

## Intensive interaction

### What is Intensive Interaction?

Intensive Interaction is an approach designed for those who are at the preliminary stages of their communication development. It involves an activity that the child/individual enjoys doing and knows. The content of the activity is understandable since the starting point is something the child already does and understands. The behaviour of the adult is understandable to the child – it is more like the behaviour of the child. There is no set task/outcome to achieve, learning takes place because of the quality of your interactions, and it is fun!

### The aim of Intensive Interaction

By joining in with or responding using the same behaviours or actions that the child/individual does and therefore understands, Intensive Interaction aims to help children's/individuals' development of the 'Fundamentals of Communication.'

- Enjoying being with another person
- Developing the ability to attend to that person
- Taking turns in exchanges of behaviour
- Sharing personal space and physical contact
- Understanding eye contact and facial expressions
- Understanding and using gestures and body language
- Extending vocalisations ~ learning use and understanding of vocalisations, developing more varied and extensive vocalisations, which gradually become more precise and meaningful i.e., developing speech.

### The Communication Pyramid



## How to use Intensive Interaction

- Create or offer an opportunity for Intensive Interaction i.e., quality 1:1 time using an activity that is understandable because the starting point is something the child already does and understands.
- There should be no set task to achieve.
- Follow the child's lead – this will mean the behaviour of the adult will be understandable to the child; it is more like the behaviour of the child.
- Allow the child to decide the duration and intensity
- Look for signals and tune into them
- Sometimes offer stimuli
- Watch and wait
- **Respond** through:
  - Joining-in / mirroring
  - Touch, gestures/actions
  - Giving eye contact
  - Facial expressions
  - Movement – stilling or actions
- Vocalisations/sounds/words, running commentary:
  - *Make the same sound back to him/her*
  - *Make a funny sound in response to him/her*
  - *Say what he/she would say if they could e.g., more, go, tickle etc*
- Learning takes place because of the quality of your interactions.

## When to use Intensive Interaction

- As often as possible!
- It is a positive interaction style for any time
- It might help to think of several times to try an Intensive Interaction 'activity' every day
- **Repetition** is important
- Children who are at the initial stages of development like repetition
- Repetition provides:

*FAMILIARITY*

*PREDICTABILITY*

*SECURITY*

*A SENSE OF CONTROL AND STRUCTURE*

### Remember:

- Be relaxed, and have fun!
- Focus on watching and responding – follow the child's lead; do not direct.
- Let the child set the pace – do not try to hurry things along
- Join in with the activities that they enjoy and are meaningful to them
- Keep behaviours and communication simple
- Try to notice and hold back during pauses – allow them to let you know when they are ready to start again.
- How will you know that you are doing Intensive Interaction successfully? ~ The child may demonstrate some/all of the 'Fundamentals of Communication;' and you will both be having 'fun'