look at the person).

Suggested activities:

- **Play Time:** Spend a few minutes stacking blocks together with your child. Select a block that is a little different, possibly in color or shape. Then hold that block in your hand and extend your hand to your child. Say, “Look at this block.” If your child doesn’t look at the block or you try again. Once your child looks at you or the block, offer the block to your child. You can do this with any toy your child likes, including toys in the bath tub.
- **Outside Time:** There are many objects in nature that are interesting to children. If you are outside playing with your child or taking a walk with your child, you can use objects from nature to work on this goal. For example, pick up a pretty or interesting leaf and hold it out to your child as you comment on what makes the leaf interesting or pretty. If your child does not look at you or the leaf, wait a few seconds before offering the leaf. Other items you can use include flowers, bugs, and interesting rocks.

Notes/Suggestions:

Joint Attention Goals

Joint attention is a very special skill. Joint attention happens when you and your child focus your attention on the same thing just because it is interesting and you want to share it with each other. The shared attention to an object or event should be purposeful and socially motivated. Some examples of joint attention are when your child shows (or gives) you an interesting object by holding it out (giving it) to you or when your child points to an interesting object and tries to get you to look at it.

Joint Attention Goal 1b. Your child gives objects just to share interest in the objects with another person

This goal is similar to Joint Attention 1a except that the purpose of this goal is to have your child give an object to you. These activities will encourage your child to share interest in an object by giving it to you or another person. You can also get others in the family to show the child what you expect him/her to do (give you the object they want to share with you and talk about it or point out something).

Suggested activities:

- **Play Time:** While playing with your child, ask if you can see something that your child is using. For example, if your child is playing with an elephant puppet, place your hand out and say “Can I see your elephant puppet?” Once your child gives you the puppet, examine it for a few seconds, comment about something interesting (for instance, “His fur is soft!”), then give the elephant puppet back to your child. As your child gains skill in this area, wait to see if s/he will initiate this behavior without a prompt/question.
- **Cooking:** While cooking with your child, ask your child to see something interesting they have made. For example, if your child is making cookies, say “Can I see your prettiest cookie?” After getting the cookie from your child, say something interesting about it (“The cookie is soft!”), then return the cookie to your child.

Notes/Suggestions:

Joint Attention Goals

Joint attention is a very special skill. Joint attention happens when you and your child focus your attention on the same thing just because it is interesting and you want to share it with each other. The shared attention to an object or event should be purposeful and socially motivated. Some examples of joint attention are when your child shows (or gives) you an interesting object by holding it out (giving it) to you or when your child points to an interesting object and tries to get you to look at it.

Joint Attention Goal 2a. Your child responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects

The purpose of these activities is to encourage your child to look at an interesting object that you are showing to him/her and then to look at you. Hold the object where your child can see it. If your child does not look at the object, hold it closer to him/her. Wait to see if your child will look at the object and then at you. If s/he does not look at you, move the object close to your face. You can also get others in the family to show your child what you expect him/her to do (look at the object you are showing and look at you).

Suggested activities:

- **Dressing:** Before helping your child put on a piece of clothing, hold it up and say something about the clothing. For example, say “Look at this alligator on your shirt!” Wait to see if your child will look at the alligator on the shirt and look at you. You can use various pieces of clothing to practice this skill as you help your child get dressed.
- **Shopping:** While shopping at the grocery store, pick up a piece of food and show it to your child while commenting about the food. For example, say “Look at this giant apple!” Wait to see if your child will look at the apple and look at you. You can use various food items to practice this skill. Try to find items that you think will be interesting to your child, such as boxes or cans with interesting pictures on them. This activity will also help teach your child the names of different food items.
- **Grab bag:** Use a paper bag to put some toys or other interesting objects (funny kitchen/bathroom gadgets) and pull them out one by one and show them to your child. You can name them or just say “Look at this.” Be silly and use some suspense when you pull them out (e.g., “Ooh, what is next?”)

Notes/Suggestions:

Joint Attention Goals

Joint attention is a very special skill. Joint attention happens when you and your child focus your attention on the same thing just because it is interesting and you want to share it with each other. The shared attention to an object or event should be purposeful and socially motivated. Some examples of joint attention are when your child shows (or gives) you an interesting object by holding it out (giving it) to you or when your child points to an interesting object and tries to get you to look at it.

