

# Expectant Look

**Definition:** The **Expectant Look** is a non-verbal signal given to a child to indicate a response is expected.

## How is this strategy done?

The *expectant look* can include any one of these physical cues or all of the cues in combination:

- Raised eyebrows
- Direct eye contact with the child
- Lean in towards the child
- Slight tilt of the head

## Why is this strategy important?

Communication is a two-way street and an expectant look lets a child know that they are a partner in the exchange of information. While the expectant look is a non-verbal cue, it helps a child learn valuable turn-taking skills for conversation. The *expectant look* is meant to elicit participation from a child and send a clear signal that a response is expected (Cole & Flexer, 2007; Talbot 2002).

This Auditory Verbal strategy helps build the following Listening and Spoken Language skills:

- ✓ attention to speaker
- ✓ response from child
- ✓ turn-taking skills
- ✓ expressive language expansion

## Discussion

The *expectant look* can be used alone or in combination with other listening and spoken language strategies. The message this strategy delivers to the child is two-fold:

1. I expect you to listen when I speak
2. I expect you to respond

The *expectant look* places social pressure on a child to give some sort of response. Communicative competence is an end goal of listening and spoken language and includes the ability to express wants and needs in a way that is socially acceptable (Gleason, 2005). As a child's language grows, an *expectant look* can also signal that the communication partner is engaged and is looking for more information. In this way, the *expectant look* can encourage longer utterances and expand language without the need to interrupt the child's thought process or the flow of the conversation. Often an adult's interruption of a child's utterances can encourage less talk from a child instead of more.

## Example

A child has indicated to their parent they would like more to drink.

Parent: Holds her hand on the lid of the sippee cup and gives the child an expectant look.

Child: Looks at the parent, but gives no response.

Parent: Leans in towards the child and then gives an *expectant look*.

Child: vocalizes

Parent: You could say 'open'.

Child: attempts the word "open"

Parent: Accepts attempt if it is at expected level and says, Here you go! I opened the cup.

It is snack time in a preschool. The teacher has several choices of snacks available for the students.

Teacher: Please let me know what you would like for snack today. She turns and looks expectantly at Tommy.

Tommy: cookies

The teacher knows the child is capable of a much longer sentence and this has been modeled in the past, so she merely gives the child an *expectant look* as if to say, "I need more information from you!"

Tommy: I want cookies.

# References

Cole, E. B., & Flexer, C. A. (2007). *Children with hearing loss: Developing listening and talking, birth to six*. San Diego, CA: Plural Publishing.

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Talbot, P. (2002). *Topics in auditory-verbal therapy: a selection on handouts*. Auditory-Verbal International Inc.

