

FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNICATION

Transforming Autism Project



Explore

Promote

Connect

Tips

OVERVIEW

- Behavior = communication
- Communication is much more than talking
- Listen, and mirror/reflect back

“...THERE WAS COLOSSAL POWER IN HOW WE REACTED TO THINGS, NOT ONLY IN OUR BEHAVIOUR, BUT ALSO IN OUR UNSPOKEN THOUGHTS AND ATTITUDES.”

GUY SHAHAR, “TRANSFORMING AUTISM”

Explore

Promote

Connect

Tips

EXPLORE YOUR CHILD'S PROFILE

- Each child is different
- Learn about your child's sensitivities and ability to cope with emotions
- Autistic brains are different: communication & interaction is more difficult

Explore

Promote

Connect

Tips

PROMOTE INTERACTION

- Provide interactive play – this allows opportunities for them to be social
- Play games that your child enjoys and encourage social interactions
- Help your child process feelings and understand social situations through symbolic play.
- ***Imitate you child's sounds and words as much as possible***
 - This shows your child that their sounds and words are *powerful* ways to communicate with people. Simple back-and-forth sound imitation games are the beginnings of social conversations!

Explore

Promote

Connect

Tips

CONNECTION IS KEY

- Make social interactions easy and **very predictable** for your child by:
 - **Repeating** a familiar, preferred activity (e.g. a tickle game, swing, or song) several times (so your child can anticipate your behavior).
 - **Pausing & waiting expectantly** for your child to *continue activity/interaction* (with a look, sound, word or action).
 - **Immediately responding** to your child's communication by continuing activity, then pausing & waiting again, etc.

Explore

Promote

Connect

Tips

HELP YOUR
CHILD
CONNECT
WITH YOU

- This helps you notice where your child is most concentrated and focused, and show's your child:
 - Mommy/Daddy is with me - I'm not playing by myself!
 - What I like is also interesting to Mommy/Daddy, so I want to share it more with them!
 - I will try to communicate more with Mommy/Daddy, even though it's hard for me!

Explore

Promote

Connect

Tips

BE READY TO CONNECT

- Be alert, notice, and reflect back your child's attempts to communicate (both verbally or non-verbally)
- Watch for any sound or body movement and respond promptly. The promptness of your response helps your child feel the power of communication
- Let your child know you're receiving their attempts to communicate, even if you're not sure what they're trying to tell you
- Remember, your child's communication may be very subtle, so pay close attention to your child's body and face, not only their sounds and words

Explore

Promote

Connect

Tips

IMPORTANT STEPS TO REMEMBER

Every second of connection matters, keep it going!

- Try spending 5 minutes once or twice a day just sitting with your child as they play. Don't do anything yourself with your child's toys! Instead:
 - **Observe** you child attentively
 - **Wait for** your child to do or say something (make an "initiative")
 - **Follow** what your child does by **naming** it or repeating what he/she says (imitate)
 - **Simplify**
 - Celebrate

Explore

Promote

Connect

Tips

BE VISUAL

- Use gestures (non-verbal communication)
- Be simple in your gesture
- Use both your body and your voice when communicating

Tip: be aware of what helps your child process your communication (watch your pitch, volume, proximity, pace)

Explore

Promote

Connect

Tips

BE AWARE

- Constantly directing your child's attention to what *you* are focused on or interested in
- ***Not recognizing*** or ***acknowledging*** what your ***child*** is *focused on/interested in*

Explore

Promote

Connect

Tips

BE AWARE

- Engage socially with your child and keep yourself present in the interaction
- Questions for independent responding towards interaction vs natural interaction regarding motivation and spontaneous commenting?

THANK YOU.
QUESTIONS?

