



Being a play partner



Here are some tips to support your interactions with your child/ren:

1) Start by **observing** your child's interests; what are they doing? Are they filling a pot with pasta, trying to get a sock or drawing a picture?

Letting your child lead begins with **OWL**:

Observe

Wait

Listen



The first letters of these three important words can help you remember them.

OWLing is an important strategy that you can use with your child throughout an interaction. When you OWL, you open up all sorts of opportunities for communication. You may even discover that your child is communicating more than you realized.

Observe, Wait and Listen:
Taking the time to OWL is a wise way to start.

2) **Wait** - This gives your child an opportunity to initiate play with you. A good tip is to be at your child's level (kneeling, sitting etc.) and look at them expectantly.

3) **Listen** to what your child tells you. This gives value to their communication and idea/comment. If you aren't sure what they are saying repeat the sounds they make or look around for clues and comment on what you see.

4) **Extend** their play by introducing new ideas, thinking aloud or posing new problem related to what they are doing. E.g. adding different shaped block to a tower they are building and seeing what happens. You could also pose a problem 'I wonder what would happen if.....?' As your child may need to discuss you joining their play.

Have a look at this video of an adult making play dough snakes with a child - it is a lovely example of how to be a play partner:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsnkxNUBRFY>



Please email us if you would like more information on being a play partner
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