Joint Attention Goal 2b. Your child shows objects just to share interest in the objects with another person

This activity is similar to Joint Attention 2a except that this activity is working on having your child show you an object just to share it with you. This activity will encourage your child to look at an object that s/he is showing to you and to look at you. You can also get others in the family to show the child what you expect him/her to do (show you the object they want to share with you and talk about it).

Suggested activities:

- **Play Time:** While your child is playing, say, “What are you playing with?” Encourage your child to hold up the object that s/he is playing with so that you can see it. For example, if your child is playing with a car, encourage him/her to hold up the car. Comment on something interesting about the car (e.g., “That car looks like it can go fast!”), smile, and let your child continue to play for little more before you encourage him/her to show you another object. Also encourage the child to show it to someone else, “Show the car to Daddy.”
- **Outside Time:** Children love to explore nature. If you see your child holding a leaf, a bug, a flower, a rock, or another item, say, “What is it?” Even if your child can tell you with words, encourage him/her to show you the object by holding it up where you can see it. When your child shows you the object, comment on something interesting about it (“That flower smells good”), smile, and let your child continue to explore for a few minutes before you encourage him/her to show you another object.
- **Grab bag game:** Using a paper sack with fun objects/toys, let your child pull out the items one by one and show them to you (and/or others). The first few times, you may want to help your child show them to others, then encourage the child to do it on their own.

Notes/Suggestions:

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Joint Attention Goal 3a. Your child follows a point to nearby objects/events just to share interest in objects/events

This activity will help teach your child to follow your point to an object that is within reach. Learning to follow your point to an object will help your child share attention to an interesting object with you. You can also get others in the family to show the child what you expect him/her to do (follow your point to an interesting object or event).

Suggested activities:

- **Story Time:** While reading a book to your child, comment on what you see in the picture and point to the picture. For example, if you are reading a story about farm animals and there is a cow in the picture, point to the cow and say, "See the cow; he's eating grass." Watch your child to see if s/he looks at the picture where you pointed. You can use this activity with any book that is interesting to your child.
- **Coloring:** Use a small box of 8 crayons. Take the crayons out of the box then point to the crayons one at a time while naming the color of each crayon. For example, "Here's the red crayon; here's the orange crayon." This activity will also help your child learn the correct names for each color.
- **Counting:** Use any items that are interesting to your child. For example, cars, blocks, teddy bears, trains, or books. Line up several items then point to each item while counting. For example, line up 10 blocks. Point to the first block and say, "one," then point to the second block and say, "two," until you have touched and counted all 10 blocks. Encourage your child to count with you and to look at the blocks.

Notes/Suggestions:

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Joint Attention Goal 3b. Your child points to nearby objects/events just to share interest in objects/events with another person

This activity is similar to Joint Attention 3a except that now the goal is for your child to point to an object to get your attention and share the object with you. Learning to point to objects to share them with others will help your child participate in social interactions with others and to get others to follow his/her interests. Unless your child has already shown you s/he can point, you may need to physically help form his/her fingers into a pointing gesture. You can also get others in the family to show the child what you expect him/her to do (follow your point to an interesting object or event).

Suggested activities:

- **Story Time:** While reading a book with your child, ask him/her to show you a specific part of the picture. For example, say “Where’s the dog?” Encourage your child to point to different objects throughout the story. After your child points, comment on something interesting in the picture (for example, “That dog has a long tongue”). Then let your child continue to look at the book for a little longer before you encourage him/her to show you another part of a picture. Be sure to model pointing to pictures of interest in the book yourself. Use animated expressions to draw your child’s attention to what you are pointing out (“Wow, look at that dog!”).
- **Play time:** While playing with your child, ask your child to point to an object nearby. For example, say “Where is the orange block?” or “Where is the Thomas train?” Encourage your child to point to a variety of toys. Comment on something interesting about each object pointed to by your child. Model pointing to toys/objects of interest and making a comment about them.

Notes/Suggestions:

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Joint Attention Goal 4a. Your child follows a point to more distant objects/events just to share interest in the objects/events

This activity will help teach your child to follow your point to an object that is out of reach. Learning to follow your point to an object will help your child share attention with you and the object. You can also get others in the family to show the child what you expect him/her to do (follow your point to an interesting object or event).

