

## HISTORY TO VERVE:

VERVE is an 'interactionalist' approach initially based on a model of therapy called Parent Child Interaction (PCI Kelman and Schneider 1994<sup>1</sup>).

VERVE has many things in common with other excellent interaction approaches such as PACT, Palin PCI, Hanen, Intensive interaction, VIG, SCERTS .

VERVE, Video PCI, Palin PCI and PACT all use unedited weekly video feedback to parents. There are many other courses known as PCI which do not include video.

### How does VERVE differ from other general PCI approaches:

VERVE uses video in every session in order to show the developing skills of each child. It always consists of a process of therapy i.e a minimum of four sessions. Each session is specific to the individual child and builds on the last.

It's focus is on supporting children in managing their underlying ability to stay calm in order to develop their own general development, learning and, communication.

### How does the Focus differ from other PCI approaches :

In all PCI approaches adults become aware of key facilitative behaviours, the following table defines elements specific to VERVE:

General PCI	VERVEing
Positioning – sitting opposite and at the same level.	<b>Positioning</b> – being in the <b>listening space</b> , opposite and at the same level
Interacting through play Following the child's lead/interest	Interacting through play Following the child's lead/interest
Waiting and watching and observing what the child is doing	<b>Using silence and remaining silent</b> Waiting and watching and observing what the child is doing. <b>Waiting for the child to look at you,</b> <b>Stopping talking when the child looks away</b>
Mirroring/tuning in to what the child is doing	Mirroring/tuning in to what the child is doing
Showing that you are listening	Showing that you are listening
Commenting	<b>Not speaking if the child does not look at you to speak.</b> <b>Smiling and saying/repeating a word if they look</b> <b>If they use a word and it is unclear- repeating it/recasting it.</b> <b>If their word is clear -repeating that word and adding on another</b> <b>If there sentence is unclear in grammar or use of sounds – Repeating/recasting the sentence or the word.</b>

## Why does VERVE work with all children whatever their challenge in communication?

VERVE focuses and builds on the individual and unique nature of all children's communicative behaviours rather than their 'diagnosis'.

<sup>1</sup> Kelman, E. & Schneider, C. (1994) Parent-child interaction :an alternative approach to the management of children's language difficulties. *Child Language*

## **How did the principles of VERVE Emerge :**

Over the past 25 years thousands of families have proven something startling. Thanks to their own skills and willingness to experiment.

Back in the 1990s when first working with the detailed analysis that video offers I became deeply uncomfortable with the general wisdom of 'commentary' i.e talking about what the child is doing. On video it became clear that there was a stark contrast in when adult's voice was useful and when it was not. If parents 'commented' (as with general advice) on what the child was doing (with key words and pausing) without waiting for the child to look - the child generally ignored their voice. In contrast (as witnessed on the video) if the adult stopped commenting, waited and only spoke when the child looked at them (stopping when the child looked away) several other things started to happen :

- 1) Each child stayed with the toy longer and experimented in what they were doing more.
- 2) Their behaviour started to settle and they and their parents clearly enjoyed the interactions
- 3) The child started to look (chose to) to the adult for reassurance when the child was ready.
- 4) If the adult only spoke when the child looked, recognitions could be seen in both faces and both parent and child became more relaxed (seen in their body language).
- 5) With the parent respecting this clear signal in their child and being consistent in waiting for that signal, each child increasingly used their eyes to manage their interactions. They became the driver to the interaction and started to 'pattern' (consistently use) looking to the adult for the adult's contribution
- 6) As they patterned to look for 'input' from the adult so they started to hold (look to the adult for longer) and listen to the adults face (looking for feedback) and word, nodding and showing they had heard and watching for further information (established face watching). If the parent didn't say the word the child was looking for, the child shook their head (Repair) and the parent tried another.
- 7) Each child showed evidence of reading how their parents were 'feeling' increasingly matching the parent's emotion with their own (mirroring).
- 8) As each parent and child watched each other so they were able to fine tune what they were doing or saying e.g if the child wasn't using voice then they started to copy gesture and sound, if they were using sound but no words, they started to copy the word, if they were using a word but it wasn't clear they copied their adults fine tuning of the word etc.
- 9) Face watching lead to the rate of interaction slowing down which had a direct impact on the child's opportunity to articulate (place their tongue in key positions) and be fluent.
- 10) Children became increasingly confident in starting interactions (their communicative intent), vocalising and putting sentences together and could be seen to really enjoy doing things that weren't necessarily their choice. They started to use their skills with others and in other situations.

PACT - Parent-mediated social communication therapy for young children with Autism - Published  
Online October 25, 2016 [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)31229-6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31229-6)

Palin PCI - [www.stammeringcentre.org/early-intervention](http://www.stammeringcentre.org/early-intervention)

Hanen - [www.hanen.org](http://www.hanen.org)

Intensive interaction - [www.intensiveinteraction.co.uk](http://www.intensiveinteraction.co.uk),

VIG [www.videointeractionguidance.net](http://www.videointeractionguidance.net)

SCERTS - [www.scerts.com](http://www.scerts.com)