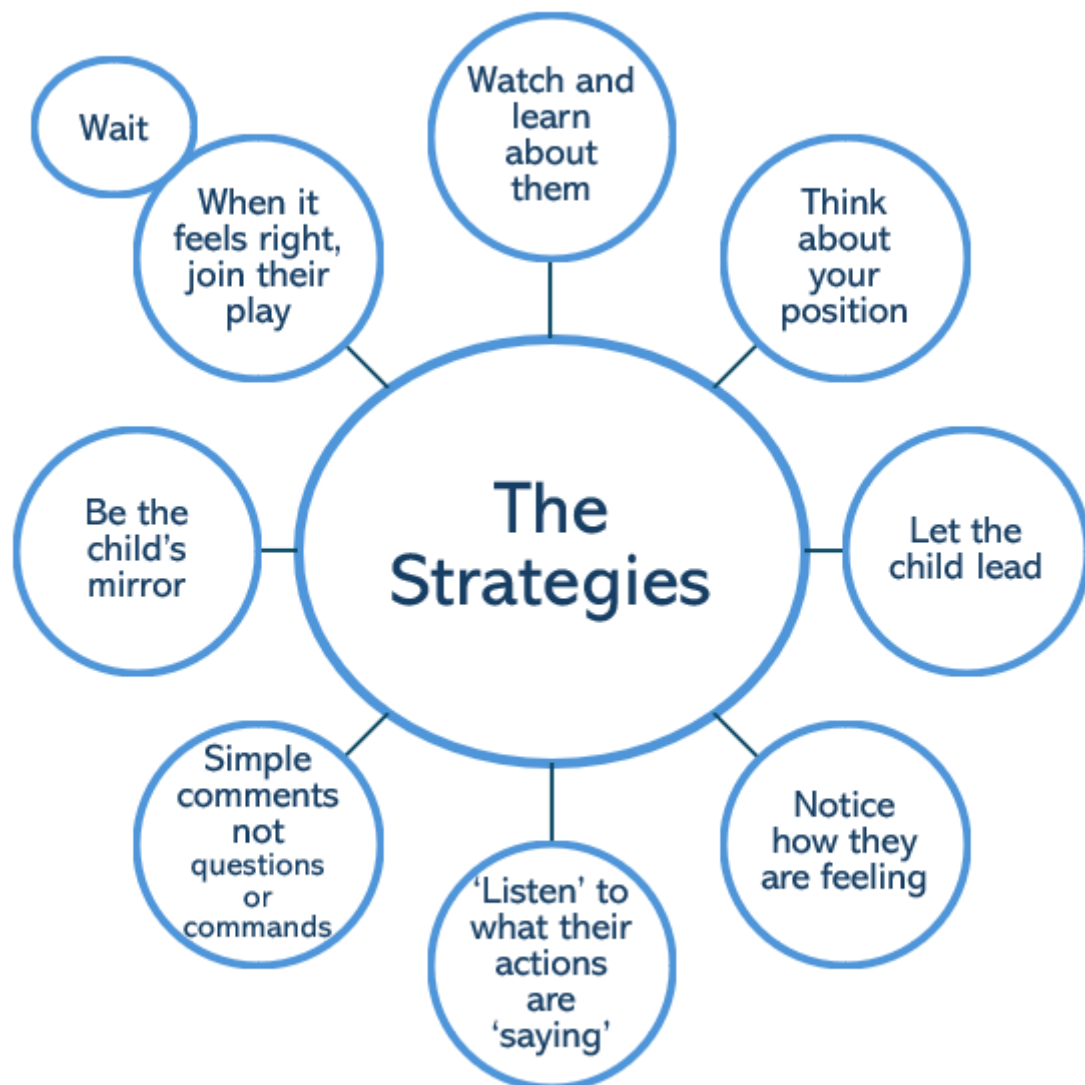


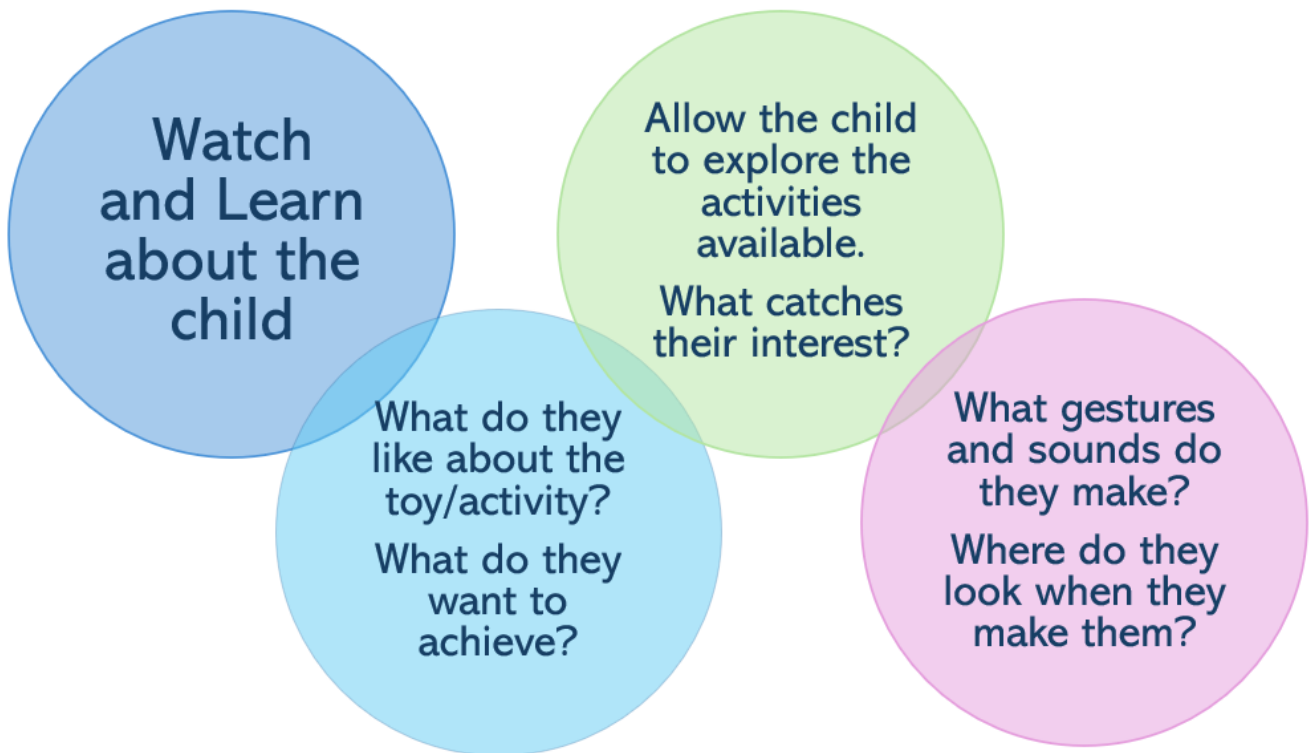
May I Join You?

The *May I Join You?* approach is a gentle and playful way of supporting children to build their social communication skills. It focuses on joining a child in their play, following their interests, and creating enjoyable moments of connection with an adult. These shared experiences help to develop the important early foundations for communication, interaction and relationships.

May I Join You? was developed by Dr Helen Delargy.



May I Join You?

