



NC SEEDLING



Study to
Explore
Early
Development

North Carolina
SEED

Steps to Purposeful Communication: Co-Active Movement

Many children do things on purpose (such as getting their favorite toy or getting a favorite food from the refrigerator), but do not realize they can communicate to you using their behavior. Co-active movement is one way to establish purposeful communication between you and your child. It helps develop an understanding about routines and what happens next.

- Note movements (e.g., bouncing, swinging) your child likes.
- Choose a movement and begin with your child in close physical contact (e.g., your arms around

him/her).

- Use simple, rhythmic movements and use rhythm in your voice. Create simple songs with words describing the movement (e.g., "Swinging, swinging, -- swinging, swinging, -- swing, swing, swing" to the tune of "Are you sleeping?").
- After several sequences, begin the sequence again then suddenly stop.
- Wait for movement from her. Reinforce any reactions she gives you. Continuation of movement

is reinforcement, because you are using a movement she enjoys. As you continue the movement, label the movement. For example, "Swing! Oh, you want to swing!" This assigns meaning to this movement.

When your child learns she can control your reaction by producing a specific movement, she has learned "purposeful" or "intentional" communication.

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www.NCSEED.org

NOTES

- NC SEED has 236 families enrolled
- Our full edition newsletter will soon be available by email

Communication Temptations

They are exactly what they sound like! We set up the environment to tempt children to communicate with us. To do this, we simply sabotage activities.

For example:

- Give a child one shoe instead of two
- Give him something he needs help opening (e.g., bubble bottle with lid screwed on tightly)

- Pour a small sip of juice in a cup
- Put a sock on your hand
- Hand the child a fork to eat soup

Activities like these promote language and a variety of reasons to communicate such as requesting ("more, again, want, help, open") and getting information ("Where is my spoon?"). They also promote use of more advanced grammar such as "not your hand!"

Wetherby & Prizant (1989)

