

Curiosity: Developing Curiosity and Communication

By introducing activities in this way that are visual and appealing to your child will help to develop their curiosity and communication. During these activities they will be learning to share enjoyable interactions and anticipate what is happening next whilst you are modelling the language, all of which are important skills that underpin language development.

To do this activity with your child, you will need:

- A quiet area to work in for 5-10 minutes every day
- A variety of interesting containers or drawstring bags
- A variety of different interesting and novel items. Change the contents daily so that the contents of the containers are always different e.g. wind-up toys, scarves, glitter, confetti, light up toys, ball activities, bubbles, dried foods, water, etc. Try to keep looking for items that your child might find intriguing and may need your help to model and demonstrate to make the activity more exciting and interesting.

How to practice

Build up the child's anticipation of what is going to happen. I usually say something like 'What's inside?' and look interested in the item myself. I might shake the tin and listen and make the noise I hear from the tin, then say, 'Open it' and open the tin. Continue to make the noise associated with what you have heard. Try to use minimal language and use the same sounds and words each time that you present the item.

Build up anticipation by looking inside the tin and looking interested. Try not to let the child look into the tin. Carefully present the item to the child and try not to let them grab it and walk away. In the first instance, you are trying to encourage the child to watch and understand the activity.

Wait and look at the child's response and see if you think they are interested and watching, then pause and wait with the object. See if they will show you that they want more. Some children will look at you, some might touch the object or touch your hand (try and get them to look at you at the same time by holding the item near your face) or they might have a sign or symbol they can use to ask for 'more'.

You can name the object and use the verb to describe what it is doing using minimal language, for example:

- Bubbles – blow, pop, open
- Scarves – pull, up-up-up, drop
- Wind-up toys – turn, go, stop
- Balloon – blow, go
- Sand through a funnel or sieve – scoop, pour

When the child is familiar with the activity, give them the opportunity to explore the materials towards the end of the session and see if they imitate what you have modelled. See if they can indicate that they want 'more' 'stop' or 'help' by pausing and waiting for them to communicate.

