Intensive Interaction 'techniques'

Although generally used in combination, the techniques set out below are the most easily identified social communication practices used within Intensive Interaction engagements.

Sharing personal space
In Intensive Interaction we look to share proximity in a mutually acceptable way e.g. somehow lying, sitting, standing or even moving together, touching or apart.

Vocal echoing
Echoing some aspect of a person's sounds (even any non-symbolic sounds) can be socially acknowledging and even develop into conversation-like exchanges e.g. echoing a person's sounds or vocalisations, perhaps even echoing their breathing patterns.

Behavioural mirroring
Mirroring some aspect of a person's posture, movements or behaviour can be socially acknowledging and can develop into dynamic behavioural exchanges e.g. mirroring some aspect of a person's movements or physical activity; adopting someone's posture.

Physical contact
Sensitive, sociable physical contact can sometimes promote mutual trust and sociability e.g. holding, squeezing or clapping hands together; hand-over-hand games; rhythmically stroking arms or shoulders; walking arm-in-arm; touching foreheads or rubbing noses.

Making or exchanging eye contact
Sensitive eye contact can be important for exchanging inclusive social signals e.g. looking at, and looking away games, making dramatic glances, looking in the mirror together.

Exchanging facial expressions
Using clear and sustained facial expressions with a person creates opportunities for these to be better understood and reciprocated e.g. clear smiling, winking; even pulling faces.

Joint focus activity
This is when both people focus their attention on the same object or activity, structuring their social engagement around this object or activity e.g. jointly exploring objects, books and pictures; doing a structured activity together; reading to or listening to music together.

Turn taking
Turn taking involves two people intentionally sequencing their actions in some way e.g. via sequenced vocal or physical exchanges e.g. clapping or passing things in turns, etc.

Burst-pause sequences
This is when an action is preceded by an extended pause, building an expectancy that something is about to happen e.g. hide-and-appear games; playing 'catch' with a '1-2-3' countdown; using noise escalation games that gradually build then abruptly go quiet.

Using 'running commentaries'
The timely use of a positive 'running commentary' on someone's actions, or on the visible actions of others in a shared environment, can provide a socialising element to an engagement e.g. using limited language to describe a person's activity e.g. "wow, great, yeah...", "I can see you looking...", "from me to you..." etc.