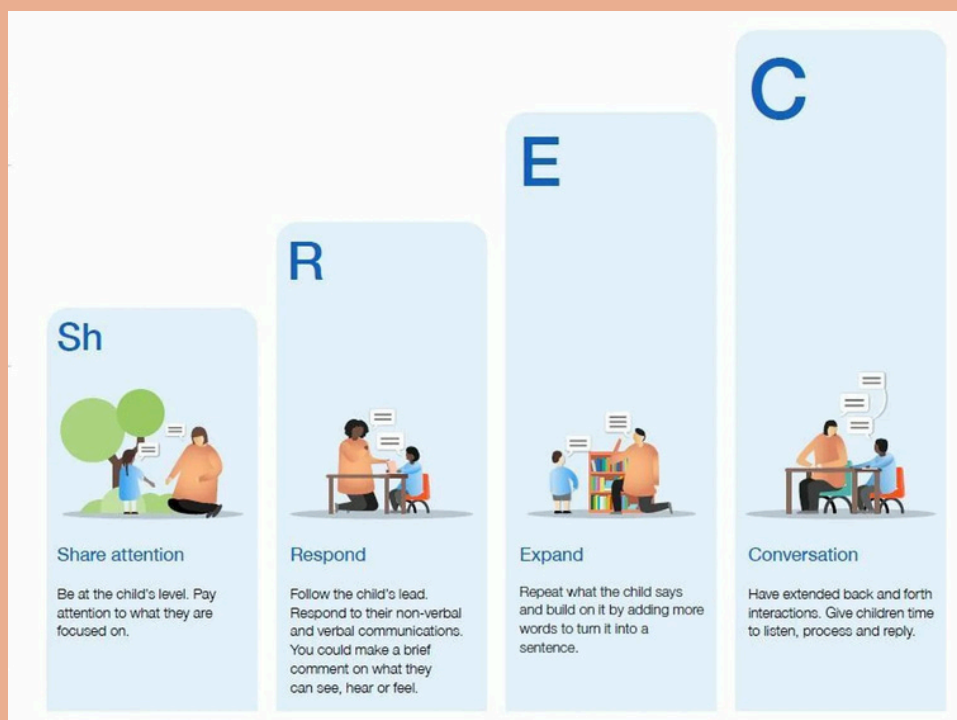


# A conversation with Hamza



**Angela Maayuf** is a Higher Level Teaching Assistant SEND at Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre and works across children from the ages of 2-4 years. She has completed the Early Years SENCO course this summer and has been working at Sheringham for 6 years.

*We use the ShREC approach to develop language and communication. It runs through our day-to-day practice.*



Hamza communicates using gestures and sounds. He loves to play with small balls. I wanted to see if it was a good time to try to engage with Hamza in his play and learning.

I started by going over to him, sitting quietly at his level and watching. My intention here was to show Hamza that I was interested in him and what he was doing. This is the **Sh** of ShREC (sharing attention): the first of the [4 evidence-based strategies](#).

I was careful to let Hamza take the lead and see if he showed any signs of inviting me into his play, so I was attuned to his facial expressions, any sounds he might make and his body language.

I waited.

As I sat, Hamza began to make sounds and look at me.

Hamza: Hmm

Angela: Hmm

I replied to Hamza by copying his sounds – this showed him that I recognised he was communicating to me, so I responded. This is the **R** of ShREC (respond): the second strategy.

Hamza: looked at me and, seeming quite excited, he smiled. He then rolled the ball.

Angela: I rolled the ball back to him, smiling.

After a few interactions like this, I wanted to see if I could expand his play and language. This is the **E** of ShREC (expand): the third strategy.

We were having a fluid back-and-forth conversation. I continued with this, making sure I followed Hamza's lead and remained aware of his sounds, facial expressions and body language. This is the **C** of ShREC (conversation): the fourth strategy.

Hamza threw the ball and said, "Hmm" while clapping his hands.

Angela: I copy his sound again "Hmmm" then comment "Hamza is throwing the ball." I throw the ball back.

Hamza threw the ball again, clapping.

Angela: "Hamza is clapping." I clapped too.

This back-and-forth dialogue carried on a few more times and then Hamza put the balls down and lost eye contact with me. I interpreted this as Hamza being ready for a break or ready to do something different.

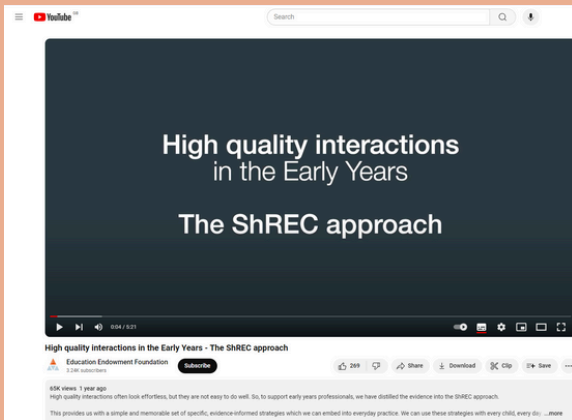
Angela: "Lets finish rolling the ball" I use the sign for finish.

"Thank you for playing Hamza." I sign for thank you.

## Further information:

These two videos show the importance of high-quality interactions:

[High quality interactions in the early years: the ShREC approach](#) EEF



[EYFS Communications and Language – Interactions](#) Department for Education

