

Helping a learner to seek attention

Case study

Jade has profound and multiple learning difficulties. She is not independently mobile. She tends to track people as they move around the room, but not to initiate to them in any more proactive fashion. She enjoys attention and can activate a single switch to operate an MP3 player. Jade has been given a single switch-operated chime which acts as a signal for a designated staff member to go immediately to her and give her 15 seconds of undivided attention, which can be extended if Jade appears to be maintaining the interaction. Jade is therefore learning a means of gaining social interaction from others and gaining experience of being the initiator. The staff are learning to be more responsive to Jade's social interaction skills.

Adapted from Coupe O'Kane, J.C. and Goldbart, J. (1998) *Communication Before Speech: Development and Assessment* (2nd edn). London: David Fulton Publishers.

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