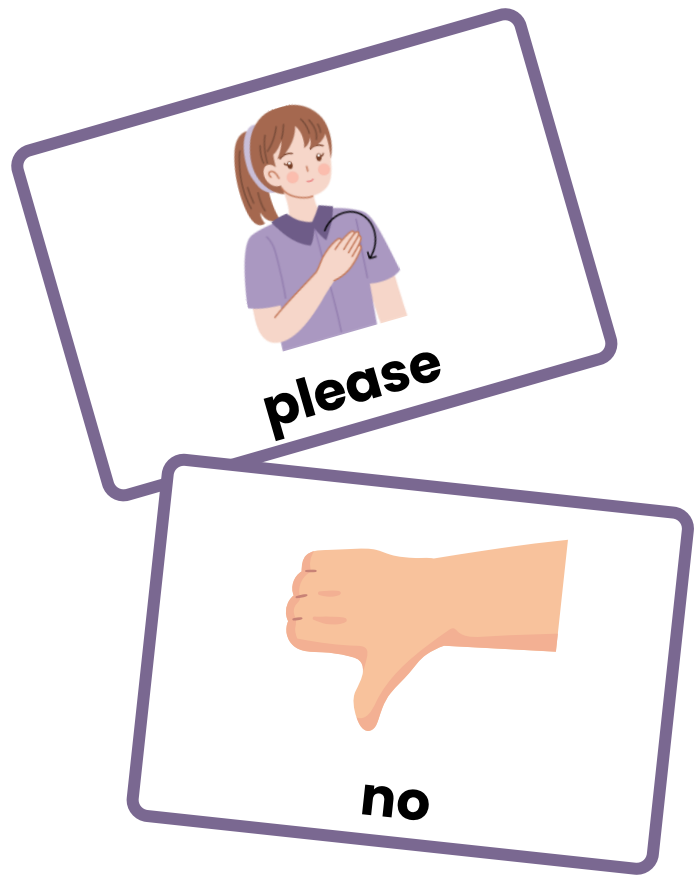
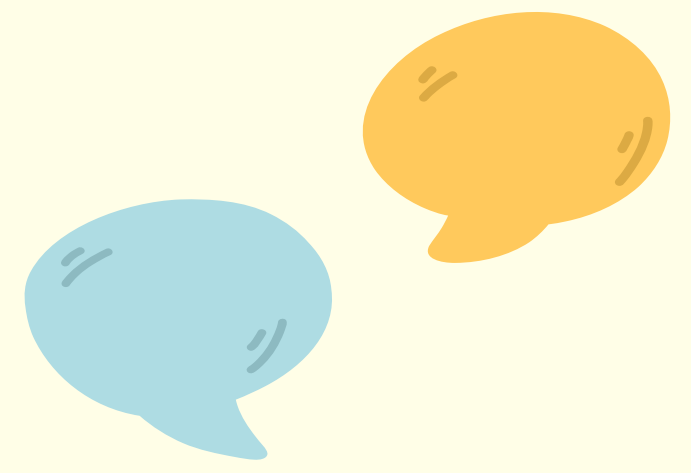


Opportunities for communication

Create opportunities for communication, for example carrying out a favoured activity such as tickle, then pausing so that the child has the opportunity to indicate wanting more, or place desired items within view but out of reach to encourage communication. Model the appropriate word and gesture to indicate this. Model a range of communication means, e.g. pointing at desired items, gestures, words. It is important to accept any method of communication used by your child and focus on the opportunity for you to model ways communicating, do not insist on your child repeating what you have done.



Core vocabulary.

Core words are commonly used words that express key meaning and functional use of language. These words can be used to express a lot of different messages. This could include making requests for items they need, asking for help, asking for activities to finish/stop, refusing unwanted items or activities. Focus on modelling these words frequently during interaction to develop functional communication skills, and use visual cues such as signs and symbols, communication boards to support this.

e.g. 'more', 'help', 'no', 'stop', 'finished', 'like', 'go', 'again'.

Mirroring/Intensive Interaction

Intensive Interaction is a practical approach developed by Dave Hewitt and Phoebe Caldwell, which supports development of social interaction and early communication skills. The approach is beneficial for pre-verbal and verbal autistic individuals, individuals with learning difficulties or sensory impairments. The aim is for adults around the child to enter the child's world and learn how to communicate with them through observation and imitation. There are different levels of interaction (see below), which is useful for parents and staff to recognise and highlight development in early communication skills.

There are key strategies that make Intensive Interaction beneficial such as:

- Follow the child's lead, they are in charge!
- Pause, wait and watch.
- Respond by joining in with the child.
- Copy and imitate what they are doing to show you are with them.
- Sometimes they might pause or turn away, this is okay as they might need to do this to process what is happening.
- Take your time and try not to do too much.
- Be available, have fun and enjoy being with them.

There are lots of resources available online on Intensive Interaction; however, we recommend visiting the following sites to learn more about the approach and watch some example sessions:

www.intensiveinteraction.org

www.phoebecaldwell.co.uk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkJKktBaTRY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgnDwRG0hXM>

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLdD4H9lo4MSVUnevThOvKGSEkk5b3-1XX>

