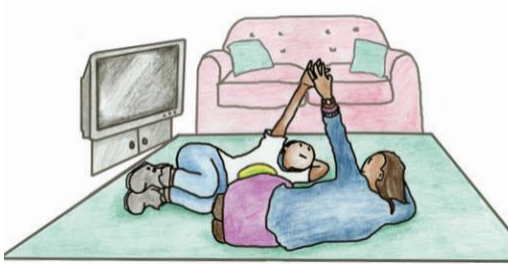


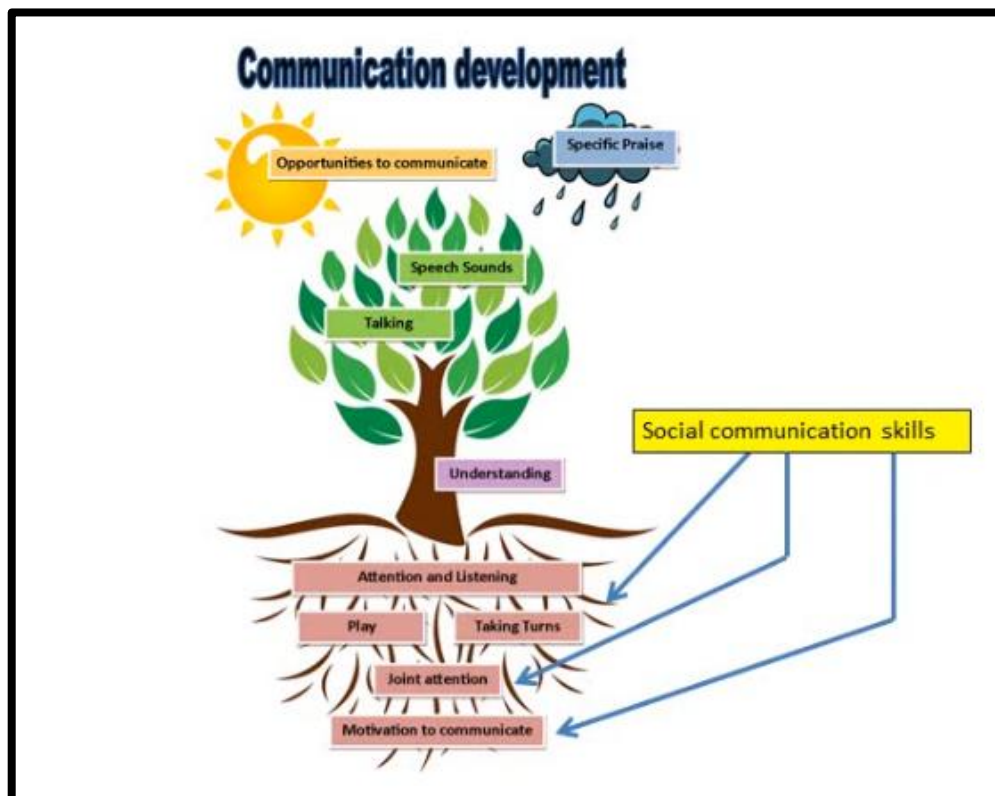
Playful Ideas for Encouraging Interaction



Interacting with others is at the foundation of children's speech, language and communication development.

Any time an adult responds to a child's message, either verbally or non-verbally, and the child responds back, an interaction has started. And it's within these early back-and-forth interactions that the foundation for all of a child's future conversations is built.

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Some children may benefit from additional support to help them develop early social communication skills and learn that interacting with other people can be **enjoyable** and **useful**. To do this, we need to make interacting with others fun, motivating, desirable and predictable and we need to provide lots of **opportunities** and **reasons** to communicate, throughout the day.

Tips for encouraging interaction:

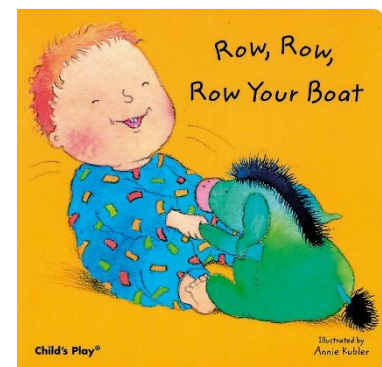
- **Follow the child's lead:** Meet the child as a co-player in what they are interested in. The best communication opportunities are when children are highly motivated.
- **Be responsive:** Look for signs that a child does or does not want to continue the interaction and respect this, don't force a child to play a game or persist if they turn away.
- **Wait, watch, wonder:** Children's play is complex, pause before you get involved and think about what is interesting them about the play and how you can sensitively join in

People Games

The aim of these games is 'Joint Attention:' two people focusing on the same thing together.

Sing Nursery Rhymes with anticipatory actions and sounds such as:

- **Row, row, row your boat:** If you see a crocodile don't forget to... SCREAM!
- **Sleeping Bunnies:** Why don't we wake them with a merry tune... HOP little bunnies HOP HOP HOP
- **Tiny Tim:** Singing bubble, bubble, bubble POP!



Play 'Peek a Boo' or 'What's in the box?' games which involve revealing something hidden. This builds up a sense of anticipation.

Ready, steady GO games

You say 'Ready, steady' and they say 'GO!'

Activities which work well with this:

- Pausing before pouring water from a jug
- Inflating then popping or releasing a balloon
- Making and then blowing flour castles (like a sand castle but the flour goes everywhere!)
- Building and then knocking a tower of blocks down
- Knocking skittles with a ball
- Marble runs





Bubbles!

These provide lots of opportunities for interaction because they involve one person blowing and the other popping and a child needs the adult to blow the bubbles.

Requesting activities:

These are activities in which you pause or hold something back to encourage a child to communicate they want 'more' or to do it 'again.' The child does not need to say words to request more, look out for any communication such as noises, gestures or pointing.

- Blowing bubbles then pausing to encourage the child to communicate 'more'
- Toys which an adult needs to spin or wind up, to encourage the child to communicate 'again'
- Activities which require adult support such as being pushed on the swings or spun on a roundabout, to encourage the child to communicate 'again' or make a request
- Holding back some of the items needed, such as puzzle pieces, to encourage the child to communicate a request for the piece
- Placing a favourite item in a clear container with an adults' picture on it to encourage the child to request the adult to 'open' the container



You will need to support a child to learn how to communicate 'more' or 'again,' for example, using signs, gestures or words. Use this activity cautiously because developing positive, kind relationships is more important and when not used carefully, this can cause frustration.



Choices: Offer two motivating choices to provide an opportunity for a child to communicate a request. Be responsive to all forms of communication such as looking towards the preferred choice, pointing, reaching or using words. Activities you can include choices in:

- Nursery rhyme props
- Snack options
- Exciting and motivating sensory toys during 'What's in the bag?' type activities
- Within play activities such as two types of glitter during crafts or two paint colours

Progress to look out for:

The child initiates an activity with you

The child communicates 'more' or 'again' or makes a request

The child looks or turns towards you

Increasing attention and involvement in activities you initiate

Smiling, laughing or joy at playing with you

The child looks to you to share emotions or for you to have a turn