Speech and Language Therapy Services
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Intensive Interaction

Intensive Interaction is a fun way to develop early interaction and communication skills.

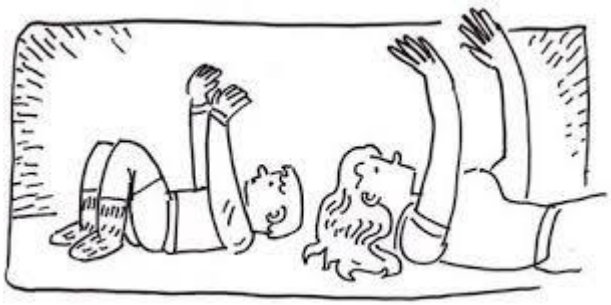
It's a lovely way to help children who find it difficult to interact with others to learn that it can be fun….but how?

We need to allow our children to lead in the interaction.

That means resisting the temptation to ask them questions and expecting them to answer or talk a lot in the hope that they will talk back.

Instead, relax and sit alongside your child, don't worry about eye-contact, that may come later (sitting alongside may be easier for them, than being directly opposite you).

They may not notice you at first…but don't worry.



Be open with your facial expression and body language.

Turn off all distractions, TV, phone etc and 'be available'.

Use this time to share space together, watch, wait and copy.

Copy the sounds and actions they do (this is letting them lead).

You can model some movements and sounds too, but give them time to process your actions and don't worry if there's no response.

If they enjoy touch, try some stroking, massage or gentle tickling.

Play peek a boo, hiding your face and peeking out to see if they notice you.

Blowing bubbles can be a lovely activity to share.

Use "Ready, Steady…go" to build anticipation with a toy such as blowing bubbles, rolling a ball or pushing a car. Pause before you say "go" and wait for a sign that they are anticipating "go" this could be a quick look at you, or at the toy, a change in breathing, a movement or a vocalisation.

Try briefly commenting on their actions and play for example "car…….car on track…wheeee…going fast!"

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Quick Tip: if you want to use a toy in your session then have 2 of the same toy for both of you so that you can copy what your child does with your own toy and not interfere with theirs.

Beware when using toys or tickles that children can become over stimulated and too excited. Choose something that's appealing but not too exciting. If that happens try to calm the situation down slowly and fade out the excitement.

During Intensive Interaction sessions your child will be learning about:

- Enjoying being with another person
- Developing the ability to focus on another person
- Developing their concentration and attention span
- Learning to do activities with another person
- Taking turns in exchanges of behaviour
- Sharing personal space
- Using and developing eye contact (looking at others)
- Using and developing an understanding of facial expression
- Using and understanding others non-verbal communications
- Vocalising and using vocalisations meaningfully

Try to do this a couple of times a day for 20-30 minutes. You may achieve a few minutes of interaction within that time slot.

Based on the work of Dave Hewett