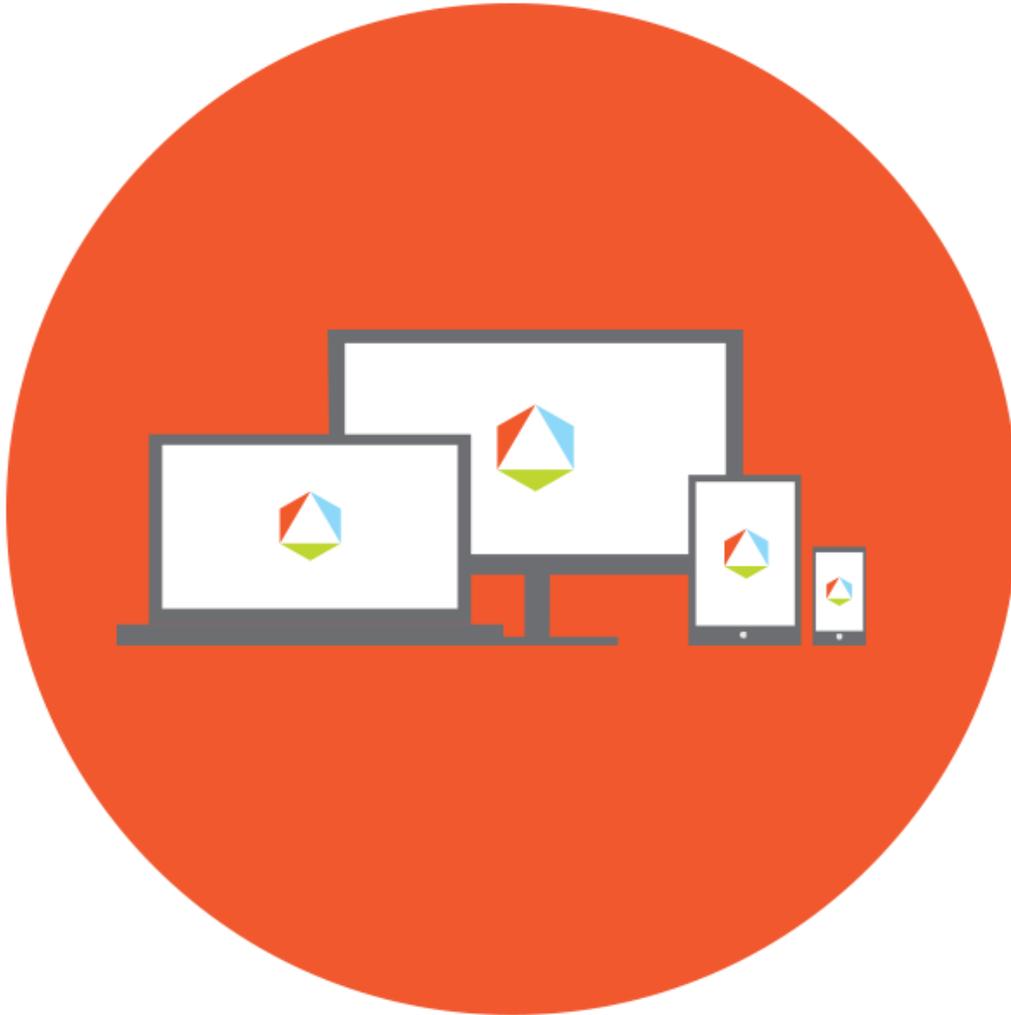




**FIRSTPATH**  
AUTISM



Lesson Guide

## 6. Imitating Actions



# Overview

<b>Teaches:</b>	How to imitate (copy or match) other people's behavior/actions. Usually starts as one simple action, and can then be expanded to include 2 and 3 step action sequences.
<b>Before beginning:</b>	Child should have the ability to sit and attend to teacher and materials. It will help if the child has been observed to <u>independently</u> do gross or fine motor actions and/or actions with objects; these actions can become the first targets for this lesson (since the child is already known to be physically able to do them, physical ability is removed from the teaching equation and we are more able to focus on learning to imitate). Some children may be more successful with learning to do actions using objects before gross/fine motor skills, since object actions may be considered more concrete in nature or more motivating to the child. Also keep in mind that, depending on a child's age, some gross motor abilities may naturally develop before some fine motor abilities.
<b>Why it's important:</b>	A child learning to modify/change his behavior based on the behavior of others is a basic beginning to more advanced social skills. It is also an important tool in teaching and learning other skills that require gross and fine motor skills and hand/eye coordination.
<b>Materials needed:</b>	For object actions, materials will be the objects needed to perform those actions (e.g., a car to roll, a drum to bang on, a ball to kick, etc.) For gross and fine motor actions, no objects needed—the people and their actions are the important part.
<b>Generalization activities:</b>	Games such as Simon Says and Follow the Leader, also watch-and-do activities such as art projects, simple cooking, etc.



# Steps

## Prepare

1. A quiet place free of distractions; you may or may not be sitting at a table for this lesson, since action is involved.
2. Have several rewards and highly preferred items ready and available.
3. Have data sheets and pen/pencil ready.
4. Have required materials for object actions ready.
5. Make sure the child is ready to attend, ideally looking at teacher and not engaging in any other activities.

## Teach

1. Ask the child to "Do this" while performing/modeling the action.

**NOTE:** Do not give other instructions in addition to "Do this", such as naming the action, e.g., "Clap your hands!" or "Kick the ball!" Giving additional instructions might accidentally teach the child to follow instructions, rather than look at and copy your physical action. Following instructions is a good thing and is taught in a different, separate lesson. However, the goal of this lesson is watching and doing: imitating.

2. Wait 3-5 seconds for child to respond.
3. Provide feedback on how the child responded  
Correct response: enthusiastic praise and/or reward  
Incorrect or No response: corrective feedback; prompt correct response
4. Write down data
5. Begin again at step 1.

*Examples include:*

Correct response	Incorrect response	No response
Teacher: "Do this" (while clapping)Child: (claps)Teacher: "Excellent!" and delivers reward	Teacher: "Do this" (while clapping)Child: (kicks leg)Teacher: "Uh-oh. I did this." (while clapping again, assist child to respond if	Teacher: "Do this" (while clapping)Child: no responseTeacher: "Uh-oh. I did this." (while clapping again, assist child to respond if



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TYPICAL ORDER OF LEARNING TARGETS:

- 1. step actions using objects
- 2. step gross motor actions
- 3. step fine motor actions 2-step actions
- 4. step actions -- creating delay between model and imitated action (teaches recall)