

Spotlight on Development

Review the definition of **joint attention** with Home Visitors. **Joint attention** (shared attention) occurs when two people focus on the same thing. Example: babies and toddlers must regularly interact with other people before they begin to listen to the words. Over time with consistent listening and attending to what a parent is saying, they learn to understand what a parent is saying by linking meaning to the words. Simply stated:

- Interaction leads to listening.
- Listening leads to understanding language.
- Understanding language leads to using language.
- Using language (such as gestures, facial expressions, eye gaze) leads to talking.

What might my child say or do?

A **joint attention** event usually begins when one person does something to alert someone else. Examples:

- Words - "Hey mom!" or "Look!"
- Gestures - pointing or showing you an item
- Nonverbal methods - The child looks at something and then looks back to you as if saying, "Hey! I see it!"

What can I do to help my child develop?

Share with home visitors a few tips that can help improve **joint attention** and increase receptive language.

- **Repeat:** On a HIPPY activity, if the child is nonverbal, have the parent **say** the word and then try and get the child to mimic/repeat the word.
- **Show me:** Model, model and model.
- **Point:** Have the child **point** to the picture that represents the word.
- **Eye Contact:** Make eye contact before giving them an instruction. Get on their level.
- **Reduce background noise:** Turn off background noise in the home (e.g. television, radio, music) when engaging with the child to reduce/minimize distractions.

EXPOSURE IS THE KEY! The child needs to hear language. Something as simple as the parent repeating the word helps increase receptive language. The research shows a child needs multiple exposures before they learn what the word means and for the word to become part of their receptive vocabulary.

Repeat to Learn, Learn to Repeat.

Activity 1 Language and Literacy – Oink, Moo, Meow

What your child will learn from these activities

The new book is a concept book and will be used the next three weeks. Concept books expand children's understanding of an idea, relationship, or theme.

Explain to home visitors how to recognize a concept book:

1. A concept book helps children learn age appropriate concepts (like colors, shapes, animals, etc.) and usually does so in a creative and engaging way.
2. The book may or may not have a plot. **Example:** Oink, Moo, Meow has no plot, but Mouse Paint is a concept book about colors and this book has a beginning, middle and end.
3. The book relies on pictures. The illustrations convey the concepts.

What concept are we focused on in Oink, Moo, Meow?

Answer: The sound associated with each animal.

What to do

1-2. Using the **Resource:** What is good about sharing books? Should be printed out (from HUSA web site) and distributed to each family. This resource will be delivered in a guided discussion format. What does the parent know? How can I help my child?

Note: Demonstrate during training how to deliver this resource. The time spent training will benefit delivery of this resource in Year 1 and Year 2.

4. We want to encourage the child to hold the book and turn the pages. The parent may need to gently and calmly take the child's hand and help them pick up the book or turn the pages of the book. This technique is called "hand over hand". Hand over hand is a technique where the parent calmly and gently takes the child's hands to help them follow through with what they are asking of them. The parent's hands are **under** the child's hands guiding their movement. As the parent turns the pages in the book, the child watches their own hands turning the page.

5-6. The child needs time to turn through the book and find an animal they may have seen. The young 2 child may not answer, but the parent can turn the pages of the book and ask guiding questions?

Example: Have we seen a cat? We have seen a cat at Grammy's house?

6-7. Be sure and modify the script to focus on the animal the **child found**.

Reminder: Sitting still is not required:

Trying to read to a child who just will not sit still can be frustrating. It's important for the parent to be patient and keep trying. Some children may like to stand up while the parent reads to them. Others may like to look at a page or two before moving on to something else. It is important to keep the book out and try again later. The child may want to return to it later, which parents should encourage. Also, parents should not worry if the child does not sit still for the entire book - the child's attention spans will get longer as we move throughout the curriculum year. Parents might want to keep reading even if the child moves around. Don't assume that because the child isn't looking at you or the book that he or she isn't interested or listening.

Home visitors should be prepared to help the parent and offer suggestions on how to make reading a successful experience.

Activity 2: Language and Literacy

What to do

1. Where are the parents keeping their books? Is it accessible to the child?

Encourage parents to store the books where the child can easily reach them. Encourage the parent to keep a few books in their purse (or diaper bag).

5. Remind parent to point to the animal in the book and allow the child time to say "pig" and make the sound "oink".

6. Many children will be familiar with the Old MacDonald song.

7. Encourage parents to over exaggerate the pause to cue the child.

8. The "stop moving" instruction may need to be modeled for some children.

10. Allow the child to find an animal from the book. What if the child chooses a lion? A lion may not have lived on the farm, but sing the song and have fun!

THINK

The Age 2 activities are designed for repetition. Encourage the parent to repeat the activity at another time during the day or later in the week. The more the child becomes familiar with the activity, the more they will be able to be engaged. The child needs:

- Time to absorb it.
- Time to make it their own.

Time to APPLY it in their own situations.

Does this apply to adults? Do we accomplish the task better the second or third time?

Activity 3: Think and Explore – Inside/Outside

What your child will learn from this activity

Why is **spatial awareness** important? Allow home visitors to share their own ideas of the importance of this skill.

Learning Spatial Concepts – The child is developing a sense of distance through movement and exploration. Have home visitors consider a child putting blocks in and out of a container. This is an activity which helps the child think about many spatial relationships, such as **in, out, full, and empty** while giving their muscles practice in realizing these concepts. Spatial awareness helps a child move around larger objects. By age 2, toddlers begin to consolidate these skills during daily routines. They climb up onto the stool to reach the faucet to brush their teeth. They look on the low shelf for their favorite toy.

