

Inclusive Developmental and Therapy Center

Connection & Communication: A Home Program for Autistic Children

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✓ Can I help my child at home?

Yes, you really can. Help your autistic child share attention, take more back-and-forth turns and communicate more, in ways that feel good to them. This free program breaks it down into simple weekly steps, built from proven therapy techniques — things any parent can do at home, in everyday moments, at no cost. It doesn't replace a professional assessment where one is needed, but for a lot of children it makes a real difference, and it never does any harm.

Go at your own pace — a new, gentle focus each week.

Download the whole program as a printable PDF to keep.

Includes the signs that mean it's worth getting a bit of extra help.

You can help an autistic child connect and communicate at home, and the way in is simpler than most parents expect: join the play your child already loves instead of steering them into yours. This free home program turns that into five gentle weeks — follow their lead, become the fun, build joint attention, create reasons to communicate, then weave it all into ordinary days. It is one of our free **parent-led home programs**, and you can start it today, while you wait for anything else.

Hold onto this while you read: your child is already communicating. A tug on your hand, a glance towards the door, lining the cars up in exactly the same order — all of it is telling you something. Parents describe it to us in their own words too: mera bacha naam ka jawab nahi deta, my child doesn't answer to his name; bacha apni hi dunya mein rehta hai, he stays in a world of his own. What we do here is help you meet your child where they are, and build more shared moments, one at a

time. If you are still working out whether what you are seeing is autism, our page on **autism in children** sets out the signs and what usually happens next.

These are warm, play-based ideas to weave into ordinary days. They support your child and your bond, but they don't replace a proper developmental assessment or therapy. If autism is suspected, please seek an assessment as well — early, play-based, parent-led support works best hand in hand with professional care, and our **autism support service in Multan** is designed to run alongside what you do at home. And to be clear about what this is for: nothing here is meant to make your child seem less autistic. It is meant to make connection easier, in both directions.

Who this program is for

- ✓ Children who are autistic, or being assessed for autism, at any level of communication.
- ✓ Children who are non-verbal or use only a few words — and children who talk plenty but rarely to and fro.
- ✓ Children who give little eye contact, or don't always turn when you call their name — a toddler not responding to their name can have several explanations, and it is worth reading them.
- ✓ Children who play happily alone and rarely bring things over to show you.
- ✓ Parents who want gentle, respectful ways to build connection and interaction.
- ✓ Families waiting for an assessment, or already getting autism support, who want ideas for home.
- ✓ Grandparents, aunts, uncles and older siblings — everyone in the house can use the same steps.

Important — when to get professional help

This is a supportive home program — it isn't a diagnosis, and it doesn't replace a proper assessment. Please speak to a professional soon if:

Your child loses skills they once had — words, gestures or eye contact (regression).

Your child doesn't react to loud sounds or to their name — have their hearing checked before anything else.

Your child has no safe awareness of danger near traffic, water or heights.

Your child shows severe or frequent distress, or is at risk of hurting themselves.

Your child has no reliable way to tell you their basic needs.

You have a worried gut feeling — always trust it and ask a professional for help. When you are ready, you can book an appointment with our team.

Getting help where you live

Everything here is free to use **anywhere in the world**. If you'd like a professional to take a closer look, the best next step is someone local to you:

Work with us online, from anywhere. We offer **online sessions and parent coaching** worldwide — book an online consultation and we'll guide you and your child directly.

Talk to your child's **doctor, paediatrician, GP or health visitor** — share what you noticed.

Ask about **free early-childhood or early-intervention services** in your area — many countries offer them for young children (e.g. Early Intervention in the US, NHS referrals in the UK).

Search **“child speech & language therapist near me”**, or ask your doctor for a referral.

Near Multan, Pakistan? You're also warmly welcome in person at our centre — **contact us here**.

Your step-by-step roadmap

Move at your child's pace, not the calendar's — the “weeks” are just a gentle order, not a race. Feel free to repeat any stage for as long as it's helping.

Week 1 – Follow your child's lead

Join what your child already loves, on their terms.

Watch for a few minutes before you do anything, then simply settle in beside them.

Do what they do — line the cars up too, spin the wheel too, flap the ribbon too.

Let them stay in charge of the play. You are a happy guest, not the director.

Say very little at first. One or two words about what they are doing is plenty.

