



Joint Attention and Gestures: How Do We Teach Them?

ASHA Convention, November 16, 2013

© Rachel Arntson, M.S., CCC-SLP
Talk It Rock It, LLC

P.O. Box 1734, Maple Grove, MN 55311

www.TalkItRockIt.com

Rachel@TalkItRockIt.com



Disclosure

- **Rachel Arntson is owner and creator of all Talk It Rock It products (formerly known as Kids' Express Train) and receives compensation for products sold including music CDs, the WE CAN TALK book, and the Push-Pull Puzzle.**

Although this seminar is intended to teach others the treatment strategies used daily by Rachel in an early intervention program, materials are occasionally used as demonstrations ONLY for the purpose of showing others how to create their own materials in their work. No techniques taught during this session require any purchased materials to implement.

- **To talk to Rachel about her company and products, visit booth 2410.**



So Much to Say So Little Time, 😊

- Research on gestures and joint attention
- Suggestions, techniques, and activities
- Case study



Research

- Olswang, Lesley B., Rodriguez, Barbara, Timler, GERALYN. (1998).– Predictors of children with communication disorders needing intervention: Decreased use of gestures is a key predictor.
- Capone, N. C., & McGregor, K. K. (2004). Excellent discussion of gestures and their importance in communication.
- Wetherby, Amy, (2013). Implementing the SCERTS Model for Young Children with Autism Spectrum.



Expected Ages - Gestures and Joint Attention

- Crais, Elizabeth R., Watson, Linda R. and Baranek, Grace T. (2009). Gives approximate age levels for gestures and joint attention.
 - **Under 6 months**
 - ✓ Smiles with shared affect
 - ✓ Whines or fusses when distressed
 - **6-7 months**
 - ✓ Looking and vocalizing
 - ✓ Reach to be picked up
 - ✓ Pushing away with arm
 - **7-8 months**
 - ✓ Anticipatory behavior
 - ✓ Reach for objects with whole hand, 7 mos, with vocalization – 8 mos.
 - ✓ Pushing away with hand and vocalizing
 - ✓ Showing off
 - ✓ Waves in context – 8 mos



Expected Ages - Gestures and Joint Attention

- **9-10 months**
 - ✓ Reaches with open and closing hand
 - ✓ Giving an object to comment
 - ✓ First clapping
 - ✓ Waves to prompt
 - ✓ Shows objects
 - ✓ Coordinated joint engagement – The gaze alternates between object and person (9 to 14 months)
- **10-11 months**
 - ✓ Initiates social games
 - ✓ Giving an object and vocalizes
 - ✓ Pointing
 - ✓ Shows and vocalizes
 - ✓ Reaches with open and closed hand with vocalization



Expected Ages - Gestures and Joint Attention

- **11-12 months**
 - ✓ Shows function of objects
 - ✓ Giving an object to request an action
- **12-13 months**
 - ✓ Hugs objects
 - ✓ Excited clapping
 - ✓ Point to objects to request
 - ✓ Point to objects combined with a word



Joint Attention Definition

- Child attends to social partner
- Shifts attention between people and objects
- Draws partner's attention to objects or events
- Shares affect, emotional states, or perspectives





Joint Attention and Gestures are a Social Event

- Children with autism may not gesture, give eye contact, comment, point, follow a point, or combine vocalizations with gestures and eye gaze because they are all social events.
 - Story of G – Swinging
 - Story of N – The newspaper ads
 - Story of N – The difficulty with eye gaze, gestures, and verbalizing simultaneously
 - Let's watch a video



So Where Do We Begin? This acronym may help you.

➤ I want your child to....



- **WIN**

- ✓ Be **Watchful** – Joint Attention and Staying Power
- ✓ Be **Intentional** – The Gesture System
- ✓ Be **Noisy** – Any Vocalizations and/or Combined with Gestures

- **TIRI**

- ✓ Turn Take
- ✓ Imitate
- ✓ Respond
- ✓ Initiate





Interviewing the parent and observing routines – Try this format

- 1. Play with people
 - Social games like peek-a-boo, songs, rhymes
- 2. Play with toys/props
 - Blocks, puzzles, sand box, play-dough, cars, babies, balls
- 3. Meals and Snacks
 - Preparations, Eating, Cleanup
- 4. Caregiving
 - Dressing, Diapering, Bath, Washing hands, Brushing teeth
- 5. Books, Early Literacy
 - Reading, Drawing
- 6. Family chores
 - Mailbox, Laundry, Care for Pets, Watering Plants, Gardening



The What, the How, and the Why

- WHAT can parents do that are reasonable and not overwhelming?
- HOW should we do the activity? Techniques and strategies
- WHY are we implementing the strategies and activities?

