

Zintuigenverhalen Kijkwijzer



handleiding
English

Observation guide



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This guide was translated using AI. We are sorry for any errors or mistakes.

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The observation guide to sensory stories

Sensory stories

Sensory stories are short read-aloud stories that engage the senses with different objects and use alternative and augmentative communication (AAC). In practice, we see that people who want to use sensory stories like to get advice on how to read the stories aloud and what else they can do during the reading aloud to initiate interaction. This is why the observation guide and this manual were developed.

(To learn more about the sensory storytelling method, visit

www.lerenbijkentalis.nl/zintuigenverhalen_maken)

Video analysis in sensory stories

Many readers say that video analysis of a reading session is of great value. It allows you to see small signals that would otherwise escape you as well as the effect of your actions on the other person. With the observation guide you can analyze videos of the reading aloud session and expand the contact and communication during reading aloud. We focus on joint attention and shared enjoyment because there is already specific research on that around sensory stories. Of course, you can use the observation guide in other situations as well, but it was developed and researched for use around sensory stories.

How do you use the observation guide?

First, the advice is to do the video analysis with someone trained in a type of video analysis/video feedback, such as video interaction coaching or video home training (VHT), method Contact/Quality in Communication (in Dutch: Kwaliteit in Communicatie, KIC). This may include the speech therapist, communication specialist, parent counselor or behavioral specialist. The important thing when watching videos is to pay attention to what goes well, what is helpful and what reveals something new. In this way, video analysis is positive to do and you can get a lot of information from it.

Then follow the steps below:

- a Pause the video at a moment when you see attention or pleasure. When watching, choose either attention or pleasure.
- b Look carefully at the images and discuss with each other what type of attention or pleasure you see. Discuss exactly what you can see this from. Do this several times. Usually this will give you insight into which types of attention and pleasure are most visible.
- c Review and discuss with each other what strategies the reader is already using (using the list) and whether any reactions to these are visible in the person being read to; does it lead to more attention or enjoyment? Does it lead to more sharing together?
- d Discuss whether this means that you can or cannot use the strategy, and discuss whether there might be strategies you would like to try.
- e Finally, agree on a goal that the reader will work on or pay attention to when reading aloud. You can come back to this the next time.

See here also the help questions we mentioned earlier: What do you see? What are you doing? What can you increase? What can you stop doing? What can you try?

Repeat the video analysis after a period of time and see if you see any difference from the first time.

Joint attention



What is joint attention?

Joint attention, also called joint attention, means that you are both paying attention to the same thing, but also to each other. So you are aware that the other is busy with the same thing that you are busy with. That demands a lot from you: the ability to focus your own attention, awareness of where the other person's attention is and also be busy with something else. In communicative development, joint attention is something that occurs very early in development. However, in people with sensory impairment and developmental delay and possibly other additional impairments such as autism, we see that this development is often delayed. We also see that because of the (possibly dual) sensory impairments, it takes more energy to shift and refocus attention. As a result, it may appear that there is no joint attention. Therefore, based on the literature and practitioner experts, the following definition of "joint attention" has been established:

Joint attention = "Both persons have attention (partly or alternately) to each other as well as to the same object, subject, or experience at the same time."¹

So what we emphasize in this definition, unlike the common definitions, is that the attention does not have to be continuous or sustained, but it can also be sequential. This means that a person can also alternate between paying attention to the reader and the object, experience or subject.

How do you see joint attention?

You can tell if someone is paying attention to something by a number of things:

- How is the body posture - where is someone facing?
- How is the facial expression?
- Where is someone looking?
- How does someone act?
- What is someone communicating about?
- What kind of sounds does someone make?

So with joint attention, you see that the participant focuses their attention on both the reader and the experience or object. But it may be that the attention alternates all the time; someone alternates between looking at the reader and the object, or alternates between touching the reader and the object, or alternates between the one and the other or a combination of these. In this project we have assumed, on the basis of the practical experiences of experts, that this is also joint attention for these target groups. Each participant looks different. Therefore, it is important to watch video recordings with someone who (also) knows the participant well and discover how to see that the participant is paying attention to something. One participant turns toward, the other moves back slightly. One participant's eyes get bigger, another's squeezes them

¹ Definition joint attention among others based on Hostyn, Neerinx & Maes, 2010; Janssen, Riksen-Walraven, Van Dijk, 2006; Wolthuis, Bol, Minnaert & Janssen, 2019; Bråten & Trevarthen, 2007; Tomasello, 1995.

together. Some make small noises, others become silent. In the study, we examined what joint attention looks like for each participant.

