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ASD Tips

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Sharing Meaning

“I hold things up for my child to look at so that he knows what I’m talking about, but I don’t think he connects the ‘thing’ with what I’m saying.”

What to look out for:

- Some children with autism may use an object for a repetitive activity like tapping. However, they may give no sign of knowing what the object **is**, or what it can be **used for**.
- Other children just repeat words they have heard without seeming to attach them to a particular object or picture. They appear to be practicing speaking, but they are not communicating with anyone else.
- Some children with autism may take no notice when an adult tries to draw their attention to an object.
- They may not **show** things to people around them, or look towards them to gain their interest.

Things to try:

- Copy the child’s actions to help him understand that you are interested in what he is doing. This will encourage **him** to do the things to show **you**.
- Encourage him to watch you ‘showing off’ with silly hats or funny clothes. You could try using face paints and then making different faces to him.
- Use photographs, or a mirror, to encourage the child to look at you, himself or other people.
- Show **him** things **you** have done. Point out how things work.



- Use 'hiding and finding' games to build up the child's interest in things you are talking about. Try putting things down a long tube and waiting for them to appear. Talk about the objects as it disappears and as it re-appears.
- When he has learned to understand a pointing gesture, point to the things you are talking about and say, 'Jonathan, look ...'.
- When you talk to the child, make sure he knows what it is you are speaking about. Draw his attention to it, by sticking a word or a picture **on** the object.
- Use the same word or phrase each time you talk about a particular object, action or event. Don't be tempted to say too much. Keep what you say simple, and use pauses to encourage the child to look at you and the thing you are talking about.
- Teach him how to show things to people. If he understands simple instructions say, '**Show** it to granddad'. If he needs help, walk with him, guiding his hand to show things to people.

