

# Intensive Interaction

## What is intensive interaction?

Intensive Interaction is a research-based approach to teach early communication and interaction skills. It is about sharing quality time with a focus on supportive and enjoyable shared experiences. Through these experiences your child will develop their competence as a communicator that is meaningful at their level. The approach aims to teach the basic fundamentals of communication as well as helping develop sociability, cognitive abilities and emotional well-being.

## What skills will it develop in your child?

- A sense of pleasure
- General engagement with social environment
- Joint/shared focus
- Turn taking and building sequences of activities
- Watching
- Anticipation
- Attention/concentration
- Imitation
- Initiation of an interaction
- Eye contact
- Use and understanding of facial expression
- Using vocalisations with meaning
- Sharing of space (tolerance of, to enjoyment of)
- Use of understanding and touch



## How do we do it?

- Observe the child (watch and wait)
- Follow the child's lead
- Respond to selected aspects of the child's behavior
- Join in or imitate their behavior e.g.
  - a) Noises (grunting, lip smacking, murmurs, babble)
  - b) Actions (tapping, flapping, clapping, rocking, moving the curtains)
  - c) Facial expressions (smile, grimaces, blinking, eye contact)
  - d) Physical contact (patting, tapping, reaching out to be held)
  - e) Other (with or without objects)
- Wait for the child to do something/restart something
- Stop when the child has had enough
- Lots and lots of repetition (several times a day)

Please see **Stages of Intensive Interaction** below, which demonstrates the stages a child may move through as they develop skills in this area.

# Stages of Intensive Interaction

## Encounter

The child is present with little awareness of the other person or interaction but can tolerate some sharing of personal space during play.

## Awareness

The child appears to notice or fleetingly focus upon an event or person who is trying to interact with them, but may quickly return to their previous activity.

## Attention and Response

The child begins to respond (although not consistently) to what is happening in the interaction e.g. demonstrate a change in emotion in response to the actions of another person.

## Engagement

The child shows consistent attention to the interaction, they might look, listen and follow events with movements of their head, eyes or bodies.

## Participation

The child engages in sharing or taking turns with another person within an interaction. They might sequence their actions with an adult or pass signals back and forth repeatedly e.g. copying sounds or movements

## Involvement

The child makes active efforts to reach out and consistently join the interaction through purposeful gesture, body language, facial expression, vocalisations or words.