Different types of attention

In the observation guide you will find five types of attention. They are steps, but this does not necessarily mean that someone goes through all the steps one by one. In normal development you often see that step 5 is reached very quickly, without steps 3 and 4 being clearly visible. Here we discuss these five types of attention² focusing on the participant's attention:

- 1 **Attention to something else** - both persons are focused on something else. Here it should be clear where you can see the focus of the participant's attention. So you can only say that the attention is on something else if you know how to observe the attention.

For example, one person looks at the table and is busy with the reading folder and the other person looks out the window and sees the car there. Or the pre-reader wants the leaves to feel out of the story, while the other is busy with the wheelchair that is not positioned properly.

- 2 **Attention to the same thing, but not to each other** - the persons are occupied with the same thing, but one of them is completely in his/her own little world and does not notice that the other person is also there and also occupied with the object.

For example, the participant is completely absorbed in lubricating with shaving cream and does not react to being touched by the other person. The attendant or parent may be attentive to the participant, but they are not attentive to the other person the other way around.

- 3 **Attention to the same and acting on each other** - the persons are both with their attention focused on acting and in acting there is awareness of each other, but no contact is made, the participant's action is focused on self-experience and self-doing.

For example, the persons are drawing on the same paper or reading in the same folder and do realize that the other is also drawing or turning the page, but there is no response; attention is not shared.

- 4 **Attention to the same thing and (partly/ alternately) to each other - functional contact** - the persons are both focused with their attention on the same object, subject or experience and are also engaged with each other. This can be seen by the participant looking at the reader, or by the participant touching the reader, or following the actions of the reader. In the previous step the focus was mainly on acting on your own, in this step there is more awareness of each other. However, a characteristic of this step is that the participant mainly reacts to the reader in a

² The types of joint attention are based on Neerinx, Vos, Van Den Noortgate & Maes (2013) and Neerinx & Maes (2016), where we changed the numbering (1-4 instead of 0-3). The distinction between 4 and 5 was added based on the focus groups and the distinction between imperative and declarative communication from the articles by Rødbroe & Souriau (1999), Damen, Janssen, Ruijsenaars & Schuengel (2015, 2017) and Damen, Janssen, Huisman & Schuengel (2014).

functional way, as someone who can do an action or repeat an experience. Often the communication partners indicate that you can feel this - it is not always visible.

For example, the participant keeps tapping the hand of the pre-reader after which the pre-reader blows bubbles. Both persons are doing the same thing but the participant's attention is mainly focused on creating more bubbles because the reader blows the bubbles. Making contact is then not the focus of the participant's attention.

- 5 **Attention to the same and (partly/ alternately) to each other, focused on sharing together - social contact** - the persons are both with their attention focused on the same object, subject to the same experience and are thereby also engaged with each other, focusing mainly on sharing the experience together. This can be seen because they are also responding to each other in a way that not only aims to achieve an action or experience, but contact is also made, for example eye contact, physical contact, sharing an emotion together, making a comment. Note that these expressions are not themselves part of the "joint attention" but do show where the attention is directed. Often, as a communication partner, you feel that you are now really connecting together, as opposed to when the contact is instrumental, to get something done. If you know someone well, you can also recognize this on the images.

For example, the participant points to something to draw the reader's attention to it, or the participant takes the reader's hand to feel the material the participant has just felt. So this is not about something the participant wants to experience himself, but it is about sharing information, letting the other person experience something, or sharing feelings, for example.

Shared enjoyment



What is shared enjoyment?

Shared enjoyment means that you both have pleasure and you share that pleasure with each other. So you don't have pleasure on your own, but have pleasure because you have pleasure together. Pleasure is important because it motivates you, for example, to play that game again or to read that book again. Fun in communication activities therefore helps to stimulate communication. But what exactly is fun? In the research 'Share a story' we defined enjoyment as follows: a positive emotion, recognizable by a smile, happy facial expression, eyes opened further, specific sounds or movements, whereby these expressions are labelled as positive by people who know the participant well. The following definition was established in this regard:

Shared enjoyment = "Both persons have fun in the same situation, are (partly/ alternately) engaged with the other, are attentive to each other and are focused on sharing/connecting together."³ .

How do you see shared enjoyment?

