

What is Intensive Interaction?

Intensive Interaction is a natural, person centred approach to developing fundamental skills of communication such as vocalisations, facial expressions and turn taking. It can help your child learn how to be an active communicator and give them the vital message 'you are fun to be with'. In simple terms you are creating an environment where your child can learn enjoyable, turn taking sequences with another person - exploring joyful shared attention.

Is Intensive Interaction suitable for my child?

Intensive Interaction is for individuals who are at an early stage of communication development including those who are autistic, have profound and multiple disabilities and those who are verbal but struggle with social interaction.

What are the fundamentals of communication?

These are the first building block in learning about people and communication. They include skills such as enjoying being with others, concentration and attention, understanding and using physical contact and sharing personal space. For a more comprehensive list ask staff at the Dingley's Promise centre you receive support from.

Will my child make progress?

Intensive Interaction is a process centred approach so outcomes for your child emerge gradually over time - this is a very different concept to many approaches out there. Children with access to intensive interaction will be making progress with different fundamental communication skills but this will look different for each child.

Intensive Interaction was developed by Dave Hewitt and his team in the 1980's whilst working in a special school - you can find out more about this approach on the website www.intensiveinteraction.org



How Do I Get Started?

Start by observing your child, what do they do when left to their own devices? Are they making any vocalisations? What movements and facial expressions do they show?

Set aside 5-10 minutes a day initially to be with your child and start practising Intensive Interaction. Tune into your child and try not to do too much. Respond to sounds, movements, expressions etc that your child does - play around with your responses, you don't always have to copy. Be minimal to allow your child to start to initiate - less is more.

Have fun, follow your child's lead without initiating or guiding the interaction. There is no end goal or agenda. Think about when you 'chat' back and forth with a young infant - this teaches the fundamental skills required to communicate but without driving the activity forward.

When you are doing Intensive Interaction try to:

- Pause, give time and space for your child to process and initiate
- Slow your responses down
- Be patient - do not try and lead the activity
- Keep your responses simple - join in by mirroring back or play around with your responses
- Think about your position and vary it to allow your child to easily interact with you
- When your child has had enough, the interaction is finished
- Resist the urge to push the interaction forward - be mindful to let your child lead it

Most of all - have fun!

If you would like some help to understand more about Intensive Interaction or you have any questions you can ask your Family Support Worker

