



WHAT IS JOINT ATTENTION?

From a young age, children realize it is fun to share in experiences with parents and loved ones. When a child and parent are observed simultaneously focusing on the same object, event, or person, they are said to be exhibiting joint attention. Joint attention is an essential skill to set the foundation for social interactions and language development.



Joint attention can take place in any setting or environment. An example of joint attention includes a parent holding their child in one hand and a musical toy in the other. The parent and child display joint attention as they shift their attention and eye gaze from each other to the object making noise. This provides the foundation for back-and-forth communication.

If a parent is concerned about their child's ability to develop joint attention, they can reach out to their child's pediatrician for advice and guidance. A child's pediatrician may refer the family to a speech-language pathologist who has experience helping young children develop joint attention and subsequent communication milestones.

Here are three tips parents can use to encourage joint attention in their children:

Follow your child's lead: A child may enjoy pushing cars down a ramp. Parents can copy this interest and add a language model such as, "Our cars go up, up, up, and then...down!"

Use facial expressions, noises, and gestures: Facial expressions, noises, and gestures help children learn where to focus their attention and make acts of communication more motivating.

Play: Children learn fundamental communication skills through play. Parents can use preferred toys and objects during play to encourage joint attention and family fun!

AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

TUESDAY, APRIL 2ND – 2019



AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

April is National Autism Awareness Month, a nationwide event that promotes awareness, inclusion, and acceptance of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The overall goal of National Autism Awareness Month is to ensure all individuals affected by ASD lead happy, independent lives (Autism Society, 2016).

What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a neurodevelopmental disability that impacts the following areas:

- Expressive Language (i.e., the language we use to express ourselves both verbally or nonverbally)
- Receptive Language (i.e., the language we understand)
- Social Communication (e.g., understanding personal space, empathy)

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ASK A THERAPIST



HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY CHILD'S VOCABULARY SKILLS?

At first glance, the word 'vocabulary' makes us think about our knowledge of words and their corresponding definitions. While these thoughts are all correct, vocabulary also involves the words we hear in our environments, how often you hear the words, and the ability to use these words in appropriate contexts.

So what can parents do?

There are several ways parents can help improve their child's vocabulary. Here are a few helpful strategies:

Read!

Read books with your child. Parents can start small by encouraging their child to label different objects within a story (e.g., animals, cars). As children develop speech and language skills, parents can ask children questions about a story that encourages story comprehension (e.g., "What did the first little pig build his house out of?").

Play!

Children take in so much about their environment through play. As children engage in playful situations, they have the opportunity to improve problem-solving and social skills.

Craft & cook!

When children participate in crafts or cooking, they learn how to follow directions and expand their vocabulary. Not only are these activities fun, but they provide an engaging foundation for learning!

APP OF THE MONTH:

Choiceworks

Ages 4+

Target Skills
Behavior

About The App

Choiceworks is a unique application that helps children develop emotional regulation and complete their daily routines.



Autism Awareness Month Continued...

Individuals with ASD may also present with restricted and repetitive movements such as hand-flapping or fixation on a particular toy or object (e.g., the wheels on a car). Children may receive a diagnosis of ASD as early as 2 years from a multidisciplinary team of health professionals (e.g., developmental pediatrician, clinical psychologist, speech-language pathologist, and occupational therapist) or an experienced neuropsychologist.

Following a diagnosis of ASD, the parents will typically receive a list of recommendations to help support their child achieve developmental milestones. For example, the clinician may recommend speech therapy to promote functional communication, improve peer-to-peer social interactions, and build other crucial speech and language skills. Licensed speech-language pathologists provide these sessions and will incorporate several evidence-based practice strategies (e.g., Picture Exchange Communication System, Social Stories, Comic Strip Conversations) to help children achieve their unique speech and language goals.



What Can I Do During Autism Awareness Month?

Educate Yourself

Scientists and researchers in the field are discovering more about ASD every day. While some factors remain unknown, there is a great deal of existing literature that explains the signs of ASD, how ASD is diagnosed, and appropriate intervention strategies to encourage growth and independence. Parents can turn to organizations such as Autism Speaks and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association for an overview of ASD to improve their knowledge about autism.