The description of "pleasure" already includes some observable components of pleasure. In people with multiple disabilities or with autism, sometimes laughter is also interpreted as an expression of tension. Therefore, it is always important to know the participant well and recognize when facial expressions or a laugh is a sign of tension and when there is fun. Of course, tension can also go hand in hand with fun! Think of the roller coaster or a haunted house.

In shared enjoyment, you can therefore pay attention to:

- Is someone smiling? Or is there a happy, open facial expression?
- Is there contact? You can tell this by physical contact, eye contact or by both holding or touching the same object.
- How is the body posture? Is someone turned toward, relaxed?
- What kind of sounds does someone make? Do the sounds sound like fun and enjoyment? Think of laughing sounds, chuckles, squeals or other distinctive sounds.
- What kind of movements does the participant make? For example, think up-and-down hopping, jumping, fluttering, cheering, clapping.
- Et cetera

As with "joint attention," with shared enjoyment in people with multiple disabilities, one also sees that the combination between having pleasure oneself and sharing that pleasure with another is sometimes too difficult; because of the sensory perception that must be constantly shifted or because of the energy the attention takes. For example, if someone smiles, makes contact for a moment and then smiles again, we considered that to be shared enjoyment in this study, at least if it follows in quick succession. When observing pleasure, you also see great differences between individuals. In one

³ Definition shared enjoyment based, among others, on Martens, Janssen, Ruijsenaars, Huisman, & Riksen-Walraven, 2014; Janssen, Riksen-Walraven, & Van Dijk, 2006; Petry & Maes, 2006.

person a smile is very noticeable, while in another it is very small traits. N.B. Positive emotions can also be visible but are not pleasure, for example quiet enjoyment. Then you do not see the happy energy that belongs to pleasure, but they are other positive experiences.

Different types of enjoyment

Also in enjoyment, we distinguished five types in this study :⁴

- 1 **Enjoyment at the same time, both to something else** - so both persons are having fun, but they are not focused on the same thing.
For example one is having fun because something funny is happening outside and the other is having fun because he is watching the one who is laughing.
- 2 **Enjoyment in the same situation, not concerned with the other** - so both persons have pleasure in the same situation and about the same thing, but one person is in his/her own little world and unaware of the other.
For example, they both have fun with the bubbles floating in the air and laugh, but the participant is totally focused on the sparkle of the bubbles and does not notice that the reader is also laughing and looking at the same thing.
- 3 **Enjoyment in the same situation, acting out with the other person** - in this, the persons are thus both having fun at the same thing and do make contact in acting out, but those (acting out) initiatives are focused for the participant on the experience and not on the reader and sharing the fun.
For example, the participant grabs the wind-up chick from the hands of the reader to be able to wind up and walk the critter himself, which both find funny to see.
- 4 **Enjoyment in the same situation, sharing/interacting with the other person - functional contact** - here both persons have pleasure AND make contact, but the contact for the participant has the reason that the reader can create the pleasure, i.e. that the reader in this situation is a "means" to get more or renewed pleasure. You can see this because the contact and contact initiatives are focused on the actions of the reader.
For example, the participant grabs the reader's hand and brings it to an object, or taps the hand to indicate "blow one more time.
- 5 **Enjoyment in the same situation, sharing/interacting with the other person, focused on sharing the fun - social contact** - here there is fun AND both persons share the fun; somehow you recognize the message "what is this fun huh" or "you're laughing too!". You see this through contact initiatives that focus on sharing the fun and not primarily on causing the fun. You see this by making eye contact, touching the other person for a moment, turning to them or, of course, by communication - gesturing or speaking about that which is fun or funny. The distinction from functional contact cannot always be seen, but can often be felt by the reader.

⁴ The types of shared enjoyment are a variation of the types of joint attention, combined with, among others, the description of emotions and pleasure from the articles by Martens, Janssen, Ruijsenaars, Huisman & Riksen-Walraven (2014) and Petry & Maes (2006).

For example, the participant looks at the reader with a big smile after he unexpectedly rings the bicycle bell. The reader also smiles. Although the participant also wants the jingling to repeat, when laughing, there is no request visible or palpable to the reader - real contact is made about how funny it is.

In the first three types, you can talk about enjoyment together but not shared. At step 4, enjoyment is shared but in a functional way. Eventually you hope to reach step 5, where you can really enjoy and have fun together.

