

Advisory Teaching Service

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We can produce this document in Braille, large print, on audio tape and in other languages. If you would like a copy in one of these formats, please call 01452 426955.

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Early Years - Helping my child to play

Advice and information for parents & carers



Advisory Teaching Service

Communication and Interaction Team



Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL

Why it could make a difference

Children on the Autism Spectrum are sometimes described as:

- lacking in imagination
- having purposeless play
- isolated play
- repetitive in play

but

- all children need play skills if they are to be included
- play is a tool for learning, all children need this opportunity
- all children need to practice social routines in safe surroundings
- it can be fun



Ideas and Strategies

Some ideas:

- put a scarf over your head and play peek-a-boo
- hide objects or toys under your or his jumper
- throw a bean bag, balls or objects of interest into a bucket. Increase the number or change objects
- tactile play with pasta, cornflour, sand—wet/dry
- roll a ball, car or train to one another
- use familiar action songs—row the boat
- chase and catch—tickle 'reward'
- posting pictures or objects in a posting box
- blow and catch bubbles
- hiding objects of interest in sand
- spinning tops—turn taking
- blow up a balloon and let it go
- magnetic fishing game



Ideas and Strategies

Techniques to develop:

- build on rapport and relationship
- gain attention
- use structure
- have a shared focus
- use imitation
- structure turns
- parallel play
- play dialogue
- build in rewards e.g. tickles
- be flexible
- enjoy



Use your child's interests and preferences to motivate them

- Sensory—sounds, music, lights, smells, tactile, rocking
- Activities—posting, fishing, spinning, rough and tumble
- Toys—cause and effect, wheels, characters



Ideas and Strategies

What you can do:

Create a regular play time and space

- structure a simple activity
- grab their attention - with name, sound, interest
- make the game fun and exciting
- repeat the game the same way over and over
- build in turn taking, anticipation, independence requesting in small steps

or

Join in with what he or she is doing

- follow his/her lead by using their interest
- model what to do with equipment
- add a narrative “we’re going across the bridge”
“Teddy says biscuit please”
- keep it short—limit turns/amount
- praise “good playing”



Cognitive Skills

experimentation, flexibility, meaning, limitations, functional, problem solving, causal, creativity, spatial, categorical

Social Skills

understanding others, intimacy, subtle social clues, compromise, awareness of others, negotiation, shared attention, affection, test ideas

Why play makes a difference.
It develops.....

Emotional Skills

Ability to:
suspend reality, explore meaning, deal with stress, deal with difficult times and experiences, pretend

Language

interpret & make sense of the world, understand concepts and new skills, communicate, express, use vocabulary, narrative, imagination