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SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY

PARENT HANDOUT

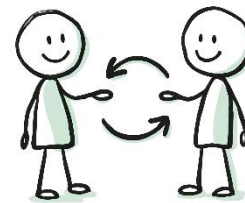
Intensive Interaction

What is Intensive Interaction?

Intensive interaction is method of teaching communication skills to children.

Intensive interaction can develop the following interaction skills:

- Participation and shared enjoyment
- Building relationships
- Using and understanding eye contact (e.g. looking)
- Using and understanding facial expressions (e.g. smiling)
- Turn taking in communication through exchanges of behaviour (e.g. copying actions)
- Using vocalisations



Who is Intensive Interaction For?

Intensive Interaction is used to meet the social communication needs of people who have, for a range of reasons, a communication and social impairment.

Intensive Interaction is being successfully used with:

- people who have very severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties
- people who have significant attention disorders
- people who have severe and complex learning difficulties
- people with multi-sensory impairments
- people who have a diagnosis of autism
- people who have a range of self-stimulatory or socially isolating behaviours
- people with a learning disability and challenging behaviour



Equally, the approach has been used successfully with people who may be highly social in many ways, but who still need to further develop their social skills in areas like:

- use and understanding of eye contacts and facial expressions
- taking turns in sequences of social behaviour
- developing and furthering vocalisations

Who can deliver Intensive Interaction?

Intensive interaction can be carried out by anyone anywhere.

It is essential that all adults who engage with the child engage consistently in these interactions throughout the day.

Why Intensive Interaction?

The aim is to develop communication through relaxed and enjoyable sequences between you and the child. Let the child take the lead during the interaction. The adult responds to and join-ins with their behaviour. Through these interactions, your child can learn fundamental communication skills.

How do we do it?

The aim: for the adult to enter the child's world and learn how they communicate by **observation** and **imitation**.

- Observe the child (watch and wait)
- Follow the child's lead
- Respond to selected aspects of the child's behaviour
- Join in or imitate their behaviour
 - 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)

Step by step:

Step 1: Follow the child's lead



Let the young person lead the interaction.

Adults follow, respond and join in with what they are doing. The adult should not dominate or drive the interaction; the young person sets the pace. Be interested in what they are interested in. Stop when they have had enough.



Step 2: Watch what they do

Watch what the young person is doing, listen to them, then respond e.g are they vocalising, how are they moving, are they jumping up and down or lying down, are they touching or smelling objects, what are they looking at.



Step 3: Waiting

Wait to see what the young person is doing first before you respond. After you have responded pause and wait for the young person to process your response. The young person should always go first during the interaction.

Step 4: Vocal Echoing



This involves copying a sound, vocalisation or breathing pattern that the young person is making. This can develop into a conversation in which you both take turns. If they make a sound, you copy that sound, they make the sound again. After several turns, you might want to try changing the sound slightly or adding a different sound.



Step 5: Mirroring

Copy a movement that the young person is making eg if they are jumping up and down you could join them jumping up and down. Look at the



position of the young person e.g. if they are lying down you could lie down alongside them.

Step 6: Joint Focus

If the young person is engaged in an activity or looking at an object you can join them in looking or exploring the object. Be interested in what they are looking at.

Look at and explore objects and the environment together. Do things together or at the same time. Examples include:

- Exploring fabrics, photos, toys
- Passing objects or toys back and forth
- Looking in the mirror together
- Listening to sounds and playing with instruments
- Making noises together
- Playing with a ball
- Watching bubbles
- Singing action songs



Activities to Support Interaction and Communication at Home

Have at least 5 minutes of 'special time' with your child every day.

During this time:

- o Minimise distractions by turning off the TV or radio
- o Let your child choose the toy or activity they want to play with:
 - They will attend to an activity they enjoy for longer
 - They are more likely to communicate about what they are motivated by.
 - Their understanding will be supported because what you say will be relevant to them
- o Sit at the same level as your child so that your child can see your face
 - This shows that you are interested in what your child is doing



- Your child can see what your mouth does when you speak
- o Talk about what your child is doing, e.g. “pushing the car”
 - This allows your child to match what you are saying to what they are doing
- o Avoid asking questions
 - Questions do not provide your child with varied language
 - They may be aware that you already know the answer!
- o Sing songs with your child:
 - Nursery rhymes are a fun way to learn language and sounds
 - Make up songs about everyday activities to make them more fun, e.g. tidy up time, bath time
 - Pause through the song to give your child an opportunity to fill in the blanks

Props & Toys:

