

TUNING INTO YOUR CHILD

What do we mean by 'tuning into your child'?

Children communicate in lots of different ways as they're playing and interacting. They might not be playing with toys in the expected ways, but you can still do this activity by looking at whatever your child *is* doing. They might be exploring an object, part of the environment, a physical movement, or something else that interests them.

Tuning into your child involves **waiting, watching and listening** to your child without interrupting them, to see exactly what they're doing. You will know some things your child already enjoys and some ways they communicate, but it is still a valuable exercise to try. By starting to tune into your child, you will be able to follow their lead in play.

We'd like you to:



1. Wait – wait to see what your child is interested in doing or playing with. Don't worry if they don't like toys, let's see what they are interested in.



2. Get down on their level – ideally face to face, so they can see your eyes and face easily. Sometimes this means lying on the floor next to them.



3. Look at what they are doing – don't tell them what to do or make suggestions – just observe what they're doing



4. Now listen to your child – are they making sounds, noises, words? Are they sending you any messages? Sometimes messages can be very quick or subtle, maybe a quick glance at you. Or more obvious, like taking your hand and putting it on a toy they need help with. Sometimes, your child might not send any messages.

Try not to join in, but of course if your child does communicate with you then you should respond, but continue to follow their lead in play.