

## Intensive Interaction

### What is Intensive Interaction?

Intensive Interaction is a type of play based therapy which works to engage a child who may find it challenging to communicate or interact with those around them. It is in some ways, a conversation that doesn't require spoken words

This method is different from other approaches in that it encourages the adult to completely follow the child's lead, using skills your child has to join them in their own style of communication. This teaches your child that their "voice" is valued and encourages them to explore it further.

### What does it involve

The following points are a great place to start, but we would highly recommend you speak to your speech therapist to see a demonstration or discuss this further.

- **Mirroring**– this simply means copying what your child does, as they do it, this includes using the same body language and facial expressions, mirroring movements, repeating any sounds your child makes back to them.
- **Expanding**– over time, if your child is showing a positive response to you copying their movements/sound etc. you can then expand on it a little. E.g. if your child is tapping on the floor, you could move to gentle tapping on their arm and seeing if their response changes.
- **Pausing to Watch and Respond**—at all times you should be fully focused on how your child responds to your actions, do they look/stop/smile etc. The more you watch, the more you will notice how to adapt what you are doing to maintain their interest.

## Things to Remember

- The adult should not “lead” the interaction, initially all you have to do is wait for your child to do something. This could be as subtle as moving their arm.
- It is not unusual to feel “silly” or out of your comfort zone when attempting this for the first time. You may find yourself doing something you’ve never done with your child before, such as rolling on the floor and making fun noises. The more you do it, the more natural it will feel.
- It will be helpful to have a relatively quiet environment initially so there aren’t too many distractions, but if this is not possible, still go ahead with the interaction.
- This interaction is key for building the foundations for communication, therefore your child may need to be showing good progress with this before they are ready to work on communicating using words or pictures.

## Recording Progress

Below is an **example** of the type of table you may want to use, to record any progress you and your child are making. This will be really helpful to show your therapist anything you have noticed over the coming weeks.

Activity Initiated by child	Their response, when copied by adult
Tapping floor	Child looked away
Waving fingers in front of own face	Child smiled and repeated
Rocking back and forth	Child stopped and waited for adult to stop, before starting again
Making long aaaaa noise	Child laughed and paused and repeated