

Autism and Social Communication Team

ATTENTION AUTISM

Attention Autism was created by Speech & Language Therapist **Gina Davies**, it is a programme that encourages, inspires, and helps to motivate and build shared attention and communication in a group situation.

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See YouTube for ideas, demonstrations and inspiration.

The programme consists of 4 stages

Stage 1 Focus Attention (The Bucket)

Stage 2 Sustain Attention (Attention Builder)

Stage 3 Shift Attention (Interactive Game)

Stage 4 Transition Attention (Table Top Activity)

THE GROUP

Group should consist of 6 children, usually children have ASD / Attention related difficulties, the group ideally should run twice a week in a distraction free room/area. Children should be seated on low chairs in a semi-circle close together.

THE STAFF

The group needs at least two members of staff preferably three and may be more depending on the children's needs.

THE ROLES

The lead member of staff delivers the programme, in order to try and engage the children staff should be organised, be able to build & encourage anticipation, be OTT, EXCITING, EXAGGERATED, ENTHUSIASTIC and FUN and USE MINIMAL LANGUAGE.

Supporting staff are BORING, NON VERBAL and **do not** give eye contact or engage with the children, their job is to guide and reseat the children in the group, observe the children's reactions.

Staff are able to swap roles.

THE EQUIPMENT



Equipment should be VISUAL, IRRESISTABLE, FASCINATING, HIGHLY MOTIVATING & CREATE CURIOSITY.

ATTENTION GRABBER

Before the children are led into the room (during every session) an Attention Grabber should be in motion, an ideal Attention grabber would be an animated toy that sings dances and travels. The toy should capture the children's attention immediately so the supporting staff can gently guide them to their seats. Once the children & staff are seated the Attention Grabber can be stopped and the group can begin.



STAGE 1 THE BUCKET

The aim of this session is to focus & engage attention, encourage tolerance to an adult- led activity and hopefully be an enjoyable experience for both children & staff. The group leader should have control of the toys (children are not allowed to access them). It's your Bucket. You will need 4-6 exciting toys, ensure they are working prior to the session. Show the group the Bucket then using a wipe board & pen draw the Bucket & write 'Bucket' underneath. Take an object out of the bucket and begin playing with it, comment and describe it using simple key words, use sounds and gestures, leave pauses too. After a few minutes replace the object in the Bucket and take out the next object, continue till all objects have been used to end the session draw a cross through the illustrated Bucket on the whiteboard and say "Bucket finished", then supporting staff can escort the children out of the room.



STAGE 2 THE ATTENTION BUILDER

Once the group can tolerate stage 1 (This may take several weeks) it can be followed by stage 2 The Attention Builder. This would follow the Attention Grabber and the Bucket activity.

During this stage we are attempting to increase and sustain attention as well as encouraging tolerance to a structured activity. The activity should have a sequence that is highly visual and colourful. The equipment needed for the activity should be gathered together beforehand. Placing the equipment in zip wallets or see through boxes can add anticipation and inquisitiveness.

Begin by drawing a simple diagram of the activity and label it, then proceed by removing the equipment from the boxes laying them out so the group can see.

Start your demonstration, add a few comments then gradually and intermittently look at the children remember to be animated and make the activity as exciting as you can. Finish by drawing a cross through your drawing of the activity and say "finish" tidy up whilst the children are still present as this is still part of the session.



STAGE 3 INTERACTIVE GAMES

If the group has tolerated stage 1 and 2 it is time to progress to stage 3 (If not continue with the previous stages).

During stage 3 we are expecting the children to be able to focus, sustain and shift their attention by participating in an interactive game.

The session begins with the Attention Grabber, the Bucket and the Attention Builder. As before, each stage needs to be introduced to the group with a visual line drawing and label. The chosen game should be structured and fun. The lead adult invites a supporting adult to have a turn first thus demonstrating what is expected it can also decrease any anxieties the children may have. Invite participation by holding out

your hand. Allow anxious children to watch a few times before inviting. Not all children are invited to have a turn. Finish as before.

Stage 3 can be extended by having a turn-taking element included or by introducing role reversible where the child takes the lead.



STAGE 4 TABLE TOP ACTIVITIES

During the final stage the process consists of focusing attention, followed by focus and sustaining attention, then focus, sustain and shift as a sequence.

Structure as in stages 1, 2 & 3.

The group need to watch a demonstration, listen to and follow instructions, make a transition, complete an individual task, return to the group and then show their work. End session as before.



TOP TIPS

Be aware of any sensory issues the children may have.

Ensure all equipment is working.

Reduce your language, keep it simple.

Limit talk to supporting adults.

Make a mess.

Use different objects, attention builders & interactive games each time you run the session.

Take your time and remember to **ENJOY** and have **FUN!!!!**

SOME IDEAS

ATTENTION BUILDERS

Flour shaking-black paper, stencils, plastic animals, jelly moulds- sieve flour over stencils.

Swinging buckets- hole in bottom fill with sand, glitter, water etc.

Pour water, sand into water/sand wheels

Paint weaving- squirt paint (runny) into a tray hold in different positions watch in merge & form patterns. Run toy cars through it.

Treacle tracking- drizzle treacle from a spoon onto paper or shower curtain.

Eggs & chicks-drop eggs onto tray so they break then scatter feathers on top.

Shaving foam fountains-squirt foam on upside down plant pots add drops of food colouring on then both quickly & slowly place another pot on top so the foam shoots out.

Fireworks- fan blowing strips of paper/ribbon into the air.

Blow up a balloon let it go.

Silly string.

Wedding cake waterfall-stack 3 tins SM, M & L in size pour rice, lentils, tapioca ect.

INTERACTIVE GAMES

It's raining on me-sit on chair hold see through umbrella pour water from watering can for rain, rice for hail, soap flakes for snow.

Stand on a stool jump off or sing a song.

Sausage roll- roll child up in fabric.

Who's got my sausages-someone steals sausage then is chased by person who it belonged to.

Sleeping in the bed.

TABLE TOP ACTIVITIES

Spaghetti monster.-play dough, spaghetti & googly eyes.

Snail on a leaf- shell, play dough & googly eyes.

Dig for treasure-dry porridge, jewels/beads etc.

Fill little bottles with rice/coloured water, using funnel & spoons.

Birthday cake-play dough case, candles