

Intensive Interaction

Intensive interaction gives value to a child's play and enables relationship building. It enables the development of understanding communication. The majority of interaction is non-verbal, interpretation of gesture, facial expression etc. Intensive interaction aids the development of these skills.

The staff member should take the child's lead. The activity should stop when the child shows signs of having had enough. It requires the staff member to be in tune with the child and responsive to their needs. Interpretation of verbal and non-verbal cues from the child is essential to success.

The staff member should mimic and mirror the child's responses. Staff can then add a sound or response to the play. Use pauses in play to provide additional responses where appropriate. This should be a relaxed time and follow the lead of the child. It should not be rushed as staff need to be able to enjoy the child and observe them. Where possible it is important the play is not disturbed.

The positioning of the adult will depend on the individual needs of the child. Some will prefer you to play alongside them, others will enjoy having some face to face contact. For some children having an adult within their play space may be difficult. Staff should monitor the activity and the child responses and adapt as appropriate.

Intensive interaction should provide an opportunity to build upon existing relationships and incorporate turn taking where possible. This may be a simple exchange of toys from staff to child.

The child may use face watching to explore interaction and/or vocalise enjoyment/engagement. Staff should ensure attempts of communication and interaction are recognised and responded to. This could be by repeating the child's communication or acknowledging a facial expression with a comment etc.

