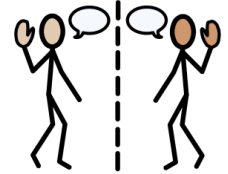


Help Sheet

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How to make connections.



Why?

- These strategies support children who have emerging social interaction skills.
- The strategies are beneficial because they follow the child's lead.
- Making connections helps children to communicate and form relationships.

You will need:

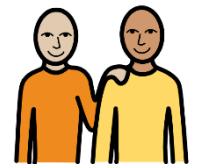
- An adult to spend time 'in the moment' with the child.
- Carefully selected toys.

How?

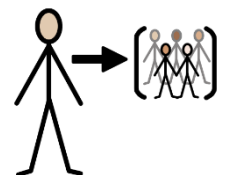
Make Time - Make time to watch what the child is doing. Notice when they look, smile, reach out, pick up items, make noises or say words. Think about what the child finds motivating and when they seem calm or happy.



Share Space - Being in the same space without making any demands is an important step in forming connections. Watch, wait and respond to the child's actions with mirroring or echoing back.



Join In - Join in with what the child is interested in and follow their lead. Tune into the child's actions and match your actions to theirs. Genuinely share their interest in that moment. Think beyond imitation - be playful at a similar level to the child.



Pause - Build in time for the child to initiate interactions. When an activity engages the child, pause to build anticipation. Activities which promote engagement include:

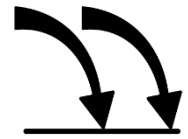
- Ready, steady, go games.
- Hiding games.

Help Sheet

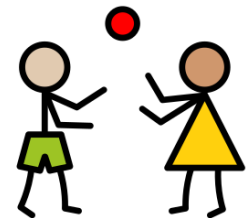
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- Pausing during a familiar song.
- Bubbles.

Repeat Familiar Activities- Children find repetition reassuring. Doing the same activity with a child over and over again helps them to make a connection with you and supports their learning.



Play People Games - Toys can be distracting. Making time to play without toys can help a child to make connections. Try action rhymes, clapping, holding hands and jumping or turning, chasing, making funny faces, hand spiders, appropriate touch and peek-a-boo.



Choose Toys Carefully - Select toys that encourage turn taking or build anticipation. Try:

- Bubbles.
- Balls and balloons.
- Cause and effect toys – lights, flaps, sounds.
- Percussion instruments.



Smile - If the child sees that you are enjoying the activity it will encourage them to keep the play going. Make the time together fun – at times even a little silly to grab the child's attention. Remember to stop as soon as the child signals that they have had enough.



Reference / Evidence base – informed by:

Theorising young children's interests: making connections and in-the-moment happenings.

Chesworth, E.A. (2019)

Learning, Culture and Social Interaction, 23. 100263. ISSN 2210-6561 Vuorisalo, M., Rutanen, N. & Raittila, R. (2015). Constructing relational space in early childhood education, Early Years.