

A Prerequisite for Learning

Attending: The First Step to Learning Readiness

Attending is the first prerequisite skill for learning readiness. In order to learn, you must be able to sit, listen, and respond when needed. Attending to a person or focusing on one task can be challenging for individuals with Autism.

For early learners, it is important to first teach attending skills before targeting additional skills. Below is a list of examples of some attending skills. Ensuring a child possesses these skills will set them up for success for future learning.

Responds to name

- ◆ recognizes the sound of their own name
- ◆ when their name is called the learner can orient their body towards the sound of the person speaking
- ◆ allows for initiation of conversation and the beginning of instruction

Responds to instruction “come here”

- ◆ approaches the speaker when asked to “come here”
- ◆ responding to this instruction promotes attending by alerting that an instruction is coming and increasing proximity

Sits patiently without becoming distracted

- ◆ the ability to sit for at least two minutes
- ◆ should be able to sit for a period long enough to receive instruction
- ◆ prior to group instruction, learner should be able to sit without touching peers

Before providing instructions or teaching new skills it is important to ensure you have the learner's attention.

Below are some tips to help facilitate attending:



Rid the environment of distractions



Provide clear and concise instructions



Gain attention before instructions



Capture motivation

For more information, contact Kerry's Place Autism Services:

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