



## Using Intensive Interaction with your child

**Intensive Interaction is a way of interacting with your child to help develop early communication skills such as:**

- Enjoyment of being with others
- Simple back and forth interaction

- ✓ Intensive Interaction should be relaxed and pleasurable.
- ✓ Watch your child and think about moments where you can try the approach ~ moments where your child is happy and calm are usually good times to try.
- ✓ Get down to your child's level, e.g. sit or lay down next to them.
- ✓ Join in with the play slowly ~ keep the pace gentle.
- ✓ Be prepared that you might be ignored by your child ~ don't worry, simply try again another time.
- ✓ You cannot always plan to do intensive interaction ~ it is about watching what your child is doing and finding a moment to join them in their play and actions.

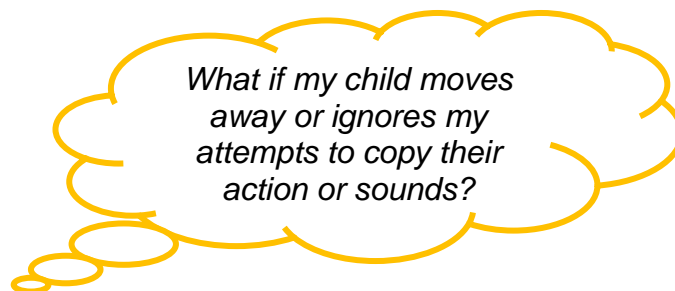


Intensive Interaction is a technique first developed by Dave Hewitt, Director at the Intensive Interaction Institute.

## How to do it

### Step 1:

- Find a moment(s) during the day.
- Watch and listen to sounds or words your child is making or saying and what they are doing in the moment.
- Pick a sound or action that your child seems to be enjoying and try to mirror or copy this (just once or twice is fine).
- Try and focus on imitating a sound, facial expression or body movement your child makes, e.g. if your child smiles you could smile back, if they laugh, you could laugh back or if they give you eye contact you could look back at them with a smile.
- Wait and watch to see how your child responds ~ do they stop what they are doing, do they notice you copying them?
- If your child stops what they are doing, repeat the action or sound to see if they continue it.
- If your child notices you and repeats the sound or action, this tells you they are enjoying the moment with you and maybe that they want you to continue.
- In this way, you could take it in turns to copy and wait for your child to respond ~ this is the beginning of a back and forth interaction.
- You are aiming for a natural and repetitive rhythm of back and forth interaction ~ it should feel enjoyable and fun.



- ✓ You could move away and then try again later, start with picking up on a sound or action that they seem to be enjoying and look for an opportunity to try to mirror or copy this.

### Step 2:

- Once a pattern of back and forth copying and interaction has started, try and introduce a different action or sound, e.g. if they are making a 'bah bah bah' sound


you could change it to 'bah, bah, boo'.





- Do this for a short period of time and gradually build up the frequency and length of interactions (you could start with a couple of seconds).





**Step 3:**

- You might like to introduce a toy or prop such as scarves, mirrors, hats, water toys, or your child's favourite toys to gain their interest (see the next page for ideas).
- Remember, the main aim of Intensive Interaction is for you to copy your child so only pick one action at a time – watch how your child responds, if they enjoy it, do more of it.

*Intensive interaction can be a simple moment with your child where you both **enjoy** each other's company.*

Activity	What you need	How to do it
<p><b>Scarves / material</b></p>	<p>A small piece of material / scarf / handkerchief</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put the scarf in front of your child for them to explore. Copy what they do with it.</li> <li>• New actions / sounds you could introduce: Placing the scarf over or in front of yours or your child's face / smile and laugh.</li> </ul> <p>Swinging the scarf in a circular motion / Throw it up in the air and add a sound, e.g. 'weee'.</p> <p>Blow into the scarf to make it move / make raspberry sounds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes you might need to encourage their play by using a peekaboo game.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Balloons (can also be played in the garden)</b></p>	<p>2 balloons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give your child a balloon and watch them play with it. Join in by copying their actions and sounds.</li> <li>• New actions or sounds might</li> </ul>

		<p>be:</p> <p>Tapping, e.g. say 'Tap, tap'</p> <p>Kicking</p> <p>Blowing / make raspberry. sounds</p> <p>Rolling / e.g. say 'weee'</p> <p>Chase</p> <p>Throwing</p> <p>Catching</p> <p>Bouncing / e.g. say 'boing'</p>
<p><b>Bubbles (can also be played in the garden)</b></p>	<p>Bubbles</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blow the bubbles.</li> <li>• Watch your child play and mirror their actions.</li> <li>• You could introduce new sounds as you pop the bubbles, e.g. say 'pop' or 'splat'.</li> <li>• You could introduce new actions: Pop / clap Catch Chase Blow.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Water trays / bath time</b></p>	<p>Water Soap Food colouring to colour the water Cups Sponge Bottles Cups Straws</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide water and a variety of containers, e.g. cups, bottles, bowls etc.</li> <li>• Allow your child to play. Watch what they do with the water. Copy their sounds and actions.</li> <li>• New actions and sounds could include: Splashing (softly) or pouring and say, e.g. 'splash', 'whoosh' Dripping the water Blowing bubbles with straws.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Small world toys</b></p>	<p>2 similar or same items: Cars Trains Animals People</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow your child to choose a toy and play with it.</li> <li>• Follow their lead and copy how they play and sounds they make.</li> <li>• You could introduce new sounds: 'Beep, beep' or 'Brmmm'.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Building blocks</b></p>	<p>Any type of building blocks materials</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide your child with a small amount of bricks and watch them play.</li> <li>• Copy their actions and sounds.</li> <li>• You could introduce actions / sounds: Tapping, e.g. say 'tap, tap' Banging Dropping, e.g. say 'boing' Sliding the blocks across the surface of the floor or table / e.g. say 'zoom' Knock the bricks down.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Musical instruments</b></p>	<p>Pans Spoons Mixer</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide your child with a few everyday objects that can be used to make sound, e.g. saucepans and wooden spoons.</li> <li>• When your child plays, watch them and copy their actions.</li> <li>• You may need to 'play' the musical instruments and see if your child follows, then return to following their actions.</li> <li>• You could make a simple pattern or rhythm using the following actions: Shake Tap Bang.</li> </ul>

## To find out more / Useful links

If your child has a Speech and Language Therapy programme, it may be that the Speech Therapist has suggested Intensive Interaction. Refer to your child's report for further information or the following are some useful links to find out more about Intensive Interaction:

- [www.intensiveinteraction.co.uk](http://www.intensiveinteraction.co.uk)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkJKktBaTRY>



*Tune in, enjoy and respond.*