Create an Inclusive Environment

Every child with ASD is unique. It is important for society to understand what ASD is and what typically developing individuals can do to foster the most inclusive environment. For example, visiting or volunteering at a sensory-friendly event is one way individuals can gain hands-on knowledge about how an environment can be modified so that all individuals can enjoy it. Schools, theaters, and recreational facilities are just a few examples of popular places that may be hosting a sensory-friendly event in your community!

Offer a Listening Ear

A diagnosis of ASD affects an entire family unit. It is common for parents of a child with autism to worry about how their child will achieve independence. Offering a listening ear to a parent of a child with autism encourages education, understanding, and builds a system of support.

References

Autism Society. (2016). National Autism Awareness Month.
Retrieved from <http://www.autism-society.org/get-involved/national-autism-awareness-month>

SPEECH THERAPY SPOTLIGHT

Debbie S. Lombardi, AuD, CCC-A/SLP

Debbie Lombardi is the owner and provider at Premiere Speech and Hearing with offices in Collegeville and Lancaster. Debbie has a license and certification to practice audiology and speech language pathology. She has worked in a variety of settings but loves private practice and the attention and care she can provide to the patients. Debbie provides services to both children and adults. She has expertise in the area of childhood speech and language development including articulation, language, auditory processing and aural rehabilitation. Audiologic areas of expertise include diagnostic evaluations, hearing aid fitting and service and assistive listening technology. Debbie is a member of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. In 2019 she will serve as the VP of Publications for the Pennsylvania Academy of Audiology.



Kristin Park, MS, CCC-SLP

Kristin Park is a certified and licensed clinical Speech-Language Pathologist. Kristin has had clinical experience in a variety of settings, but has extensive experience with childhood expressive and receptive language, fluency, and articulation disorders. In addition, she has expertise in the areas of cognitive rehabilitation, verbal apraxia, oral motor planning, and voice assessment and treatment. Kristin works with infants, school-age children and adults. Recently, Kristin completed a certification in the LSVT Loud program that is designed to treat patients with Parkinson's disease and other neurologic conditions. She is a member of the following organizations: American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and Pennsylvania Speech-Language-Hearing Association.



Testimonials

"My experience for years has been nothing but excellent. Very knowledgeable and efficient." – Joe

"I have had a great experience with the people at this office. They are a great bunch of people. Love it here." – Cathy

"My son has been a client here for 2 year and we have seen an incredible improvement in his speech. Sue Levy makes therapy fun and exciting, and my son loves coming here!" – Jen

Would You Like Additional Copies of this Newsletter to give as a **FREE** Resource?



If so, email Debbie at:

dlombardi@PremiereSpeechHearing.com
Please include the address of your office & how many additional copies you would like.



Concerned About Your Speech or Hearing?

**Call us today
for a free consultation
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About Premiere Speech & Hearing: *Hear. Communicate. Live.*

Premiere Speech and Hearing provides superior services in a personalized, convenient, and caring environment. Our educated and experienced Doctors of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathologists are dedicated to the evaluation and treatment of hearing loss, tinnitus, speech, language, voice, fluency and cognitive disorders. Our efforts are designed to provide patients and their loved ones with advocacy, education, prevention, and rehabilitation services.

As we say, the goal is to *"Hear. Communicate. Live."*

Contact Premiere Speech & Hearing at www.PremiereSpeechHearing.com or call (610) 454-1177

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Speech Services

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- Oral Motor Disorders
- Stuttering Therapy
- Voice Disorders
- LSVT Loud Provider



Schedule Your Evaluation Now!

Call us today to schedule an appointment: (610) 454-1177

Or go to our website: www.PremiereSpeechHearing.com



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Premiere Speech & Hearing values your referral!

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Do you have thoughts or feedback? If so, we would love to hear from you.

Just email: dlombardi@PremiereSpeechHearing.com

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