

Talking Tips FOR PARENTS



"Not this"



"Yes: shows joint attention
while feeding"

For this issue our topic will be "**Joint Attention.**" How can you create many moments of joint attention throughout the day?

Earlier we defined "joint attention" as a time when both parents and child are simultaneously focusing on the same object or event of focus.

Let's see if we can outline a few examples of joint attention for you to consider in your household.

Making Refrigerator Dough Cookies

- 1) This past weekend my four-year-old granddaughter and I made St. Patrick's Day cookies together. I bought some refrigerated cookie dough that comes in 24 small square pieces of dough that you break apart and bake.
- 2) In order to establish joint attention with Madelyn so we could easily talk about what we were doing, *we sat close with the cookie sheet and package of cookie dough between us.* This allowed us both to focus on the cookie dough as we broke it apart and talked about putting the pieces in rows.
- 3) We talked about the shape of the pieces of dough as compared to the round cookies pictured on the package. We wondered how pieces of dough could turn into circles and agreed to check on the cookies as they baked to see what happened.
- 4) I could see quickly when she had trouble handling more than 2 cookie pieces at a time to break apart.
- 5) We also could easily talk about what color of sprinkles we should use for St. Patrick's Day and why we shouldn't use the others.
- 6) Fun activity for toddlers+ and you would adjust your language level accordingly. Use similar positioning for many activities.

Feeding Toddlers

- 1) This past weekend I put my 18-month old grandson in his highchair and pulled the highchair over so it was positioned in front of me.
- 2) I talked about his pears as I cut them in small pieces for finger feeding. I also talked about the fork I was using and compared it to his plastic child's fork.
- 3) I talked about his grilled cheese sandwich as I cut it in small pieces with a knife. I showed him the knife and told him only Mommies, Daddys and Nanans can have a knife because the knife is sharp.
- 4) I could see that a few of the pieces were too big as he had trouble swallowing. We talked about that and I cut them in smaller pieces.
- 5) Multiply this by three meals and a couple of snacks, and you have many opportunities each week for joint attention.

