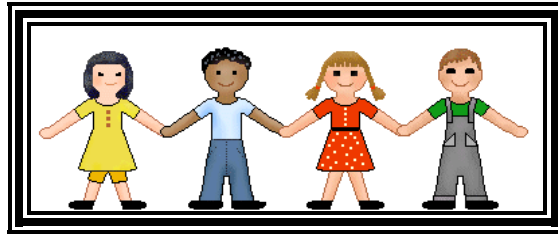


Have Fun Listening & Following Directions with Little Ones

By Ricki Block, MS, CCC-SLP



Children's daily routines are filled with moments when required to listen and follow directions. This extensive list of activities is a jumpstart to tuning in to opportunities for engaging in joint attention when talking with your child. Learning occurs everywhere throughout the day. Make sure child understands all the words – give a visual explanation when doing activities together and use words such as “first, next, then, last.” Encourage eye contact as long as you can. Speak slowly and give child time to respond. Repeat the direction or rephrase if necessary. Have child repeat direction too. Child can follow the direction or respond to a Wh questions (e.g. *Who, What, Where, Why, Yes-No.*) The best part is when children don't even know they are working! Here's where to start:

- 1-step directions – with 1 item (find a dog.) Then move on to 2 items, 3, etc...
 - 1-step with critical elements – 1 (find a black dog), 2 (big black dog)
 - 2-step directions – e.g., clap hands and wave hello
 - Directions with critical elements – e.g., put circle under star – expand to put yellow circle under big star
 - Recall information in sentences – e.g. where is the girl is eating an apple- What is the girl eating? Expand to 2 elements, girl eating red apple and continue to expand
1. If the child is not following daily sequencing routines or directions, help create a visual routine focusing in on a specific item and keeping that routine in the same order of first, second, third, last, etc. This child may have trouble with a general direction such as clean up. The directive may need to be broken down into smaller & more direct instructions such as *put your doll in the box*, rather than *put your toys away*
 2. Read stories together. During the story read a sentence and ask your child to tell you what happened, e.g. “The girl is playing with her black dog.” (You can ask related questions - *Who is the girl playing with? Where's the black dog? Which one is not a dog? Do you have a pet? Name 3 other pets you could have.*)
 3. Fun around the house –
 - Give your child a “job” to do around the house. Clean up together – make it a game and earn stickers – start with picking up 2 items in the same order and then increase to 3, e.g. first pick up the doll and then the car. Put this child in charge of “helper jobs” – to feel independent and successful and a valued member of the family.
 - Sort socks together – describe the color and design on the sock to match the pair.
 - Clothesline game – Tie a piece of string or yarn to the back of a chair to create a clothes line. Use spring loaded clothesline clips – child puts clips on clothesline when word or phrase is said
 - Set the table together – put silverware in a small container and give simple directions, e.g. put a fork and spoon next to/on mommy's plate.

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4. Fun with toys & games –

- Play Simon Says indoors or outside.
- Play a matching game, e.g. Go Fish, Concentration or Lotto. Child takes turns.
- Favorite preschool games – a fun way to work on vocabulary and verbal turn-taking “my turn-your turn” - Ned’s Head, Zingo, Cranium Cariboo,
- Play I Spy picture guessing game – Decorate a shoe box. Put cards or small objects in the box. Take one card out at a time or take an object out and play a “feely” game. Give 2-3 descriptions of an item, e.g. find an animal that says ney.
- Play a fishing game. Put a paper clip on each card. Make a fishing pole with a magnet on the end of the line or use a magnet wand. Turn the cards upside down and have the child "fish" for the cards. Alternately, you could leave the cards face up and ask them to fish out the card(s). This is a fun activity to do a small baby pool too!
- Play bowling. Tape cards to the bowling pins and have the child say the words pictured on the cards before attempting to "bowl" them down with a small ball.
- Play a bean bag/block game together – throw bean bags on pictures or shapes, e.g. simple direction *throw on dog* or more complex *throw red bean bag on big circle*
- Put cards in a mailbox. Cut a slit in the top of a box or other container to make a "mailbox". Let the children "mail" the cards after completing each card.
- Flashlight hunt. Tape the cards on the wall or play with objects. Shine a flashlight on each card or object in turn saying the word when the card is illuminated.
- Play with a doll house/baby doll play together – give child directions, e.g. *baby is sleeping*. Encourage child to put baby in the bed.
- Play with cars and trains/tracks – make a road, pretend ramp, train station, garage or repair shop from a shoe box – give directions, e.g. *the big yellow car needs to go to the repair shop for an oil change*. Directions can include concepts, e.g. in, on, out, up, down, under, fast, slow, big, little – e.g. *put the green and yellow train in the garage*.
- Play with animals, barn and blocks together – use the blocks for making fences – Directions can be as simple as *give me the cow* or more complex e.g. *where is the brown cow that is next to the horse?*
- Play with attribute blocks together or make your own out of card stock – attribute blocks consist of the following: I use 4 shapes – circle, square, rectangle, triangle, 2 thicknesses (thick, thin), 2 sizes(big, little) and 3 colors (red, yellow,blue) – Child can follow simple or more complex directions,e.g., *put the little red circle on the big blue square*.
- Play with sidewalk chalk – make pictures, e.g. big faces together – *make big circle, 2 eyes, 1 nose, 1 mouth, etc...*
- Play with Mr. Potato Head – e.g. *let’s find mouth and eyes*
- Play with blocks, e.g. duplos, mega blocks – *put red on, take off blue, put in big green*

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5. Fun with water

- Going to a lake or beach – search for shells, swim in the water, play in sand-hide items in sand. Take pictures of what you are doing . Make a book together and sequence the pictures.
- Blow bubbles together. Count and pop the bubbles. Make your own bubble solution-ingredients: 2 cups Joy, 1 cup light corn syrup, 6 cups water.
- Fill a tub with water – add blue food coloring – put in toy fish, animals, cars, boats, etc... Child can follow directions, e.g. *put fish in boat*, etc.

6. Fun with car travel

- Play I Spy with my little eye. Choose simple categories depending on where you are traveling to – e.g. animals, people, vehicles (e.g. find different colored cars , e.g. *look for red cars* - say “beep beep” when you see the car – keep track of who says the most beep beeps.
- Make paper spy glasses in advance to bring in the car.
- Create little backpack with car travel activities e.g. listening to stories/music with headphones, drawing boards such as Magna doodle, pipe cleaners, feltboard (e.g. Little Folk Visuals), colorforms, magnet play boards (e.g. Smethport-known for travel games)
- Make animal sounds and let your children take turns naming the animals or making the sounds too and you guess the animal.

7. Go to www.preschoolspeechie.com – for kid cooking ideas, FREE picture cards and more at [Ricki’s Pinterest](#) site.

8. Favorite iPad apps for listening & following directions – complete app list at www.preschoolspeechie.com.

*My Play Home

*Shoe the Goose apps

*Toca Boca apps

*Maverick software apps

*Super Duper apps

*Mr. or Mrs. Potato Head

* Book apps – from digital storytime

* Bitsboard 7.0

*Sounds – peekaboo barn

*Lazoo Squiggles and Lazoo Let’s Color

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