

Early Interaction

Paediatric Community Speech and Language Therapy

<p>What is</p>	<p>Before children learn to talk, they need to develop early interaction skills. These include; looking, joint attention, and listening. These skills are key 'pieces of the jigsaw' for developing understanding and communication. A lot of important communication skills develop before the first words appear.</p>
<p>How to help</p>	<p>There are several strategies to start during quiet play times with your child. We sometimes refer to this as 'Special Time' so you can make sure to practice little and often and the time is protected. Try to put aside 5 minutes per day.</p> <p>Follow your child's lead and let them choose what to explore</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child may pay attention to playing for longer if they are interested in the activity. Only having a few choices out will help your child choose Sometimes, as adults, we want to teach and show our child how to play games. This can lead to frustration on both parts. By allowing your child to lead throughout the play, it shows them you are interested in them. In turn it will lead to positive responses from your child like smiles, gestures, sounds or words. <p>Position yourself face to face with your child, at their level</p> <p>Copy your child's sounds and actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This shows that their communicative attempts are valued. It's sometimes called 'mirroring' and can help some children develop an awareness of others around them as well. <p>Name what your child is looking at or doing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By naming what your child is focused on, you are giving your words meaning. Repeat these single words many times, as children often need to hear words lots of times before saying it themselves. Using one word at a time means the word stands out. Children that know lots of nouns (names of items) need action words too so they can start to build phrases e.g. jump, draw, swim. <p>Reduce the number of questions you ask your child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember, you are still teaching your child words, not testing them. If you ask a question, answer it yourself. <p>Pause!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children need time to work out what you mean. By leaving a 10 second gap after a comment, they may take a turn themselves using babble or a word.

Remember to...

Do a little every day
Keep practice fun
Praise your child when they take part or put effort in
Say your child's name before you speak

Helpful links	<u>Using Intensive Interaction</u>		<u>Tiny Happy People: Singing</u>	
	<u>Tiny Happy People: Copying sounds and actions</u>		<u>The importance of early interactions</u>	

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