You don't necessarily need lots of props for Intensive Interaction as you can use expressions, vocalisations and body movements. However, some equipment that can be useful includes:

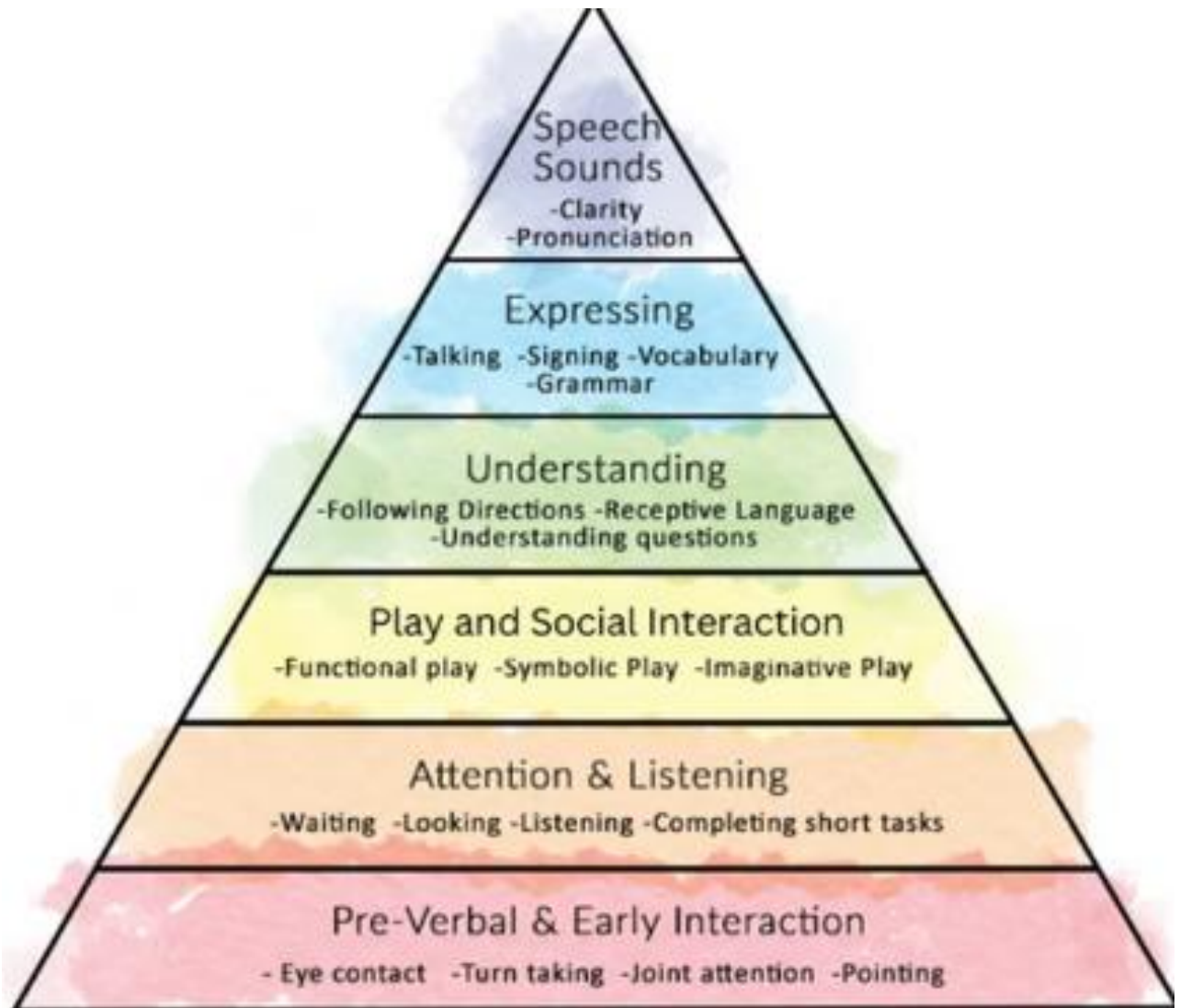
- Scarves
- Musical instruments
- Balls & ball runs
- Bubbles
- Mirrors
- Balloons
- Cause & effect toys
- Sensory materials like feathers or brushes
- Wind-up toys
- Slinkies



Please note: Do not introduce new toys or unfamiliar games. The aim of the interaction is to use activities that your child enjoys doing and do it alongside them to build connection.



Communication Pyramid:



Intensive Interaction consistently targets:

- Pre-Verbal & Early Interaction
- Attention & Listening
- Play & Social Interaction

[Intensive Interaction Institute - What is Intensive Interaction?](#)