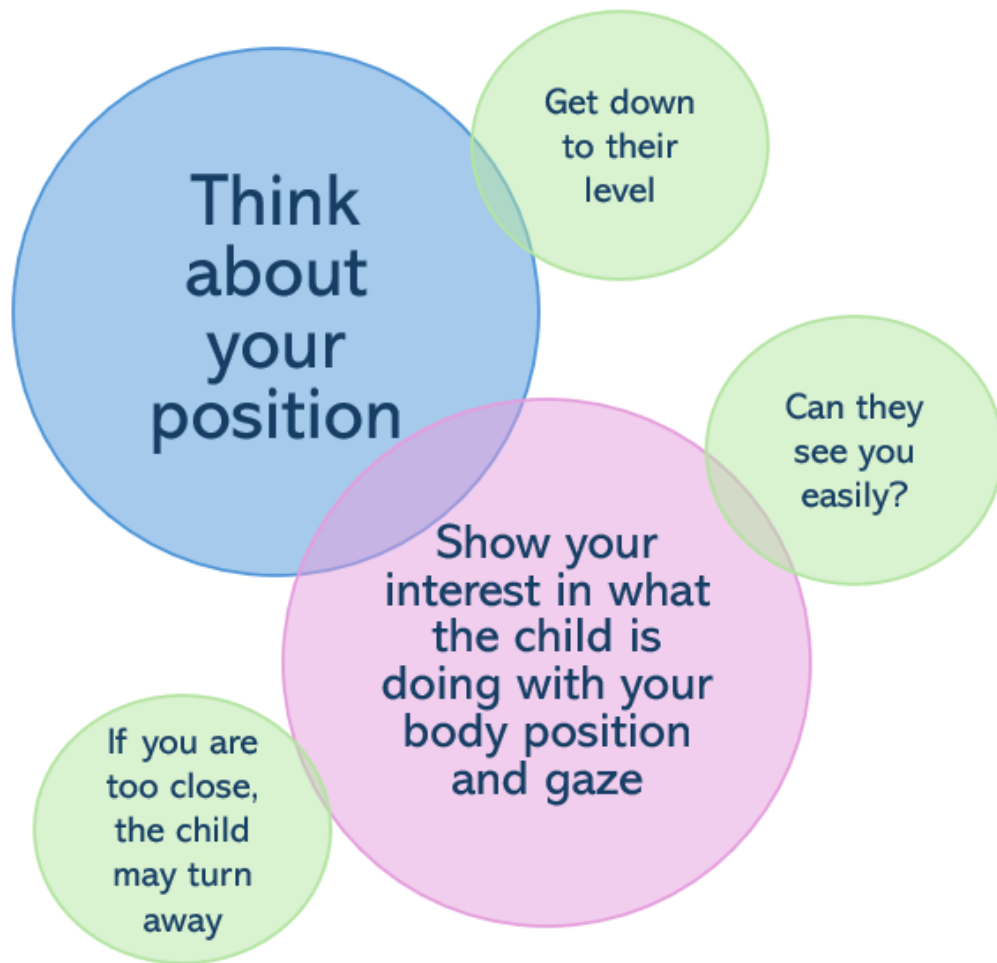


Why?

The child's communication may be mainly by body language or sounds. Their signals may be very easy to miss because they are weak, not directed at anyone, unusual or mis-timed. Watching the child will enable you to learn about their communication signals and show you what interests them.



May I Join You?

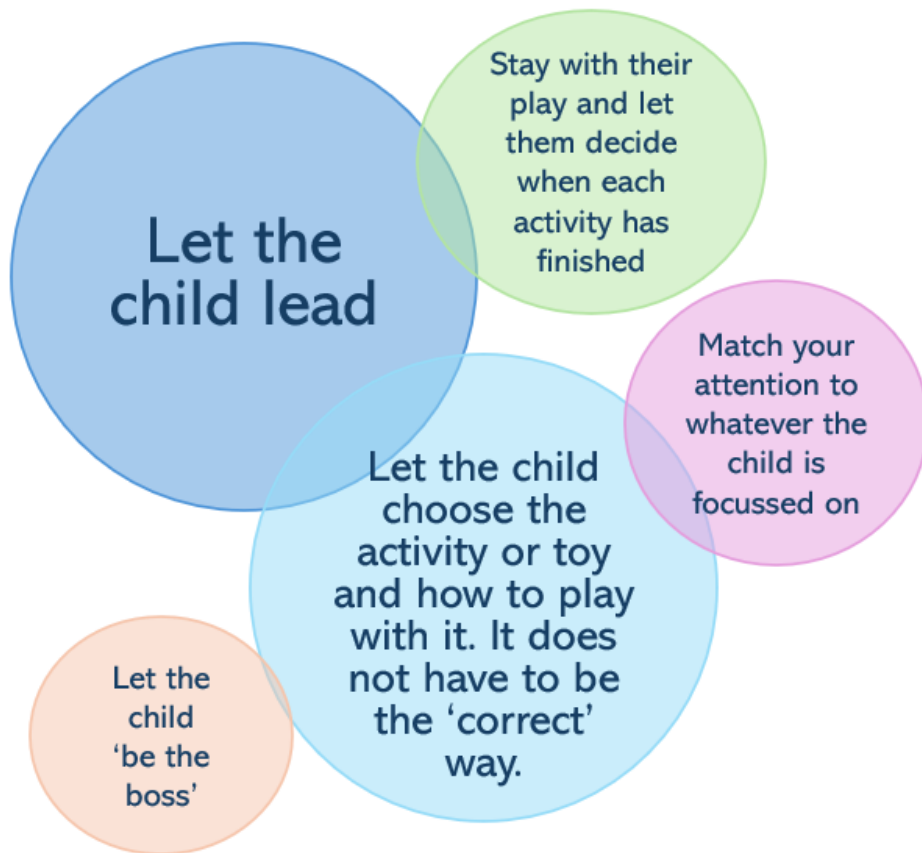


Why?

Being in the right place will help the child to look at you and interact. Your position will show them you are interested in what they are doing. It will show that you are ready to play when the child wants.



May I Join You?



Why?

The child will choose something that motivates them and keeps their interest. It lets the child show you what interests them. The child will experience having fun and being understood by another person. Later, these skills will let them accept another person's lead.



