

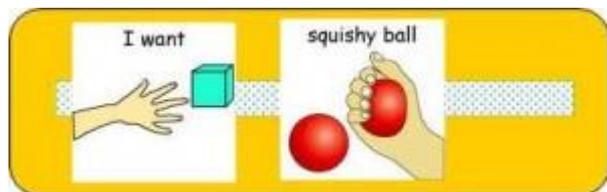
Communicating & playing with your child



Types of play



Types of communication



- Why play and communication is important
- Key ideas
- Top tips
- Common difficulties and problem solving



WHY PLAY & COMMUNICATION IS IMPORTANT

Play helps:

Creativity and early learning skills

Relationships and social skills

Self confidence

Emotional regulation

Language development

Even our immune system!



Play can also help in the moment!

- Our sense of wellbeing
- Our sense of being able to cope (it reduces feelings of anxiety)
- Helps us feel safe
- Our readiness to learn





Play Strategies and Schemas

- **Trajectory** - creating lines in space by climbing up and jumping down. Dropping items from up high.
- **Positioning** - lining items up and putting them in groups.
- **Enveloping** - covering themselves or objects completely. Wrapping items up or placing them in containers.
- **Rotating** - enjoys spinning items round and round. Likes to run around in circles or being swung round.
- **Enclosing** - adding boundaries to play areas e.g. fences around animals. Adding borders to pictures.

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- **Transporting** - carrying or moving items from one place to another; carrying items in containers or bags.
 - **Connecting** - setting out and dismantling tracks, constructing, joining items together with tape or glue.
 - **Transforming** - exploring the changing states of materials, transforming them from a solid to liquid state and back again.
 - **Orienteering** – an interest in positioning themselves or objects in different places or positions e.g upside down or on their side.





Through the Eyes of a Child



The Communication Trust
Every child understood



KEY IDEAS

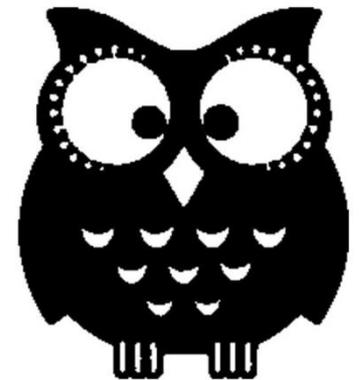


1: Follow their lead

- Tune into where they are
- Children (and adults!) engage more when we join their interests
- Get down to their level and be face to face
- Play with what they are interested in, letting them choose the toy/ activity
- Respond to your child's communication and play
- Sing and read to your child

2: Be attentive

- Notice
- Be curious
- Think about what is going on for your child in that moment
- Tune into their feelings
- Think: Observe, Wait, Listen (OWL)





3: Help them feel successful

- We need to feel successful to be motivated
- Important to feel heard and responded to
- Feedback
- Give them the experience of influencing you!



4: Consider their development level

- Support attention
- Simplify language
- Make it relevant to the child
- Don't test, build success!



TOP TIPS



Joining your child's focus of attention

- Take time
- Friendly body language
- Wonder about what they are doing, might be thinking or feeling
- Comment on what they are doing using single words or sounds e.g. 'car' or simply 'ooh!' 'weee!'
- Pause, give space
- Notice their initiatives and invitations



Receive and return!

- Acknowledge their turn before taking a turn
 - May want to make eye contact if child finds this comfortable
 - Use body language – smiling, nodding
 - Repeat their words
 - Repeat their actions (used in Intensive Interaction)
- Take a turn



- Building success

- Don't anticipate a child's needs; instead give them a chance to communicate.
- Allow silences to give a child the space to start the communication.
- Avoid highlighting a mistake. If your child says a word incorrectly, don't correct him/ her but instead model the correct form.

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- Adapting to child's level
 - Don't use open ended questions
 - Child may not be able to attend to more than one thing. Prompt attention and give time for child to manage their attention
 - Check understanding
 - Would visual prompts help?
 - Make communication part of everyday life, ensure it is meaningful to child, e.g. use what they can see or are doing.

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- Continue to use home language
 - Children need a good language model to develop a secure foundation in one language. They need their primary carer to talk to them in the language they are most proficient in.
 - This will help them learn a second language, e.g. when they get to school



COMMON DIFFICULTIES & PROBLEM SOLVING



1. Time and stress

- It doesn't feel like a priority or we're not in right frame of mind

2. Other children (or adults!) competing for our attention

3. Comparing our child to other children/ comparing ourselves to others

- Feeling that our child or our communication or our play isn't what it 'should' be
- Pressure from relatives or friends

4. Past difficulties – we start to expect to fail



5. Our own experiences/childhood

- May not have good memories of childhood and playing, may not feel we have the skills to play.

6. Painful or difficult to tune into child's world or feelings

7. Find it hard to let them lead, we want to take control

8. Being too hard on ourselves

- unrealistic expectations



It can help to:

- Value the experience more than the outcome
 - It doesn't matter what the Lego looks like!
- Be aware of our thoughts and try to reflect, e.g.
Am I focusing on what my child can't do rather than what they can?, Do I need some more support?
- Have more playfulness in our own lives
- Be realistic and start small
 - Don't need to be attentive all the time.
 - Aim for quality, 10 minutes of giving full attention and following their lead in play is great!



DISCUSSION



RESOURCES