

Creating Opportunities for Your Child in an Interaction

Some children need a bit of help to get an interaction going. Try some of these strategies at home when you are playing with your child. These strategies are taken from the Hanen 'It Takes Two to Talk' programme.

1. Follow their lead

Your child will be more interested in interaction if you are focusing on something they are interested in. If they are playing with cars you should follow their lead and play with the cars too.



2. Join in and play



Play like a child! Use fun sounds and words to get them interested. You can get them interested in you by using an upbeat tone of voice and facial expression. Join in the game they are playing. It's ok if they are playing the game 'wrong'. Children have a very vivid imagination! They may not be playing with the toys as you would.

Some children find it tricky if someone intrudes in their play and takes their toys. If your child finds it hard when you join in, try getting some of your own toys that are similar e.g. other cars/vehicles and play alongside your child.

3. Imitate

Copy what your child is doing to get them interested in you. If they are making sounds, repeat the sounds back to them. If they are doing actions e.g. banging, copy the same movements. After you have copied them, wait and see what they do next. It might take a couple of turns for them to realise you are joining in.



4. Interpret



Observe, wait and listen for your child's message. Decide what they are trying to tell you. You might need to use some situational clues to work this out e.g. if they are holding a shoe they may be trying to put the shoe on/ off.

After you have decided what they are trying to tell you, say it as they would if they could e.g. 'shoes on' or 'help me'. Wait to see whether you have got it right.

5. Comment

Give your child a word or short phrase that relates to what you are doing at that moment e.g. 'building bricks', 'driving the car', 'mummy eating chips'.