Be careful that you are not instilling guilt in families or overwhelming them.

Keep a list of techniques that parents are using confidently.

- We can demonstrate an activity or technique, but observe the parent trying it. Observing will reveal how hard it is.
- My favorite activity? The ones that the parent is already doing. Build on their strengths.



WE CAN TALK

A possible place to begin

- W** Wait, watch, and wonder about what your child is communicating.
- E** Exaggerate and entice with your gestures and voice to increase imitation.
- C** Comment about what your child and you are doing, seeing, and enjoying.
- A** Analyze the position of your child and yourself to maximize learning.
- N** Notice when your child initiates communication. Respond and add to it.
- T** Take turns talking, giving your child time to respond. Keep it going.
- A** Ask questions that clarify a child's needs and requests.
- L** Laugh a lot! Laughing together is a great way to get talking started.
- K** Keep books and songs handy.



Let's talk general strategies

- What's the point? Tours of the house, lotion time.
- Be the messenger – Give, Show, Tell, Ask.
- Waiting – versus withholding.
- Use activities with no objects first.
- Does the child watch your turn? How do we change the game to be less about the object and more about the parent?
 - Be silly with objects.
 - Hide them in child's clothing.



Let's talk general strategies

- Be the giver – “Give me your hand” when they want something. Hold their hand when they give you something. This extends staying power and the length of the routine or turn.
- Laughter is key – Stages of laughter.
- Use visual and verbal choices – out of reach to work on pointing, reaching, comprehension.
- Activities with a clear beginning, middle, and end.



Some specific examples of using the WHAT, HOW, and WHY in home visits

- **WHAT – Swing game in a blanket.**
- **HOW do we do the activity?**
 - Take turns, if possible, with a sibling.
 - Position yourself in front of your child.
 - Use a predictable beginning, Ready, Set, Go. Wait before you say Go.
 - Sing a simple song, “Swinging, swinging, swinging, Whee!”
 - Wait for eye contact and any movement or gesture to indicate wanting more.
 - Use the sign and enticing verbal of “more” or “swing.”
 - Practice some speech imitation tasks in between turns.
- **WHY are these techniques important?**
 - Encourages staying power and willingness to watch and take turns.
 - Encouraging gestures or signs paired with enticing verbal can increase verbalization. It can also facilitate a child’s ability to move and verbalize simultaneously.
 - Gives opportunity to practice imitation of sounds at the end of each swing.



Some specific examples of using the WHAT, HOW, and WHY in home visits

- **WHAT** – A child wanting to open a door to the refrigerator or to go to the basement.
- **HOW** do we do the activity?
 - Practice teaching child to get his mom, hold her hand, and take her to the door.
 - Position yourself and ask your child, “Do you want to go downstairs?”
 - Teach “Touchdown yeah” with gestures. Model for your child, but do not request. Just entice.
 - Knock on the door, saying, “Knock knock”. Wait. (Count under your breath to 3)
 - Eventually help your child to knock on the door, but initially just say it with the gesture.
- **WHY** are these techniques important?
 - Increase simple gestures of getting mom and pulling.
 - Encourages shifting eye gaze from the door to the person.
 - Encourages child’s ability to imitate gestures and eventually vocalizations.
 - Encourages child to wait.
 - Teaches child to initiate communication with gestures and vocalizations.



Some specific examples of using the WHAT, HOW, and WHY in home visits

- **WHAT - Animal face posters**
- **HOW do we do the activity?**
 - Hold the posters first to your face.
 - Sing, “Who is the ___ today, and what does the ___ say?” (Tune of 99 Bottles of Pop)
 - Model the animal sound. Give the poster to your child and say, “Your turn.”
- **WHY are these techniques important?**
 - Increases eye gaze.
 - Increases willingness to watch other’s turns and take a turn.
 - Be careful of praise if it breaks the flow, or be specific with praise.
 - Increases imitation attempts and accuracy.
 - Teaches a child to see other’s perspectives by turning the face to show others.



Thank you!

- Best wishes to you as you continue your honorable work with children and families!