*The **most effective way** for children to gain body awareness and an understanding of spatial relationships is through active exploration.*

You will need

Sites may want to provide some string, rope, or yarn to form the circle needed in the activity. It is important that the thickness and color of the yarn/string be easy for the Age 2 to see.

Example: Brown, thin yarn on a beige carpet is hard to see.

What to do

1. It is important to make sure the child understands the name of each room. The child must understand **kitchen** and **bedroom** are the names of the room.
2. Over emphasize the words **in** and **out**.
3. Switch – If the child does not know the word switch use change.
11. The circle needs to be the appropriate size to walk inside and outside.

THINK

The **THINK** activities are designed to reinforce the activity and guided discussion should be used to help parents understand how to incorporate into their routine.

Guided discussion is the method for delivery of the **THINK** activities. Home visitors should ask the parent of specific examples of how they can use the words inside and outside in their daily routine.

Activity 4: Motor – Balance, My Body

What your child will learn from these activities

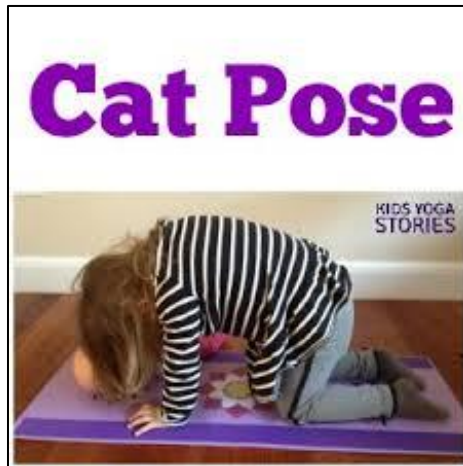
What is balance? It is a complicated process where large groups of muscles work together to maintain postural control. Balance dictates our ability to do almost everything, from sitting and **standing** to **walking** and kicking a ball. Review with home visitors the gross motor developmental stages they may see in the child.

Most 2-year-olds by the end of their third year will:

- Walk, run and start learning to jump with both feet
- Pull or carry toys **while** walking
- Throw and kick a ball
- Try to catch a ball with both hands
- Stand on tiptoes and balance on one foot
- Climb on chairs and playground equipment
- Walk up stairs, holding on to your hand and using alternate feet

What to do

2. Notice how the activity reviews and reinforces the **Language and Literacy** activity this week.
3. Model, model and model following simple directions. The child will watch and copy your movements.
4. "I am stretching like a cat stretching his back." This move is much like a yoga stretch called the cat pose.



5. If the child is unable to wave their hand (front paw) and shake their leg (back paw) at the same time allow the child to do each separately. Place your "paw" (hand) back down and then shake your back leg (back paw.)
8. Move like other animals in the book. Pick your child's favorite.

Activity 5: Motor – Sorting, Sizes

What your child will learn from these activities

Home visitors need to be aware of developmental milestones for the child. Review the following information:

24 months old – After age 2, children are beginning to refine their fine motor skills including hand grasp. Examples you may see include:

- Manipulates play dough with fingers.
- Can build a tower 9 blocks high.
- Can turn doorknobs.
- Can pick up small objects with **pincer grasp** (index finger and thumb).
- Can complete 3-piece puzzles.
- Makes scribbles on paper.
- Can wash hands independently.
- Can screw lids on and off containers.
- Zips and unzips large zippers.
- Able to use a spoon correctly.

The pincer grasp will be used in the motor activity. Home visitors should be familiar with the term and be able to explain to parents how to encourage the grasp. The pincer grasp uses the tips of the index and thumb fingers for grasping.

You will need

The bowls used in this activity need to be easy to identify as small and big. Over exaggerating the bigger bowl. Example: Using a large soup pot or mixing bowl for the large bowl and a cereal bowl for the small bowl.

What to do

1. It is important to start with a few items and then add items after child has mastered the concept.
2. How would a paper ball feel?
3. Encourage parents to **point** to the item when saying big or small.

4 - 5. Put the big cotton ball in the big bowl. Be very specific with instructing the child. Repeat big and little for each item. Language is very important.

Note: Once the child understands the game, some older Age 2 children may enjoy seeing how fast they can sort the cotton balls.

THINK

Encourage parents to complete the **THINK** activities. When reviewing the previous week interview parent and ask specific questions that refer specifically to several of the **THINK** activities.

Family Feedback

Have the home visitors read the family feedback questions silently. **Using a blank piece of paper have them write down their responses. Have each home visitor share one of their responses to the questions.** This allows the coordinator to receive very important feedback and understanding from the staff.

What do you notice is different about this storybook from *Goodnight Moon*?

Example: Real pictures are used. She loves animals and I found she was more interested in this book. I loved watching her face as she made the animal sound.

Did you have an opportunity to see any animals this week? How did your child respond?

Example: We went to the pumpkin patch and they had a petting zoo. She loved petting the mini donkey....until it "hee hawed" she cried!

What do you notice about your child's fine motor skills?

Example: They are developing. I have noticed she is holding her spoon with more control.

How do you think the crawling like a cat activity will help your child's balance?

Example: Not sure, but my home visitor said it will help her develop core strength. She had trouble lifting one arm and one leg together. We will keep trying. This activity did help her follow directions and held her attention longer.