Disclosure-Sancibrian

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Joint Attention

**Joint Attention** = Consciously focusing your attention on the same event or object as another person

– Not just looking at the same thing as someone else, but being *aware* that you’re sharing the experience
“Survival of the Busiest”

- Infants with autism may prefer self-stimulatory behaviors over “baby games” that involve social interaction, anticipation, joint attention

— Twachtman-Cullen, 2008
RJA and IJA

Response to Joint Attention
child follows adult’s “line of regard”

Initiation of Joint Attention
child *spontaneously* draws adult’s attention toward an object or event ("showing")

Expect more deficits in IJA than RJA

Mundy, Sigman, & Kasari (1990)
Correlates of Joint Attention

For children with ASD, early JA correlates with:

- Language gains in early intervention
- Language skills 1 to 10 years later

Siller & Sigman, 2002
What does early JA look like?

- Should be able to point to an object, then look at adult’s eyes to establish JA by 11-14 months
- Babies later diagnosed with ASD may use gestures to regulate others’ behavior (proto-imperative) but not to share focus (proto-declarative)
Communicative Intent and IJA

- Lack of commenting is hallmark of ASD, not seen in children with language impairment only

  • Mundy P, Sigman M, Kasari, C. (1990)
Vocabulary and RJA

• Early impairment in JA interferes with learning new words in incidental learning contexts; not following the adult’s gaze means the child may not attach meaning to the correct referent

  • Baron-Cohen et al. (1997)
But can we teach JA?
Interventions for Attention

- Patten & Watson (2011)
  Reviewed 12 studies targeting attention
  Protocols varied, but 4 consistent strategies emerged:
  - **Child choice** — toys or topics of interest to child
  - **Reinforcement** — both natural and artificial
  - **Imitation** — contingent imitation of facial expressions, actions on objects, gestures (leading to turn-taking)
  - **Prompting** — visual, tactile, and auditory cues
Strategies

• focusing on faces (Schertz and Odom, 2007)
• turn-taking activities (Girolametto & Weitzman, 2002)
• using child interests (Vismara & Lyons, 2007)
• contingent imitation (Whalen & Schreibmann, 2003; Ingersoll & Schreibman, 2006).
• tactile and visual attention-gaining strategies (Whalen et al 2006); illuminated targets (Leekam, Lopez, & Moore, 2002)
Focusing on Faces

• Be face-to-face
  – Lie on your side or stomach when child is on the floor

• Hold desired item close to face

• Mirror play

• Imitate facial expressions

• Respond to even the briefest eye contact
Turn-taking

• Begin with face-to-face play, rather than play with toys
• Turn a chance action into a game
• Play teasing games (e.g., chase, tickling)
• Trade toys
Turn-taking in “People Games”

- Peek-a-boo
- Hide-and-seek
- Chase
- Horsey rides
- Up and down
- Tickling

- Bouncing on big ball
- “Pillow Mountain”
- Tug of War
- 1, 2, 3 – Jump!
- Swinging
- Ring around the rosy

Hanen - More Than Words
Turn-taking with Objects

- Feathers (to blow)
- Balloons
- Pinwheels
- Wind-up toys
- Rain sticks
- Bubbles

Preserve novelty by having 20+ items!

- Books w/sound buttons
- Books w/ pop-ups
- Musical instruments
- Vibrating toys

Hanen - More Than Words
Follow the child’s lead the four “I” way

- Include child’s interests
- Interpret
- Imitate
- Intrude

Hanen - More Than Words
Include child’s interests

• Notice what the child is doing and then join in.
• Bring what the child looks at into your shared space.
• Notice what the child is looking at and then point to the person, thing, or action accompanied by an exaggerated, “Look!”

Hanen
Interpret

• Respond as if the child deliberately tried to communicate with you
• Model “fun” comments with exaggeration—uh-oh, whee, yucky, stinky, wow, ouch

Hanen
Imitate

• Imitate the child’s vocalizations, gestures, body movements (exaggerate!)

• If inappropriate, shape into something more appropriate (e.g., if excited child is flapping, model clapping).

• Have identical sets of toys so you can imitate without taking the toy.
Intrude

• Insist on joining in on what the child is doing, even if he doesn’t welcome you at first.
• “Keeper” strategy—join in dropping, lining up toys
• Find a similar toy and join the play.
• Model actions with objects, like pushing a car, then move to actions without objects (e.g., clapping) and then sounds (e.g., animal sounds).
• Get in the way, make “mistakes.”
Illuminated Targets
Tactile Strategies

• While child is playing with one toy, place the child’s hand on a different toy.
• While child is playing with a toy, tap or bang on another toy.
• Tap or touch the child on the arm or leg.
Following Gaze/Point

• Stare at the object you want the child to look at.
• Turn your body in the direction of the object.
• Point to the object, putting your arm close to the side of child’s head, so he can look along your arm and along your pointing finger.
RJA-Following a Point

- Engage the child in play and hide some desirable items (e.g., puzzle pieces). Initially, the objects should be at least partially visible. Start playing, and when the child realizes the item is missing, shrug your shoulders and say, “Hmm, where is it?” Then point to the object and say, “Look, there it is!”

Adapted from WWW.TRIADATVANDERBILT.COM
RJA-Shifting Gaze

- When surprising events occur (e.g., a jack-in-the-box popping up, a block tower falling over), look at the child, make an exaggerated “surprised face” and say, “Wow!” or “Uh-oh!” If the child looks at you, provide a playful response (maybe a brief tickle).

Adapted from WWW.TRIADATVANDERBILT.COM
Shifting Gaze

- Obtain the child’s attention
- Look in direction of a “target event” (e.g., remote control car or fan)
- Activate the target event
- Gradually increase the time interval between the gaze shift and activation of the event. (creates opportunities for child to anticipate and look in direction that adult is looking)
Success!
Resources

Teaching Social Communication to Children with Autism
Brooke Ingersoll and Anna Dvortcsak

More Than Words
Promoting the communication development of children with autism spectrum disorder and other social communication challenges

[Image of book and DVD covers]
References


References