Suggested activities:

- **Around the House:** Put one of your child's toys out of reach. Point to the toy and comment about the toy. For example, "Look at your train! How did your train get way up there?" Encourage your child to follow your point to the train. You can also point to other common household items like a photo on the wall, a spider on the ceiling, an appliance on the kitchen counter, etc.
- **Outside Time:** While playing outside with your child or going for a walk, point to objects that are out of reach. For example, point to a dog and say "Look at that cute dog." Encourage your child to follow your point to the dog. You can do this with various objects outside including a bird, squirrel, cat, mailbox, flag, car, bike, person, flower, color, leaf, etc.

Notes/Suggestions:

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Joint Attention Goal 4b. Your child points to more distant objects/events just to share interest in objects/events with another person

This activity is similar to Joint Attention 4a except that now the goal is for your child to point to objects that are out of reach to get your attention and share the object with you. Learning to point to objects to share them with others will help your child participate in social interactions with others and to get others to follow his/her interests. You can also get others in the family to show the child what you expect him/her to do (follow your point to an interesting object or event).

Suggested activities:

- **Around the House:** Ask your child to tell you where things are in the house, encouraging your child to point to the objects. For example, say “where is the vacuum?” or “where is the television?” You can ask your child to identify any household items such as the couch, the towel, the dresser, clothing, etc. Comment on something interesting about any object your child points to (e.g. “I love that fluffy towel”).
- **Outside Time:** Ask your child to play “What do you see?” outside, encouraging your child to point to the objects. For example, say “Nathan, Nathan, what do you see?” Establish a routine of saying “I see a swing in front of me” or “I see a dog looking at me” similar to *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*. Whenever your child points to an object, comment on something interesting about the object.

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Joint Attention Goal 5. Your child follows gaze of another person to objects/events just to share interest

The purpose of this activity is to encourage your child to look at something that you are looking at. For this activity, do not point to the object. Name the object and turn to look at the object. For example, say “Look at that big dog!” then turn your head and eyes to look at the dog. Encourage your child to also look at the dog. As your child’s skill in this area increases, you can try not labeling the thing you’re drawing attention to, instead saying “Look at that!” and seeing if they are able to follow your gaze. You can also get others in the family to show the child what you expect him/her to do (follow your point to an interesting object or event).

Suggested activities:

- **Outside Time:** While playing outside with your child or going for a walk, name an object and turn to look at the object. For example, say “Look at that big red bird” then turn your head and eyes to look at the bird. Encourage your child to follow your gaze to the bird. You can do this with various objects outside including a squirrel, cat, mailbox, flag, car, bike, person, flower, color, leaf, etc.
- **Shopping:** While in a store, name an object and turn your head and eyes to look at the object. For example, say “Look at those Elmo shoes” then turn your head and eyes to look at the shoes. Encourage your child to follow your gaze to the shoes. You can do this with various items including clothing, food, toys, or a baby.

Notes/Suggestions:

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Joint Attention Goal 6. Your child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event

The goal of this activity is to encourage your child to share an object or event with you by pointing at the object/event or telling you about the object/event AND looking at you. After naming an object or event and turning your head and eyes to look at it, encourage your child to also look at the object or event, point to it or make a comment about it, and then look back at you. Sometimes children with autism may call out the name of an object, but not use a gesture to point to it or look at the person to see if they're looking. Being able to use words, gestures, and looking when showing others objects/events is important.

Suggested activities:

- **Outside Time:** While playing outside with your child or going for a walk, name an object and wait for your child to respond. For example, say "Look at the bunny rabbit." Encourage your child to either point to the bunny rabbit or comment ("I see the bunny") and to look at you. You can do this with various objects outside, including a squirrel, cat, mailbox, flag, car, bike, person, flower, color, or leaf.
- **Special Event:** While at a special event, like fireworks, say, "Look at the pretty fireworks," then wait for your child to respond. Encourage your child to either point to the sky or comment ("it's big") and to look at you. Other examples of special events when you can work on this skill are: at a park, a playground, a restaurant that has child-friendly characters on the walls, an amusement park, farm, county or state fair, zoo, etc.
- As your child's skill improves, you can wait for something exciting to happen or make it happen ("accidentally knock an object/toy off the table") and see if your child will point it out to you. If s/he doesn't, you point and comment and look at the child ("uh oh").

Notes/Suggestions: