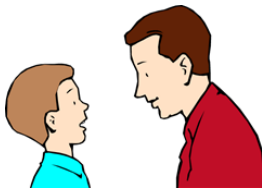


Starting an Interaction

Children need a reason and a way to communicate in order to join in with an interaction. We communicate for lots of different reasons – request, comment, ask questions.

The following strategies are to help you start an interaction with your child. These strategies are from the Hanen 'It Takes Two to Talk' programme.

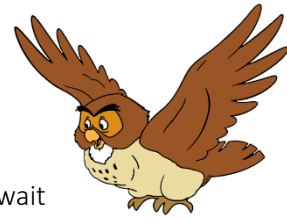
1. Get face to face



Getting face to face allows you and your child to connect. In order to get face to face you might need to sit or lie on the floor. Being face to face allows you to see what your child is interested in and what messages they are sending you. It also allows them to see what messages you are sending

2. Observe, Wait and Listen (OWL)

Observe what your child is interested in and what messages they are trying to send you. Look in the direction they are reaching or pointing to discover what is interesting them.



Wait to give your child a chance to start an interaction. You will need to wait expectantly - this means you need to be face to face with your child, leaning forward and looking at your child as if you are expecting a response. This encourages your child to learn that a response is required and send you a message.

The amount of time you need to wait will depend on your child. Some children need up to 5 seconds of waiting before they will send a message. It may help to count elephants to encourage you to wait for longer.



Listen to what your child is saying. If your child is not using any words yet this can also be **look** to see what non-verbal messages your child is sending you. When you listen and look, this lets your child know that you are interested and what they are communicating is important to you.

3. Let your child lead (& follow their lead!)



Allowing your child to take the lead helps them to engage in an interaction. It also takes the pressure off them to talk. If we put too much pressure on a child to talk, it may make them talk less.

Once they have started an interaction respond follow their lead by responding immediately with enthusiasm.