

# Interactive

## What is this?

Babies are ready for interaction from the moment they are born! Stick your tongue out at them and they might do it back. Being interactive with a baby is just like having a chat with a friend or playing a game. They say something, or make a move, and you respond in a way that matches it or builds on it.

It's sometimes called "serve and return". Like a tennis game we build up a series of "you do, I do".

## Why does it matter?

It really helps us feel in touch with the baby, and quickly becomes a lot of fun. It can be amazing when we get into what feels like a "conversation".

It's also great for the baby. They have so much to learn about what to do, so learning from how we respond to them is just what they need. And deep in their brains it builds patterns of "now/next", "this/that" which are the ticking clocks that make thinking and managing behaviour work. One day they will be able to wait *now* for a snack because they know it is *next*. Fewer hassles for us, and more capable child.

## What does it look like?

- Noticing what the baby is doing, or how they respond to us
- Taking a turn back, reflecting what they are doing or building on it

It is usually simple things like:

Baby ...	So we ...
Makes a sound	Chat with them, give them time to respond back and so on
Throws the toy	Laugh and bring it back to them
Smiles	Smile back
Waves arms	Wave back!
Turns head away	Give them some space and quiet

*Turn over for Play and Games!*

## Play and games

There are some interactive games that babies usually love, such as:

- Peekaboo
- Mirror actions and copy sounds
- Singing
- Pat-a-cake
- This Little Piggy
- Tummy time together
- Gentle dancing around
- Rattles, toys to shake and explore
- Books to explore and feel
- Crunchy, crinkly textures

As long as you are taking part and taking turns, almost anything you both enjoy will do!