

Follow my lead

Children learn lots through play. When you follow your child's lead during play, you are taking their interests and expanding on them to teach new skills.

Using this strategy helps the child to develop play skills, imagination, problem solving and self-confidence, whilst also showing them that you are interested in what they like.

What do I need to do?

- **Direct your attention** to what captures your child's attention.
- **Respond** to what your child does by joining in with the play.
- When your child interacts with you make sure it is **related** to what your child has said.
- **Encourage** interaction by making comments, building on the activity and asking questions.



Remember...

- It doesn't matter if the game isn't going how you think it should or that there are lots of different games.
- **It just matters** – that there is **language**, there is **engagement** and there is **fun**.

For further ideas check out the videos below.



How?

Don't be afraid to join in with your child's play. It's not the toys but the interactions with people when using the toys that help your child learn.

Putting it into practise

- Let your little one lead the activity as this helps to keep the **play at the child's pace**.
- This encourages the child to take charge and direct the activity.
- **Be present and engaged** in what your child is doing, this lets them know you are interested.
- **Helps to develop** important pre-verbal language skills like **joint attention** and **turn taking**.
- You don't have to follow their lead all of the time but it's important to **notice what your child pays attention to** and finds interesting throughout their day.

➡ Moving forward...

Try using **comments** instead of questions. This can help **keep the interaction going**. If your child is pushing a tractor and says "tractor", try saying "**pushing the tractor**". Or if your child is using a rolling pin with playdough, say "**rolling**". This shows the child how to talk about what they are doing.