Contact me:

Rachel Arntson

Rachel@TalkItRockIt.com



Bibliography

- Arntson, Rachel, (2008). *Ditching the + and – A System for Data Collection*. ASHA convention.
- Arntson, Rachel, (2009). *A Systematic but Flexible Therapy Format in Early Intervention* . ASHA convention.
- Arntson, Rachel, Jokumsen, Jada Anne; Simmons, Rebecca Ann, (2009). *Teaching Student Clinicians an Interactive Approach to Speech-Language Therapy*, ASHA convention.
- Arntson, Rachel, (2011). *Learning Through Laughter, Let's Get Serious About This*. ASHA convention.
- Arntson, Rachel, (2011). *WE CAN TALK ©, A Parent Training Program*. ASHA convention.
- Brady, Nancy C., Fleming, Kandace, Thiemann-Bourque, Kathy, Olswang, Lesley Dowden, Patricia, Saunders, Muriel D., and Marquis, Janet (2012). Development of the Communication Complexity Scale, *Am J Speech Lang Pathol*, 21: 16 - 28.



Bibliography

- Capone, N. C., & McGregor, K. K. (2004). Gesture development: A review for clinical and research practices. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 47*, 173–186.
- Crais, Elizabeth R., Douglas, Diane Day, Campbell, Cheryl Cox, (2004). The Intersection of the Development of Gestures and Intentionality, *J Speech Language Hearing Research, 47*: 678-694.
- Crais, Elizabeth R., Watson, Linda R. and Baranek, Grace T. (2009). Use of Gesture Development in Profiling Children's Prelinguistic Communication Skills, *Am J Speech Lang Pathol*, Feb 2009; 18: 95 - 108.
- Kaderavek, Joan N, Sulzby, Elizabeth. (1998). Parent-Child Joint Book Reading: An Observational Protocol for Young Children, *Am J Speech Lang Pathol, 7*: 33 - 47.
- Kasari, C., Gulsrud, A.C., Wong, C., Kwon, S., and Locke, J. (2010). Randomized Controlled Caregiver Mediated Joint Engagement Intervention for Toddlers with Autism. *Jour. Of Autism and Developmental Disabilities, 40*: 1045-1056.
- Nelson, P. Brooke, Adamson, Lauren B., and Bakeman, Roger. (2008). Toddlers' Joint Engagement Experience Facilitates Preschoolers' Acquisition of Theory of Mind, *Developmental Science, 11* (6): 847-852.



Bibliography

- Olswang, Lesley B., Rodriguez, Barbara, Timler, GERALYN. (1998). Recommending Intervention for Toddlers with Specific Language Learning Difficulties: We May Not Have All the Answers, But We Know a Lot, *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 7, 23-32.
- Patten, Elena, Watson, Linda, (2011). Interventions Targeting Attention in Young Children with Autism, *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology* Vol.20 60-69 February 2011. doi:10.1044/1058-0360(2010/09-0081)
- Rollins, Pamela Rosenthal (1999). Early Pragmatic Accomplishments and Vocabulary Development in Preschool Children With Autism, *Am J Speech Lang Pathol*, 8: 181 - 190.
- Rollins, Pamela Rosenthal, Wambacq, I., Dowell, DI, Mathews, L., and Reese, P. (1998). An intervention technique for children with autistic spectrum disorder: Joint attentional routines. *Journal of Communication Disorders*, 31, 181-193.
- Wetherby, Amy M., Prizant, Barry M., and Hutchinson, Thomas A. (1998). Communicative, Social/Affective, and Symbolic Profiles of Young Children With Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders, *Am J Speech Lang Pathol*, 7: 79 - 91.



Bibliography

- Wetherby, Amy, (2013), Implementing the SCERTS Model for Young Children with Autism Spectrum, Seminar in Maple Grove, Minnesota
- Amy M. Wetherby & Barry M., Communication and Symbolic Behavior Scales Developmental Profile, (2002) Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.
- Wetherby, A., Watt, N., Morgan, L., & Shumway, S. (2007). Social communication profiles of children with autism spectrum disorders in the second year of life. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 37, 960-975.
- Wetherby, A. & Woods, J. (2006) Early social interaction project for children with autism spectrum disorders beginning in the second year of life: A preliminary study. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 26(2), 67-82.
- Woods, Juliann J., Wilcox, M. Jeanne, Friedman, Mollie and Murch, Trudi. (2011). Collaborative Consultation in Natural Environments: Strategies to Enhance Family-Centered Supports and Services. *Lang Speech Hear Serv Sch*, Jul 2011; 42: 379 - 392.