

Attention Autism (Bucket Time)

Attention Autism is an intervention model designed by Gina Davies, Specialist Speech and Language Therapist. It aims to develop natural and spontaneous communication through the use of visually based and highly motivating activities. It is used to help encourage joint attention, engagement and focus on activities that may not be of the child's choosing. It can also be used to introduce new skills, develop independence and build vocabulary and experiences.

Aims of Attention Autism

1. To engage attention
2. To improve joint attention
3. To develop shared enjoyment in group activities
4. To increase attention in adult-led activities
5. To encourage spontaneous interaction in a natural group setting
6. To increase non-verbal and verbal communication through commenting
7. To build a wealth and depth of vocabulary
8. To have fun!

Stages of Attention Autism

The Attention Autism programme progresses through a series of stages, building on each skill level. Each new stage is introduced when the group is ready to expand attention skills.

Stage 1: The Bucket (or any container) to Focus Attention

A bucket (or any container) is filled with visually engaging objects and toys, aiming to gain the shared attention of the group. The adult leader shows each item to the group and uses simple repetitive vocabulary to comment on the various objects.

Stage 2: The Attention Builder

Visually stimulating activities are shown to the group by the adult leader, aiming to sustain attention for a longer period. The activities are fun, visually engaging and can often involve delightful mess!

Stage 3: Turn taking & Re-engaging Attention

The adult leader demonstrates a simple activity, often modelled with another adult in the group. The children are then invited to have a turn but only if they are comfortable to do so. We are working towards not giving every child in the group a turn each session, which will develop important emotional regulation skills, as well as the essential skills of waiting, turn-taking and learning through modelling.

Stage 4: Shifting & Re-engaging Attention

Stage 4 aims to develop the skill of engaging and shifting attention. The adult leader demonstrates a simple creative task, and then gives each child an individual kit to copy the task. The children take their kits to a table, complete the task independently, and then everyone returns to the group to show their completed tasks. Currently one group of children is working through this stage at different levels.

More complex skills can be introduced as confidence and social skills develop e.g. sharing materials, working with a partner, problem solving.