Strategies in sensory storytelling

Working on the next step

During the reading aloud of a sensory story, you can use different ways (strategies) by which you can encourage joint attention and/or shared enjoyment and get one step further. Which way is appropriate for this participant is something that depends on a person's skills, preferred senses and what a person does already pay attention to or enjoy. Often it helps to start expanding that. Therefore, the help questions when watching the videos are:

- what are you already doing,
- what can you start doing more,
- Where can you stop, and
- What could you try?

Because you usually repeat a sense story regularly, you can explore in the similar situation whether a different strategy results in more (shared) attention or (shared) pleasure.

Strategies

We are going to briefly explain the strategies. These strategies come in part from the scientific literature and in part they were mentioned by practitioner experts. The strategies we discuss here are focused on the situation of sensory stories, but are (also) drawn from other examples and situations. We did deploy all of these strategies in the study for sensory stories.

N.B. We have divided the strategies into a number of groups, although of course they can be effective in several areas; with sensory stimulation you can also elicit contact and contribute to information processing.

Strategies focused on sensory stimulation

Sensory stimulation can be done in a variety of ways:

- Putting the participant's hand on the material or going hand-over-hand to explore the materials.
- Invite the participant to explore the material in a new way, so for example, if someone first spreads the shaving cream on the table, you can show that you can also put it on your arm or on your nose. Or using a different sense; instead of feeling, you can smell or try to make sound with it.
- Start discovering the material yourself; you show that you find it interesting yourself or you show what you can do with it, smell/feel it or look at it intently.
- Highlight *Bodily emotional traces* (BETs): this refers to experiences the participant has with the material that make a big impression on someone, often because it is linked to an emotion (pleasure, surprise, horror). By then touching that spot on the body again, you can give the BET attention and give it attention again in a subsequent story. For example, a participant who keeps pointing the hair dryer at her neck touches her neck with her hand, the reader also touches the neck with her hand. The next time the hair dryer is grabbed, the pre-reader waits to see if the participant remembers blowing the hair dryer and touching the neck, and if not, she herself touches the participant's neck again.
- You can choose to offer one way of experiencing or sensory processing at a time, only looking, then only feeling, then only smelling, or just a combination.

Strategies focused on information processing

In strategies focused on information processing, you are primarily concerned with how the participant can process stimuli.

- Give the participant extra time to process the stimulus. This waiting time may be longer than you yourself may be used to. For example, research shows that a person may need as much as 15 seconds to respond or take an initiative.
- See what the effect is if you slow down the pace a little or speed it up. Usually, as you read above, someone needs more time but it may also be that someone has a short tension arc and actually likes it when there is quick variety between experiences.
- Also, give someone time to regulate for a while. Sometimes that can mean standing up, wiggling or fluttering for a moment. And after that, the participant can then turn their attention back to reading aloud.

Strategies focused on attention to interaction

How do you get the participant focused on you as a reader? How does the participant become aware that you are there too?

- Mirror a participant's body posture and/or movements. Even if someone cannot see it, a person can often feel it anyway.
- Confirm the expressions someone makes, the initiatives the participant takes, by imitating them, repeating them on his/her body or repeating them hand-over-hand.
- What you can also do is magnify your own behavior; you start paying extra attention to something, you repeat your own actions, you make them bigger, you get closer or you distance yourself.
- A familiar - but very effective - way is to do "action-reaction" games. Think 'peek-a-boo' or taking turns tapping or pushing against something.
- You can also make someone aware of the other person through games on the body such as tickling them briefly or making contact by tapping someone with an object.
- By deliberately waiting a long time, doing something surprising or forgetting something, you can also "wake up" the other person and provoke contact.
- Naming what the other person is doing, "captioning" with words or (four-handed) gestures (language), can also help make that person aware that you are seeing him or her and paying attention to what is happening.

Strategies focused on predictability

These strategies are about creating a pattern of expectation. A fixed regularity creates recognition, and in doing so, a participant can begin to (learn to) focus attention better on what is happening.

- You give cues (hints) that something is about to happen, for example you make an impetus for a sound, a gesture, a movement, turning the pages, a word or you say/gesture the first part of the sentence. This allows the participant to recognize and possibly complete.
- You can point to an object or image and thereby draw the participant's attention there.
- Making a rhythm with materials or your hands, on the table or on the participant's body. This can lead to an alternate game or can make someone more aware of their surroundings.
- By building a fixed ritual around a certain object, a page or an experience, you also create expectation in the participant. This may make someone pay extra attention, recognize the ritual and, for example, enjoy it.