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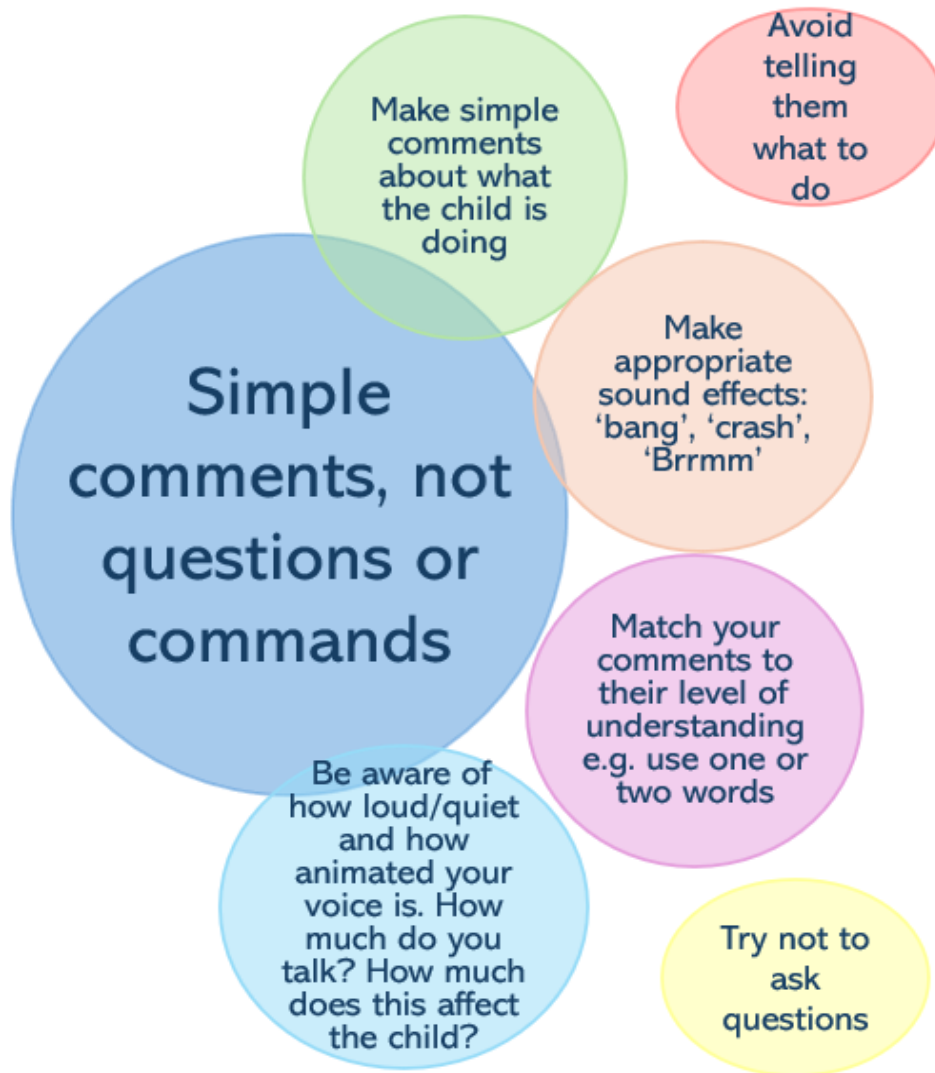


Why?

Mirroring the child will encourage them to notice your actions and look at you. The child will learn they can influence an adult's behaviour. Social interaction often feels like a table tennis match, with turn-taking a rhythm. Copying the child will help them learn about conversation.

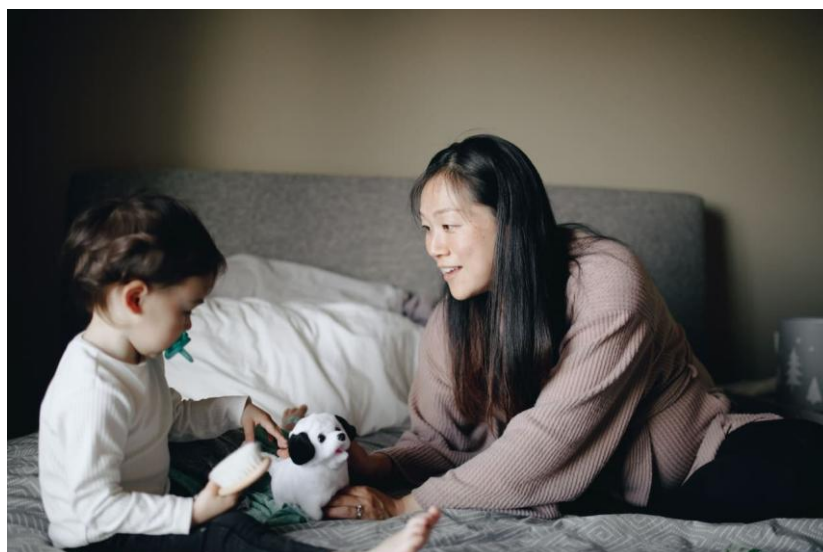


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Why

You give the child the best chance of being able to listen to you. Saying only the most important words, helps them to understand what you have said. Avoiding questions and instructions gives them the 'headspace' to be able to play and listen to you at the same time.



