



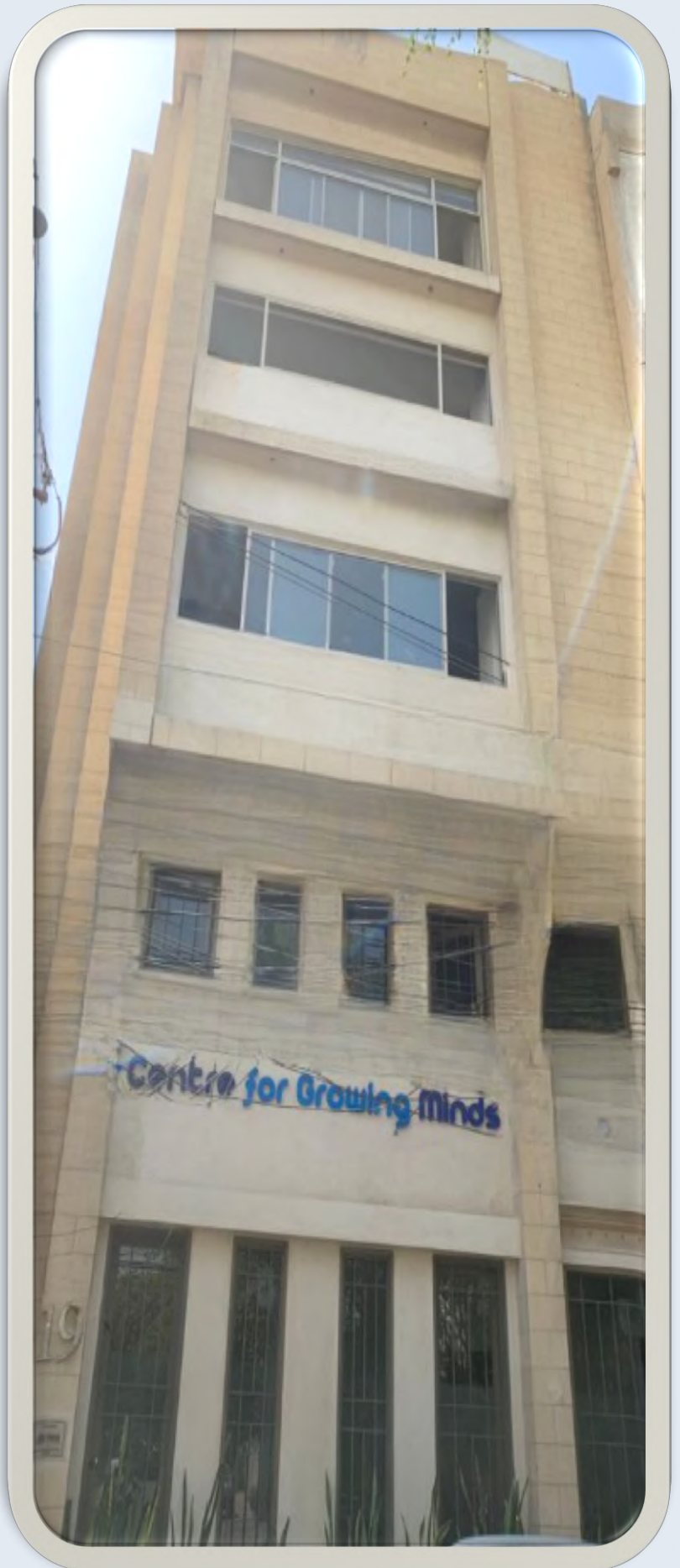
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

March 2023

Volume 5

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Updates from the Month.
- Joint Attention and Strategies to promote it.
- Recap of our Second Parent Training.
- Free Q&A Session for Parents



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UPDATES FROM THE MONTH:

RAMADAN TIMINGS:

Our Ramadan timings are 10:00 am to 04:15 pm.

WORK ANNIVERSARY OF OUR STAFF

April 1st marks one year of work for Khurram, our Admin officer, and Anushka Shakeel, our RBT!