⚡ **Try** Copying is the quickest way in. When a child who usually ignores you **this:** notices you doing exactly what they are doing, that glance is where it starts.

Week 2 – Get face to face and playful

Become the most interesting thing in the room.

Get down low, face to face, right at your child's eye level — on the floor, not standing over them.

Use lively, silly, sing-song sounds and big, warm expressions.

Play people games that need you — peekaboo, tickles, chase, swinging, bouncing on your knees.

Stop while they still want more, so they come back to you and ask for another go.

⚡ **Try** Be such good fun that your child chooses to look at you on their own. **this:** Never hold a toy by your eyes or turn their face towards you — a forced look teaches nothing.

Week 3 – Build joint attention

Share a moment on the same thing, together.

Joint attention just means you and your child looking at the same thing, and both knowing you are sharing it.

Notice what your child is looking at and put words to it — “You see the bird!”

Point things out, and follow where your child points or looks.

Pause with excitement in the middle of a favourite game so they glance up at you, then carry on.

 **Try** A shared look at the same thing is the seed all communication grows **this:** from. It comes long before words, and it is worth far more than a forced “look at me”.

Week 4 – Create reasons to communicate

Give your child gentle chances to reach out.

Offer a favourite toy or snack and wait, with a warm, expectant look.

Count slowly to five in your head.

Put a favourite thing in sight but out of reach, or hand over a jar that is a bit too tight — now there is something to ask for.

Honour **every** attempt — a look, a reach, a point, a sound, a sign, a picture or a word.

Every one of these is a turn

- A look towards you
- |
- A reach, or a tug on your hand
- |
- A point
- |
- A sound
- |
- A sign or a picture
- |
- A word

None is a lesser turn — answer them all.

Hand the thing over straight away, so reaching out to you always works.

⚡ **Try** A short, friendly pause is really an invitation. It feels awkward to you
this: and it feels like room to your child.

Week 5 – Weave it into every day

Make connection part of ordinary routines.

Turn dressing, meals and bath time into little back-and-forth games.

Keep routines predictable and give warning before a change, so your child feels safe enough to join in. A printable [daily routine chart](#) makes the order of the day easy to see.

Use the same short words for the same moments each day — “shoes on”, “all done” — so they become easy to recognise.

Read their signals. Sensory breaks and quiet are not a step backwards; they are what makes the next shared moment possible. If sensory needs shape most of your child’s day, our [sensory home program](#) runs comfortably alongside this one.

 **Try** Tiny shared moments dotted through the day add up faster than one **this:** long practice session — five minutes, five times over, beats half an hour once.

Little tricks that make it work

- ✓ Follow your child's interests rather than steering them onto yours.
- ✓ Say less and say it slower — one or two clear words land better than a long question.
- ✓ Count every kind of communication — sounds, signs, pictures and pointing all matter.
- ✓ Respect sensory needs — breaks, calm and quiet help your child stay connected.
- ✓ Get down low and face to face, so sharing a look is easy.
- ✓ Make comments instead of asking questions; a question puts a child on the spot.
- ✓ Wait and give time; don't rush in to fill every silence.
- ✓ Celebrate the connection itself, not eye contact for its own sake.

How you'll know it's working

- The first thing to shift is usually tolerance, not talking — your child lets you sit closer and stays put while you join in.
- Your child looks at you, or shares a moment, a little more often.
- Your child comes to you to play, to show you something, or to ask for help.
- You're getting more back-and-forth turns — sounds, gestures, pictures or words.
- Protests and meltdowns settle a little, as your child finds easier ways to tell you things.
- Your child seems calmer, happier and more connected with you. Once back-and-forth with you feels steady, our social skills home program carries the same steps over to other children.



Is this based on real methods? Following your child's lead, playing face to face and building joint attention are the core of naturalistic developmental behavioural approaches, and the same principles sit behind parent-coaching programmes such as the Hanen approach. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) supports early, play-based, parent-involved support for autistic children, and speech and language therapists routinely pair it with gestures, signs or picture-based systems such as PECS where a child needs another way to communicate right now.

 **Educational information, not a diagnosis.** Our guidance follows standard, research-based practice (CDC, NHS, ASHA and WHO), is written by our therapy team and **medically reviewed by a GMC-registered doctor**. Every child is different, so we can't promise specific results — always use your own judgement and speak to a qualified professional about your child. **Read our full disclaimer.**

Connection & Communication: questions parents ask