



People Play—Following Your Child's Lead

This people play is about having lots of fun together and letting your child take the lead in play.

Why do we do it?

Following your child's lead in play will help them to develop important skills they need for communication:

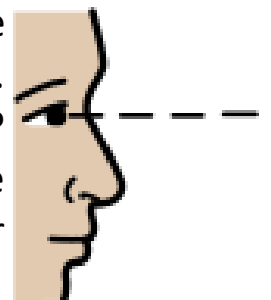
- Noticing other people and enjoying being together
- Understanding and using eye contact, facial expressions and gestures
- Taking turns with sounds and/or actions



What do I do?

Sit with your child and watch what they do. Follow their lead and join in with whatever activity they are doing:

- **Mirroring**— Copy what your child does. This includes using the same body language and facial expressions, copying movements and repeating any sounds your child makes. For example, if your child is jumping on the spot, then you jump alongside them.
- **Expanding**— This means slightly changing or developing their sounds or actions. For example, if your child is rolling a car on the floor, you could roll your car on their leg and wait to see how they react.
- **Pause and watch your child** - At all times you should be fully focused on how your child responds to your actions. Do they stop what they are doing? Do they look at you? Do they smile or laugh? The more you watch, the more you will notice how to adapt your play to keep their interest.



Things to Remember

- Play together in this way for up to 10 minutes once or twice every day at home and at school/ nursery.



- Remember, when you follow your child's lead you are responding to what they do, you are not teaching them how to play. (For example, if your child likes to only spin the wheels of cars, you should copy this, and at this stage not teach them to drive the cars around).



- You might feel 'silly' or out of your comfort zone when trying this for the first time. You may find yourself doing something you've never done with your child before, such as rolling on the floor and making fun noises. The more you do it, the more natural it will feel.



- Where possible, have a quiet environment without lots of distractions. Turn the television off and put phones and favourite toys out of view.

