

## Activities for home learning for pre-verbal children and/or children who have complex needs

- **Sensory activities** - *There are many things around the house that you can use to create fun, sensory activities with your child. Here are a few examples:*
  - Water play in the bath or sink with containers for filling, squeezing and emptying. Use washing up liquid or food colouring for extra fun!
  - Make a home-made Maraca or sensory shaker using a plastic bottle, water and glitter and your imagination!
  - Make home-made musical instruments with bottles, saucepans, spoons and pasta.
  - Finger and feet painting!
  - Threading using pasta - make your own jewellery!
  - Create your own sensory box containing objects to stimulate your child's senses. You could include things like feathers, a handkerchief with sensory oils, stretchy objects, noisy objects, a light up ball, different pieces of material, a pine cone and straw.
  - Make your own playdough- there are lots of recipes online.
  - Play with shaving foam and small objects, e.g. toy cars to drive through the foam.
  - Build a den using cushions and blankets and boxes.

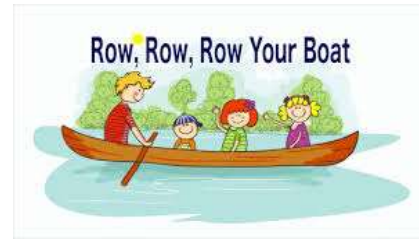


- **'Friendly sabotage'** where you take turns with your child (and then stop) or have something just out of reach, so that the child needs to communicate with you to get what they want or have their turn. Things like bubbles and cause and effect toys are good for this kind of approach. Your child does not need to speak to show you that they want you to continue an activity - they could demonstrate their communication by pointing, reaching, making a sound or making eye contact, however briefly.

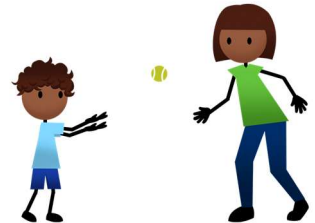
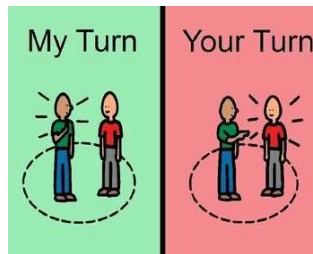


- Use of familiar **Nursery rhymes/songs** where you suddenly stop and wait to see if the child continues the action or indicates for you to carry on so nursery rhymes may work well. It works well sometimes to have laminated pictures of nursery rhymes to see if a

child can indicate a preference by choosing a picture. But you can just start with singing with the actions and seeing if they join in and try to anticipate the actions-e.g. rocking in Row Your Boat or The Wheels on the Bus. You can add new nursery rhymes as your child gets to know more songs. Twinkl have a range of nursery rhyme pictures that you could print at home



- **Simple turn taking activities.** Take turns with your child using simple activities such as throwing/rolling/kicking a ball, banging a drum, pushing a car back and forth or building blocks. Use gestures and the words, 'my turn' 'your turn' to encourage your child to watch, wait and anticipate.



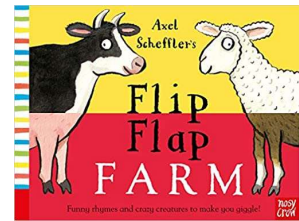
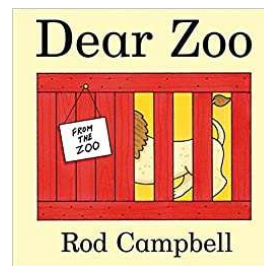
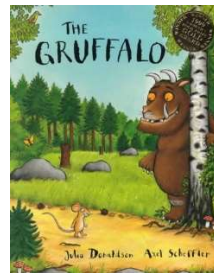
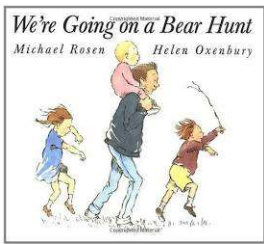
- Go on a **nature trail**, collecting objects in your garden or the park. Use these to create a picture or nature box. Collect some objects or take photographs of what you saw together and talk about these at home.



- **Colour matching activities.** Use everyday objects and encourage your child to place them on the correct coloured piece of paper or to sort the objects/toys into different colours groups.



- **Sharing books together.** Use to child's special interests and look for books where there are repetitive phrases or actions to join in. Some books to try:



### **Ways to encourage effective communication with your child:**

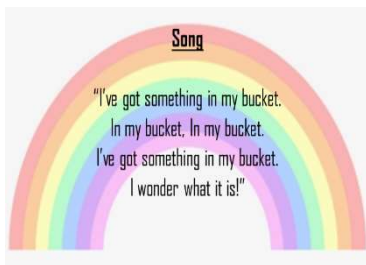
- Use single words and short phrases or sentences, depending on your child's level of understanding.
- Speak clearly and don't speak too quickly.
- Get down to your child's level and ensure that they have your attention.
- Minimise distractions around you- e.g. turn the TV or radio off.
- Allow your child time to process what you are saying. Repeat if necessary but try not to rephrase what you have said to avoid confusion.
- Use gestures or pictures to support your child's understanding.
- Try using objects of reference to support your child's understanding- e.g. show them their coat when it's time to go outside or a towel to help them understand it's time for a bath.
- Try using a visual timetable at home or a Now/Next board to help your child make sense of their routines at home.
- Make communication fun and relaxed!
- Look out for all of the different ways your child may be trying to communicate with you - e.g. pointing, pulling, guiding your hand, making vocalisations, copying what you say, crying, refusing, making eye contact.

### **Different approaches that you could adapt at home:**

- **Intensive Interaction** - This is an approach used for adults and children with significant learning/communication needs and also used increasingly for children/adults on autism spectrum. The approach is about just being with the child and communicating with them at their level without making demands, asking questions or directing a child to do things. The approach focuses on copying the child's actions and verbalisations and then seeing if they can copy yours too. The aim of Intensive Interaction is to show children that communication with other people can be pleasurable and fun. You can find more information about Intensive Interaction online and on YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaD5Vn2OoLU>

- **Attention Autism** – This approach was developed by Gina Davies who is a Speech and Language Therapist. It is good for building early attention skills. The idea is to have really fascinating activities and objects in the bucket that make attention to it almost irresistible, but the child's attention has to be on the adult who is showing them the toy as well as the object in the bucket. The adult sings the 'bucket song' before showing the object in the box to help build excitement and anticipation. The adult then uses repetitive words to describe the object in a highly motivating and engaging way.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFYnc4xcZ6k> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWJhjJF8ES0>



### **Further ideas for activities, resources and information:**

Autism West Midlands- Developing play and Fun Activities:

[https://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Developing\\_Play\\_In\\_Autistic\\_Children\\_March\\_2020.pdf](https://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Developing_Play_In_Autistic_Children_March_2020.pdf)  
[https://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Fun\\_Activities\\_For\\_Autistic\\_Children\\_Aug\\_2020.pdf](https://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Fun_Activities_For_Autistic_Children_Aug_2020.pdf)

Ambitious About Autism- Learning from Home:

<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/information-about-autism/coronavirus-and-autism/education/learning-from-home-support>  
[https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/3163/postcards\\_pre\\_school\\_final.pdf](https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/3163/postcards_pre_school_final.pdf)

CBeebies- Messy Play Activities:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/makes/lets-go-club-messy-makes>

Oxford Owl Learning at Home Ideas:

[www.oxfordowl.co.uk](http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk)