

Social Communication and Interaction groups

A guide to planning the basic six-week course:

The purpose of the groups is to teach and practice basic social communication and interaction skills. To support this there several core games that will make up a session. Each session follows the routine of a welcome song, two or three activities with a specific aim for example developing naming or listening/attention skills, and a goodbye song. The number and length of each activity and session will be determined by the needs of the children in your group.

Social Communication and Interaction games:

- **Hello song** – the aim is for children to hold their head up, look round at everyone and make general eye contact. Model this yourself when you start the singing off. Praise the children when you see their uplifted faces.
- **Naming activity** –
 - **Ball Rolling** – this works well as a naming game. Each person says the name of the person they are going to roll the ball to, and says, for example, “George, ball’s coming!” This encourages the development of attending and responding to communication;
 - **Who’s hiding** – use a light scarf to cover someone’s face and ask, “Who’s hiding?” to encourage direct looking and naming. Some children really love this game but beware others can find being hidden quite scary!
- **Turn taking activity** - use a motivating toy such as car chutes and ball chutes, to help children to learn how turns work in sequence and to wait for their turn. Use the language of turn-taking very specifically, for example, “Whose turn is it now?”, or “Whose turn is it next?”. You can reinforce turn taking with many other activities, for example passing round a feely bag or basket which contains puzzle pieces or bits of Mr Potato Head. Also, remember to praise ‘good waiting’.
- **Listening/attention activity - Follow the leader** – use a drum or tambourine and get the children’s attention, asking them to look and listen. Teach them to stand still when the tambourine shakes, or the drum skin is rubbed, then jump when they hear a bang! Once the children in your group have mastered this a little they can take turns to be the leader.
- **Choice activity - Song Box** – use a song box to enable all children to make a choice. You can use objects of reference, photographs or symbols for the child to use when making their choice.