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Wait

When it feels right, join their play

Wait for any response to you joining them e.g. do they glance towards you, gesture, move away or vocalise?

Wait until the child settles on an activity. Look for little chances to share their focus.

Why?

Responding when the child signals they are ready, gives them the best chance of letting you join in. You are helping the child practice starting an interaction. They will feel you understand them and will enjoy sharing their interests with you.

Follow the child's lead and join them in a way you feel they might like...

... by looking at what the child is doing, admiring it, making comments or sound effects for their actions.

...by helping the child achieve their goal e.g. if they are building a tower, hand them the blocks.

...by copying their chosen activity, so together you are both doing the chosen activity.



May I Join You?

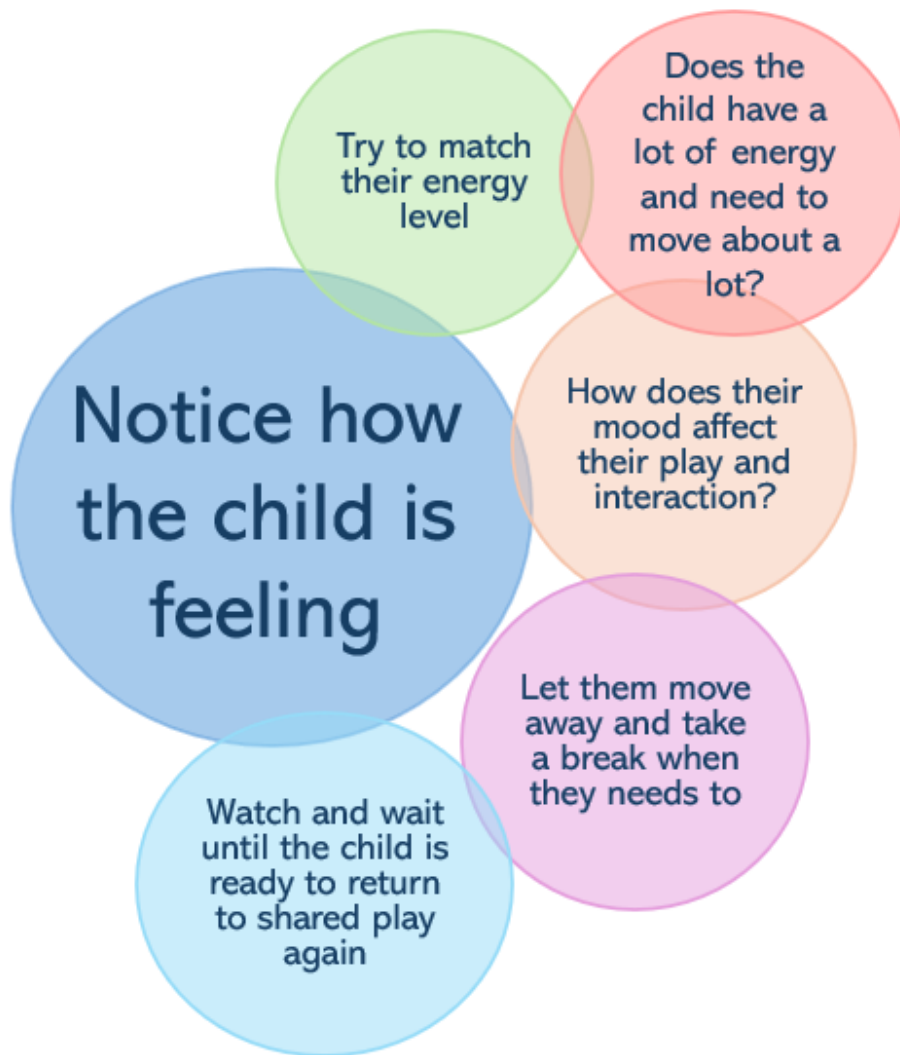


Why?

They will feel understood and begin to see the point of communication. The child will see they can influence an adult and want to communicate more.



May I Join You?



Why?

You will learn about how the child's feelings affect their behaviour. Allowing the child to move away and return when they are ready will help them to feel in control. This will help the child to learn about regulating their own feelings and behaviour.

