



## Parent Information Sheet

### Improving Eye Contact

*Good eye contact is important for social interaction. It helps your child to pick up more information about language through non-verbal cues such as facial expression and signs/gestures. Remember to use the phrase 'Good Looking' and the Makaton sign / visual clue to help your child.*

1. **Liaise** - Liaise with your child's Speech & Language Therapist, Class Teacher or SENCO.
2. **Peek-A-Boo Games** - Peek-a-boo games can be played anywhere: from behind a curtain, when getting dressed or while having a bath. You can encourage your child to look at you by sitting at his/her level or opposite the child. Hide your face behind your hands and play peek-a-boo games.
3. **What's Mummy/Daddy Wearing?** - Try putting on and taking off a brightly coloured or interesting hat, gloves, a colourful scarf, sari or sunglasses encouraging your child to look at you.
4. **Making Faces** - Make funny faces or sounds while looking at the mirror together. Wait for your child to look at you before you continue or wait for your child to copy you. You could also do this during bath times when sitting at his/her eye level.
5. **Blowing Bubbles** - Before you blow bubbles, wait for your child to look at you. You may have to call out their name, help them anticipate blowing by saying, 'Ready, steady...' or shake the bottle of bubbles to get their attention. You can encourage your child to look at you by placing the bottle of bubbles close to your face.
6. **Ready, Steady Go!** - Play any ball game (i.e. skittles), blowing bubbles, a marble run or a car game with your child. Say 'ready, steady....' and pause briefly to get his/her attention before saying 'go' and throwing the ball, rolling the car or blowing bubbles.
7. **Ball Games** - Play ball games of throw and catch or passing, rolling or kicking. Wait for your child to look at you before you throw/pass/roll or kick it to him/her. Try using a big colourful beach ball or balloon. You can also show the ball to your child and then make it disappear behind your back saying 'all gone'. Wait till you get eye contact from your child and show the ball to him/her saying 'Here it is!'

8. **Toys** - Play with inset puzzles, a posting box, blocks or stacking rings by holding one piece at a time close to your face at your eye level. This may encourage your child to look at you. If he/she does not look at you, try banging two pieces together or throwing it up and down to gain your child attention. When he/she looks at you, hand over the piece to her/him.
9. **Puppets** - Put on a hand, glove or a home-made sock puppet on your hand and wave your hands or wriggle your fingers close to your face to encourage your child to look at you. Similarly, you can use finger puppets or draw faces on your fingertips with washable paint, paint your nails or use hand paint on your hands. Place your hand close to your face and wriggle your fingers and hide them, encouraging your child to look at you.
10. **Painted Faces** - Use face paints to paint shapes, animal faces or clown faces on your child's face and on your own. This activity may encourage your child to look at you while you draw on his/her face.
11. **Praise** - Don't forget to praise your child for their efforts.