Anushka Shakeel
RBT



Khurram Shehzad,
Deputy Facilities Management Officer

FREE Q&A WEBINAR FOR THE PARENTS:

Free webinar for parents conducted on the 3rd April was a huge success. We had 30 parents join in and ask questions - all parents questions asked live were addressed. We did however run out of time and was not able to address questions sent in advance. We will conduct another session in the upcoming months to address the questions sent out in advance. Stay tuned for the next date.

GOOGLE FEEDBACK FORMS:

We are looking to send out parent questionnaires for therapy related feedback. Google feedback forms to be sent out separately.

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THIS MONTH'S SOCIAL SKILLS CLASSES

Our kiddos have been working together to do a puzzle, draw their feelings, listen and answer questions during story time and problem solve different scenarios!



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YOGA SESSIONS:

In yoga, our kids have been working together following a sequence of poses using a visual prompt prepared by Nehel Lali of Flex.Abilities.



IMPORTANCE OF JOINT ATTENTION & STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE IT

By

NAIHA KHAN

Joint attention refers to moments when a child and individual have shared focus on an object with the intent that they will be interacting with each other while focusing on the object. It has been recognised as one of the earliest forms of communication and children are observed to develop non-verbal joint attention between 9 and 18 months of age with their parents and later with peers. Joint attention promotes communication, social cognitive behaviours, and vocabulary. Various research has shown that children with autism and other related developmental delays show deficit in joint attention skills. Lack of joint attention is a common indicator of developmental delays.

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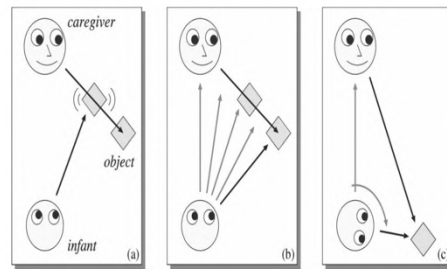
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There are certain prerequisite behaviours that are required to develop for joint attention behaviours to be established. Behaviours such as eye contact, following instructions to look, following gestures, following other individuals gaze and initiating conversation are some of the few. These clusters of behaviours, like other behaviours are learned in the natural environment. Researchers have distinguished two forms of joint attention: (1) responding to joint attention and (2) initiating (starting) joint attention.

(1) Responding to joint attention:

Responding to joint attention is the child looking at an item after an adult has showed interest in it. This can happen in three different ways. The child can initially look at objects in their own field of view and alternate their gaze between the object and the adult. Secondly, they can track the direction of the adult's gaze if the object is within their field of view. Lastly, the child can track the gaze of the adult, look at the object even if it is outside their field of vision.



Here are some ways responding to joint attention can be taught:

Proactive strategies:	How to respond:
Tap on the object and wait for the child to look	Give the object once the child has attended towards it, and praise them for looking at it
Say "Look at the (ball)" and wait for the child to look	Move the ball and give it to the child once they have attended towards it and give them the ball and show enthusiasm
Place an object close further away from the child (while looking at it) and wait for them to look at you	Once they attend to the object <u>and</u> look at you, give them the object and show enthusiasm
Look at the child and then look at an object. Wait for them to follow your gaze	Once they have followed your gaze, give them the object, and engage with them with enthusiasm

(2) Initiating joint attention:

Children initiate joint attention to request for the adult's (or peer's) attention directed to be directed towards an object. Initiating is a superior skill when compared to responding to joint attention bids and can happen in different ways. The child can shift their gaze to look at the adult with the intention of requesting them to also look at the item. Secondly, the child can point to the item they have, with

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the intent that the adult should also look at the object they are pointing at. Lastly, they can use words to get the adults attention towards the object of their interest.

