

# About Active Engagement



## What is Active Engagement?

Children are actively engaged if they are....

Step 1: Coming Together



**1 Well Regulated.** Your child feels generally content and their needs are met. When fussy, they get over it easily.



**2 Productive.** Your child is doing something productive in an every day activity or in play, and can include people in those experiences.



**3 Socially connected.** Your child notices you by turning or looking toward you, pays attention to what you are doing together and keeps the interaction going.

Step 2: Keeping Together



**4 Looking at your face often.** Your child looks toward you both when asking you to do something and sharing enjoyment and interest.



**5 Responding to your voice and words.** Your child may not yet understand exactly what is being said, but understands that you have asked for their attention or for them to do something.



**6 Communicating directly to you.** Your child uses gestures, sounds or words to send a message without being asked.

Step 3: Working Together



**7 Being Flexible.** Your child moves easily between actions, activities, or materials rather than getting “stuck” on certain objects or ideas.



**8 Generating new ideas.** Your child comes up with creative ideas to advocate for themselves, to describe something they see, to share with you about a new and different plan, or a new way to play.

## Why is active engagement so important?

Active engagement means a child is ready to interact and learn, be productive, communicate with those around them, and “hang in” when faced with challenges or change. Learning how to keep your child actively engaged is important, because research shows that children with autism spectrum disorder who have at least 25 hours of engaged time per week do better in kindergarten than those who do not.

*Coming together is a beginning.  
Keeping together is progress.  
Working together is success.*  
--- Henry Ford

You are learning strategies to help you keep your child engaged so that you can achieve 25 hours of time each week helping your child interact and learn. Active engagement can occur in every day activities that your family already spends time doing like caregiving, having meals and snacks, playing, sharing books, and doing family chores. It can also happen in community settings such as a grocery store, playground or a restaurant. Your interventionist will help you see what elements of active engagement are going well, and what areas need more support. Your effort to promote active engagement now will have a lasting impact on your child’s social and academic success.