



## PREVERBAL SKILLS

### ATTENTION

A child needs to be able to focus on objects or people in order to learn about them. It is also important to attend to experiences.

Attending involves:

- \* Turning towards an object
- \* Gazing at the object
- \* Sustaining gaze for a period of time
- \* Maintaining interest in an object with the time increasing with the child's age
- \* Attending to an activity initiated by both adults and other children as well as self initiated activities

### EYE CONTACT

This is a basic skill beginning shortly after birth. Eye contact enables a child to focus on people's faces and objects. Children watch the mouth movements of the speaker and then attempt to copy them.

If the child has difficulties with hearing, it is imperative that they can clearly see how sounds are made.



### OBJECT PERMANENCE

This occurs when a child understands that people and objects exist even when they aren't visible. It is important for the development of language. It also reflects cognitive development. It means that if a ball rolls under the table, the child realises it still exists and will begin to look for it. It enables a child to label things not present. Children's early words may indicate development of object permanence, such as 'gone' when an object is removed from sight.




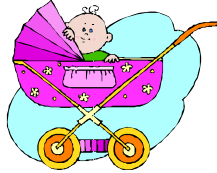
### CAUSALITY

This is a sensorimotor notion that is a prerequisite for communication.

A child realises that they can make requests and expect a result (cause and effect). It begins as a nonverbal skill. For example: 'I push this button and a sheep pops up' or 'I cry and mum comes in' or 'I point to that cup and dad gets me a drink.'

Once first words commence, children realise that when they say words people respond immediately.



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MEANS-END</b></p> <p>This is an action sequence signalling the development of intention. The child will approach a task anticipating the outcome. They then select a means to attain the end. Once a means is selected, the child maintains that behaviour. The action stops when the desired end is maintained. When children display early tool use, it reflects means-ends. So a child using an object to retrieve another is learning means-end behaviour. Pull string toys facilitate means ends behaviour.</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PLAY</b></p> <p>A child needs to explore and learn about different objects before they can use and understand the labels. There are various stages in acquiring play skills. Children begin to explore toys via trial and error. If they have difficulty, they will allow adult assistance. Auto symbolic play will follow where the child pretends to do daily activities such as pretending to drink from a cup. Symbolic play is where one object represents another, such as using a banana for a telephone. Representative play (role playing) begins around 24 months, eg. playing roles of people in families eg. Mummy and Daddy</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MOTOR IMITATION</b></p> <p>In order to imitate, a child is required to complete 3 tasks – turn taking, attending to the action and replicating the features of the action. It is helpful to develop the child’s ability to copy actions because motor movements can be totally physically assisted unlike speech. The transition from copying actions to copying sounds can be made, eg: rubbing our tummy while making an ‘mmm’ sound or acting out animal actions while making the animals noise. Use of gestures represents early labelling. Joining words often follows.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SOUND IMITATION</b></p> <p>Vocal imitation and gestures are closely related at around 9 months. Gestures are learnt with motor imitation and an increase of one will generally increase the other. Children play with sounds long before they imitate. As they begin to copy sounds, they may relate them to real words. This may facilitate the transition from sound imitation to word imitation.</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INTENT</b></p> <p>There needs to be a purpose to communicate. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Seeking attention to self</li> <li>* Seeking Attention to events, objects or other people</li> <li>* Requesting objects</li> <li>* Requesting actions</li> <li>* Requesting information</li> <li>* Greetings/farewells</li> <li>* Protesting/rejecting</li> <li>* Responding/acknowledging</li> <li>* Informing and answering</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>TURNTAKING</b></p> <p>This is the basis of communication and interaction. It starts off as taking turns in an activity and moves to taking turns in a verbal interaction. For eg: the adult pushes the ball towards the child and the child recognises they should push it back to the adult. As the child becomes older, they recognise when the adult asks for/requests a response, they should comply.</p> 