Strategies focused on making meaning and communicating about the experience

The previous strategies were mostly nonverbal, focused on contact-making, but of course adding communication can also lead to more joint attention and more shared enjoyment! Therefore, consider:

- Adding (supported) communication, such as a word, gesture, image, photo or voice button.
- Ask questions about the story or experience; "Does it smell good or dirty?" or "What color do you see?"
- And perhaps most importantly, assume that the expressions the participant shows have meaning, even if the movement or sound seems involuntary or stereotypical. Then respond to the utterance as if it were a word or gesture with meaning. This may cause the participant to become aware that you are perceiving the expressions and thus may create joint attention or shared enjoyment.

Other strategies

The above list is not exhaustive. Thus, there is bound to be something in each participant that is key to (joint) attention or (shared) enjoyment.

Research

The observation guide was developed within the research 'Share a story'. This research was conducted within Royal Kentalis in collaboration with the University of Groningen, financed by ZonMw (project number 637005114). The observation guide is based on scientific articles and focus groups with experts. Subsequently, the observation guide was part of an intervention study. In the intervention study, twelve duos of a reader and a person with an intellectual disability and an auditory disability or with a congenital impairment in hearing and vision (deafblindness) were filmed during the reading aloud of a tailored sensory story. Using these videos and the observation guide, video analysis was done twice with the reader and a communication specialist (e.g., speech therapist or communication specialist). Within the study, we then investigated whether more moments of joint attention, shared enjoyment, or more strategies by the read aloud were evident after the video analysis. Ten of the twelve pairs showed an effect of the video analysis: the reader was using more strategies, or there was more shared enjoyment, joint attention, engagement, or a combination of these. Also, all twelve readers were positive about this type of video coaching!

The observation guide is included in the "Creating Sensory Stories Toolkit," which is available for free download (www.lerenbijkentalis.nl/zintuigenverhalen_maken). In the toolkit and on YouTube, you will find a sample video using this observation guide: Making Sensory stories * Creating a Sense Story Custom ([youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)).

The "Share a Story" research was conducted by Rita Gerkema-Nijhof MSc., Prof. Dr. Saskia Damen, Dr. Nina Wolters-Leermakers, Prof. Dr. Alexander Minnaert and Prof. Dr. Marleen Janssen.

Substantiation

This observation guide was created within the Share a Story project, a collaboration between Royal Kentalis and the University of Groningen. The content is based on literature research and focus groups with professionals and a parent. The observation guide was then used within the intervention study on Sensory Stories by 12 read-alouds and communication coaches (ranging from a speech therapist, communication specialist, remedial educationalist or parent counselor) within 2 video-feedback sessions and adjusted where necessary.

The operational definitions for joint attention and shared enjoyment as used in this observation guide come from the literature and the focus groups, but since we are still learning within the project, these definitions are also evolving and may be further refined.

The definition "joint attention" is based, among others, on Hostyn, Neerinckx and Maes (2010), Janssen, Riksen-Walraven and Van Dijk (2006), Wolthuis, Bol, Minnaert and Janssen (2019), Bråten and Trevarthen (2007) and Tomasello (1995).

The definition shared enjoyment is based in part on Martens, Janssen, Ruijsenaars, Huisman and Riksen-Walraven (2014), Janssen, Riksen-Walraven, and Van Dijk (2006) and Petry and Maes (2006).

The types of joint attention are based on Neerinckx, Vos, Van Den Noortgate and Maes (2013) and Neerinckx and Maes (2016), where we have changed the numbering (1-4 instead of 0-3). The distinction between 4 and 5 was added based on the focus groups and the distinction between imperative and declarative communication from the articles by Rødbroe and Souriau (1999), Damen, Janssen, Ruijsenaars and Schuengel (2015, 2017) and Damen, Janssen, Huisman and Schuengel (2014). The types of shared enjoyment are a variation of this, combined with, among others, the description of emotions and pleasure from the articles by Martens, Janssen, Ruijsenaars, Huisman and Riksen-Walraven (2014) and Petry and Maes (2006).

The strategies also come partly from the literature (including the aforementioned articles) and partly from the focus groups. For a specific rationale for this observation guide, refer to the Share a Story study. For more information, visit www.kentalis.nl or www.zintuigenverhalen.nl or email: zintuigenverhalen@kentalis.nl

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