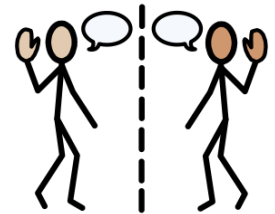


Help Sheet

0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

How to develop quality interactions in early years.



Why?

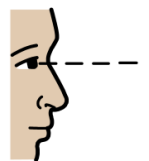
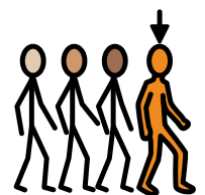
- These strategies can be used as a checklist for practitioners to reflect on their practice and focus on building quality interactions with all children.

You will need:

- To observe the child carefully and tune into their communication – verbal or pre-verbal prompts.
- To spend time 'in the moment' to interact and communicate with the child.

How?

- **Let the child choose the toy or activity** - provide motivational activities / resources linked to the child's interests.
- **Follow the child's lead** - This takes advantage of what the child is currently interested in and attending to. You can then capitalise on the child's current focus of attention. This includes allowing your child the freedom to play with toys in ways that are often different from your original intention!
- **Sit where the child can see your face** - Think...opposite / height / level / listening space. We don't always have to be at our child's eye level but when we do it allows for a better connection with our children.



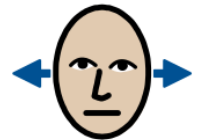
Help Sheet

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- **Waiting, watching and offering silence** - We need to be sure to listen with our eyes, meaning we need to watch our children closely for their communication cues (non-verbal) and take the focus off the words.



- **Avoid questions as an initial interaction – make a comment instead** - Asking too many questions tend to shut down communication, rather than promote it. You do not need to say anything at all.



- **Be responsive** – Be truly present in the moment. Staying connected with your child allows them to lead the interaction. The practitioner may:
 - Copy or mirror the child's actions or words.
 - Listen to what the child is saying.
 - Name what is in their hand.
 - Repeat and expand the child's utterance.
 - Offer praise/reinforcement.

Things to note:

- Respond promptly (within a few seconds of a child doing or saying something).
- Respond positively in a way that shows the child you are really interested in what she/he is saying.
- Stick with what the child is “talking” about and interested in – do not try to direct their attention to something else when she/he is already focused on something or someone.

Evidence base – informed by:

Elks and McLachlan “Language Builders” 2012