

Following Your Child's Lead

tips and strategies

Why follow the child's lead?

Sometimes it's hard to tell what your child needs and wants especially if your child has difficulties with communication. Following your child's lead and observing their behaviours can help us better understand them and allows us to become a part of their world. These simple strategies will help you understand your child better and you may discover they are able to communicate more than you think!

What should I do?

Wow, look at the butterfly flying!



Dad was trying to show Sam food options for what he wants to eat. Sam notices a butterfly buzzing around. Dad then observed that Sam was interested in something else - the flying butterfly.. Now they can talk about what Sam is really interested in.

Watch and Observe

01

Taking the time to observe their body language, actions, gestures and facial expressions – will help you figure it out what your child wants/needs, also their likes/dislikes.. By watching these messages, you can learn a lot about what they're interested in and what they want to tell you! Observe the direction your child is looking at, reaching or pointing to. Discovering what has captured your child's interest will help you experience the moment and bond with them.

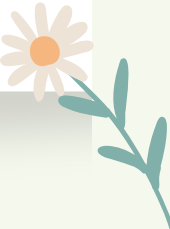


What should I do?

02

Provide Wait Time

Waiting is a very powerful tool. It provides time to observe what your child is interested in. Waiting gives your child time to start an interaction, allows processing time, and to respond to what you've said or done. Your child may be used to everyone else doing the communicating for them. Waiting relays the message you are ready to receive their response, or for them to take the lead themselves. Once your child provides a response, then it's important for you to respond to them immediately afterwards.



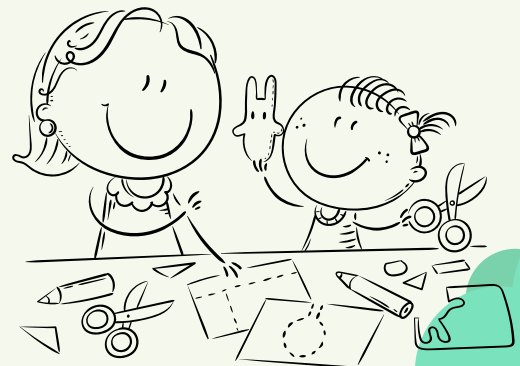
Mom was making a puzzle when Max crawled over looking at the puzzle. Instead of mom asking questions, or handing Max a piece, she waited.. and waited for 10 seconds.. Max then picked up a puzzle piece and tried to insert a piece. Mom responded immediately - you are helping mommy make her puzzle (with excitement and a big smile!)

03

Listen

Pay close attention to all of your child's words and sounds. Ensure not to interrupt them or try to finish what they are trying to say. You may know what they want or are trying to say, but let them try! When you listen to your child's message, you're also letting them know that what they are trying to say is important. Listening helps with building your child's confidence, independence, and self-esteem. This helps build her confidence and self-esteem. You may not always understand what they are trying to say, but acknowledging you're trying your best to understand is important.

What should I do?



Mom and Lucy were making crafts together. Lucy said "bubby". Mom listened to Lucy, acknowledged her words, and responded by saying "yes, that is a bunny!"

