

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service

Supporting play and learning with a common object

Visual attention

- Move item slowly in front of the child – left to right and reverse, up and down and reverse
- Make item disappear behind you – will child look for it; will child anticipate where it will come from next?
- Move item in time to music with a strong beat
- Move and stop, move and stop – will the child continue to look and show that they notice the difference
- Hold the item in different positions so that different aspects can be examined
- Hold the item in front of your face then play peep boo

Touch

- Use item to tickle hands, face, feet of child – watch for their responses before continuing
- Hold item in different places – will child move or reach for it?
- Support child to explore the item with their hands, mouth (if appropriate) or feet. Does the child notice that different parts of the item have different textures?
- Experiment with different types of touch with item on the child arms or legs - light or firm
- Watch how the child handles the item – moves from hand to hand, grasps then drops, holds and looks, shakes etc.

Movement

- Help child to hold on to part of the item as you gently sway it

Sound

- Tap item on different surfaces and listen to the sounds
- Tap different rhythms
- Use the item to 'conduct' as you sing

Remember to

- Using your facial expression and tone of voice add in repetitive routines to build suspense – 'Here it comes!' or 'Ready steady.....'
- Make play routines easy for the child to understand and anticipate
- Build in pauses to give you time to observe and respond to the child
- Give the child feedback as they play and explore
- Look out for key skills that may be developing such as:
 - ⇒ Joint gaze
 - ⇒ Anticipation
 - ⇒ Awareness of sound and movement
 - ⇒ Initiating communication
 - ⇒ Sharing in enjoyment
 - ⇒ Understanding of cause and effect