Here are some ways initiating joint attention can be taught:

Proactive strategies:	How to respond:
When the child is playing with an item, wait for ten seconds before gently taking their hand and helping them point to the item while saying 'show'	Look at the item and engage with the child after they have pointed to it
Place novel items in different parts of the room and wait for the child to look at it and point to the item	Look at what they are pointing at immediately and comment on it
When sitting with the child, create a scenario where there is an element of a surprise. Wait for the child to look at you and/or comment on it. For example, when stacking cups let the child stack their own tower and show yours only when you are done.	If they point, look at you or comment on what you have done, praise them and show enthusiasm

Responding to an adult's bid to joint attention, and initiating joint attention are primarily maintained and generalised through social attention. Therefore, when working on developing joint attention skills, using natural reinforcement such as the following can be the most beneficial:

1. Social Praise
2. Making a comment on the object
3. Engaging with the object and the child together
4. Asking questions about the object
5. Giving access to the object
6. Showing how the object will work

As joint attention involves a social partner and an object, it is important to understand that the child's motivation to engage with an object plays an important role in their motivation to initiate joint attention. Therefore, when working on developing initiation of joint attention, using strategies to increase motivation can be beneficial:

1. Place items in their field of vision
2. Place items close to yourself
3. Keep your attention diverted to allow them an opportunity to ask for attention
4. Choose items that are novel and preferred to the child

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RECAP OF OUR SECOND PARENT TRAINING - WEBINAR
To EAT or NOT TO EAT? – PART 2

Segment – 1 : NUTRITION & SPEECH DEVELOPMENT – By IFRAH SHAH

RECAP FROM OUR TRAINING WITH IFRAH SHAH- SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST ON

NUTRITION AND SPEECH DEVELOPMENT



Strategies to promote speech in relation to food

- Avoid screen time during meal times
- Have conversation around meals
- Encouraging speech by repeating words your child says
- Keep track of oral hygiene
- Allow children to feel different food textures

Segment – 2 :REINFORCEMENT vs BRIBERY – By AHLAM PREMJEET

Bribery

- Given to reduce a challenging behavior
- Negotiation
- In the future the behavior will only go down with the bribe
- The child is in control

Reinforcement

- Occurs after a behavior
- Used to build skills
- Given after your child demonstrates appropriate behavior
- The care giver is in control

Similarity

- Your child gets access to something they want

Difference

- Reinforcement is given after an appropriate behavior. A bribe is given after an inappropriate behavior
- Reinforcement teaches skills. Bribery makes challenging behavior more likely

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What can you do?

- Catch them being good and reward that
- Start small and then work your way to bigger expectations
- Look out for triggers
- Plan ahead
- Use first-then strategies e.g. first homework then toys

The Problem with Bribery

- Increases challenging behavior
- No skills learnt
- Teaches your child that challenging behavior gets you what you want
- Eventually, you will have to offer bigger bribes to reduce behavior




LET'S CELEBRATE AUTISM THIS APRIL!

DATE : 3rd APRIL 2023
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Q & A SESSION FOR PARENTS
Question & Answer Webinar with our team of Board Certified Behaviour Analysts.
Open to All Parents!
Pre-registration will be required.
Free of Cost

Email at
INFO@GROWINGMINDS.COM.PK OR
WhatsApp 0335-2221642
For Booking/Reservations



AREESA CHINYOY
Founder of Centre For Growing Minds,
Child Psychologist and
Board Certified Behavior Analyst

Areesa Chinoy is a Child Psychologist and Board Certified Behaviour Analyst. She has an undergraduate degree from University of Edinburgh and a postgraduate degree from University College London. She has completed her BACB approved course sequence from Florida Institute of Technology. With more than 10 years of experience in the field, she presently works with children in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Pakistan.



AHLAM PREMJEE (BCBA)
Ahlam Premjee is the 8th BCBA in Pakistan and has completed her graduation in Behavior Analysis from Florida Institute of Technology (USA) and Masters in Developmental Disorders from University of Nottingham.



SARAH AMIN (BCaBA)
Sarah Amin is a BCaBA and she completed her Masters in Applied Psychology from Middlesex University. She has been working with children with different needs since past 9 years. She also has a certificate in Humanistic Counselling from CPPD.

As part of April's autism awareness month, we held a free Q&A webinar session on 3rd April 2023 to address questions from parents.

Due to the huge response and questions sent in that we were not able to address as part of the live session, we will be conducting another webinar to address the questions we missed out on!

Details to follow.