

Intensive Interaction



What is Intensive Interaction?

- Intensive Interaction is an approach that works on **early interaction abilities**; understanding eye contact, using facial expression, giving attention to another person, understanding physical contact and personal space.
- It focuses on interactions that happen **naturally throughout the day**.
- It is **individual** and focuses on the interaction that the child can already do.
- It aims to support understanding and **enjoyment in interacting** with others.

How do I carry out 'intensive interaction'?

1. **BE AVAILABLE:** - Make yourself available. Get down to the child's eye level. Position yourself at the level the child is at, if they are sitting sit opposite them, if they are lying down, lay down next to them. Capture the interest and attention of the child by ensuring you have face-to-face contact.
2. **LET THE CHILD LEAD:** - Be completely attentive to your child, waiting for them to start the interaction. Don't rush; make the experience relaxed and enjoyable.

What to look out for:

- Vocalisations
 - Other noise made with the mouth (e.g. blowing, tongue wagging).
 - Other noises (e.g. tapping parts of the body, slapping or tapping furniture or walls, foot tapping or stamping, clapping or hand rubbing).
 - Movements (e.g. hand movements, rocking, swaying, movements of the legs and feet, head bobbing, reaching out).
 - Facial expression changes.
 - Physical contacts (e.g. pats, taps, reaching to hold you).
3. **RESPOND:-** Respond instantly to the things your child does. Start by doing a similar thing as them, perhaps copying their play, actions, sounds or movements.



If your child tries out new noises or movements or facial expressions, you respond by doing it again, imitating or joining in. Celebrate your child's responses and behaviours.

For example, they might flick their fingers in a certain way, but if you respond to this by imitating them then this has become a form of communication.

How to Respond

As imaginatively and creatively as you like, e.g.:

- Imitating
- Joining in
- Saying something, e.g. "yeah", "that's a good noise".
- Being dramatic
- Non-verbal responses (e.g. smiling, widening eyes).
- Running commentary e.g. "Hey yeah, you're pleased to see me, I know"

4. PAUSING :- Pause and wait for your child to interact with you before you join in again.

Look for any reaction. Your child's face may change. They may stop what they are doing to watch you or listen. This will tell you if they are interested and enjoying what you are doing. Give them time to respond to you and see what they do next. Your child might indicate that they want you to react differently, or want you to repeat what you're doing.

5. EXTENDING :- Build up a shared knowledge of things that you and your child do together – you may end up repeating these activities many times.

When repeating familiar interaction routines, new things happen. Your child may experiment, then you may extend the interaction, add faces and voices.

As you start to notice your child becoming more aware of you joining in with them, change the way you respond to extend the interaction and see if they respond to this e.g. you could vary your vocalisation, you could do something different with the toys you might have been playing with.

Strategies to ensuring success:

- Respond instantly to signals of negativity – If you feel your child is not enjoying what you are doing or moves away or reacts negatively, interpret this communication and respond to it appropriately. Perhaps you were too close to them, or they need a break from the Intensive Interaction.
- If your child doesn't appear to respond- Try doing less of everything. Respond with less behaviour (reduce the noise, excitement or intensity). Go back to a 'quiet' period, spending time sharing space to help your child to become more comfortable.
- If your child is highly active- Join in with them and move around with them in order to create shared activities.





- If your child is interested for a short amount of time- Try doing less, you may be putting too much into the interaction.

If your child keeps moving away. The child may not be ready to take part in interactions yet, may need to share space and time instead to build a sense of security. Increase the distance between you and your child.



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