

## Intensive Interaction

### What is intensive interaction?

Intensive interaction is a way of communicating with your child on their terms using their own 'language'. It can be used with younger children who are developing their communication skills or with older children who may have difficulty in communicating verbally or interacting with others.

#### **Aims of intensive interaction:**

To begin the child's acceptance of having others in their personal space

To allow and use some touch

To begin to attend to another person

Learn how to turn take – with the possibility of this building into vocalisations with meaning

Focus on eye contact, body language and facial expressions

Allowing interaction that takes the focus off of formal verbalisations

Allowing the child to lead the interaction at their own pace, in their own way

#### **Stages of intensive interaction:**

**Watch** – the adult observes the child to see what they are interested in within the environment. Look at their: posture, vocalisations, movements, how they manage you sharing their personal space.

**Mirror** – can you copy their posture? Can you join in their movements or repeat their vocalisations? Are they noticing you copying them? Can you copy their tapping gently on a body part, such as their hand? Do they seem accepting and interested in you joining their world?

**Enhance** – can you add something to this interaction, such as adding intonation to a vocalisation. Can you build to a back and forth conversational style of interaction? Is the child interested and accepting of your building on this interaction?

#### **Considerations:**

**Environment** – should have minimal distractions to allow the child to focus solely on the session with the adult.

**Sensory issues** – should be considered such as whether the child finds loud or quiet spaces difficult or whether they are receptive to touch, perhaps consider using items such as feathers or soft toys to instigate touch.

**Alternative communication and minimal speech** – total communication can be used and language should be kept to a minimum i.e. 1 or 2 words used.

**Hearing** – any hearing issues should be considered when choosing the environment, such as ambient noise and no interruptions.