



Sharing Attention Activities – Attention Autism

Everything you need for
having **FUN** and **LAUGHING**

Purpose of the activities:

To help children develop attention skills through motivating and exciting activities that will engage them (using Gina Davies' Attention Autism approach); please see her website for more information www.attentionautism.com

The idea is that we should be making things really exciting for the children so they will sit, listen and look and start developing their ability to attend.

You need to provide:

- ☺ Activities that inspire your child's attention
- ☺ Motivating activities
- ☺ A shared experience
- ☺ Activities worth the effort of attending to and communicating about

The stages of developing attention using the Attention Autism approach are:

1. How to focus – **“The Bucket activity”**
2. How to sustain attention – **“The Attention Builder”**
3. How to shift attention from a group activity to an individual activity - **“The interactive game”**
4. How to shift and refocus attention for an individual activity and then back to the group - **“The table top task”**

In the long term it is hoped that they will develop intentional communication, e.g. asking for more, making a choice etc. and social communication skills, e.g. taking turns, coping with not being first to take a turn etc.

Think about what your child likes/enjoys, e.g. visual/auditory/tactile experiences and build these into activities, e.g. making things fall/swirl/throw/sprinkle etc.



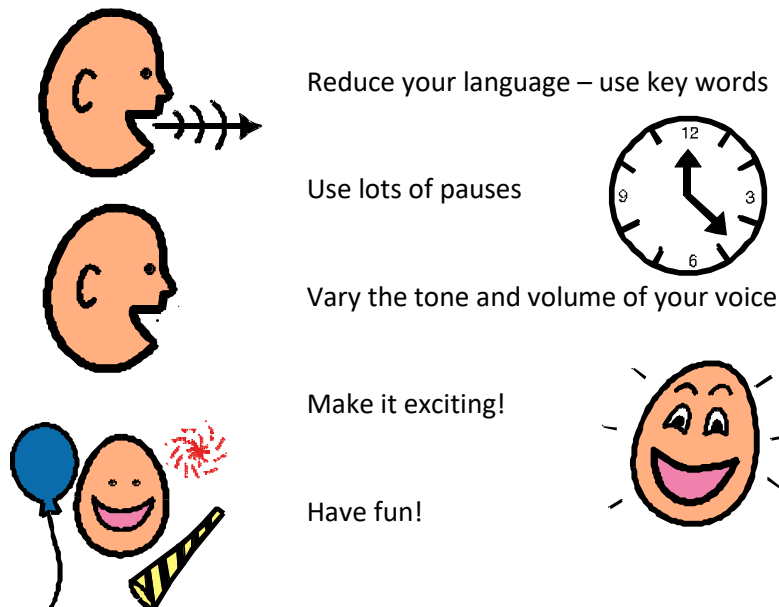
The Adults' Roles

The Lead Adult

The lead adult carries out the activities. The lead person and the activity they are carrying out should be the only exciting thing in the room. So, make sure that you are not competing with anything, e.g. the TV behind you, a family member coming into the room mid-session!!

Use a visual timetable – draw your plan on a white board in front of the children and after each activity cross it off the timetable.

Top tips for the Lead Adult



The Supporting Adults

If you have family members at home, **GET THEM INVOLVED!**

The supporting adults should use their own involvement as a model for:

- ☺ How to join in and that the risk is worth it
- ☺ Demonstrating what's expected
- ☺ Enthusiasm and fun
- ☺ Shared attention

Therefore, they need to focus on the lead person and their activity and act in the way that they would like the children to act, e.g.:

- ☺ Looking
- ☺ Listening
- ☺ Commenting (using the words and vocalizations that the children might use)
- ☺ Taking their turn during activities – demonstrate how the children should wait for their turn and then to take their turn



How to carry out the stages

The activities on the following pages are ideas only. You could make up your own activities too – just make sure they are interesting, motivating and engaging for the children that you are working with. Alternatively you can explore YouTube, Pinterest, Facebook and Google for more...

Have fun!

1. Teaching your child how to focus their attention on a shared activity - “The Bucket activity”

This is a good activity to start sessions with. It aims for the child to:

- ☺ Focus attention on an adult-led agenda
- ☺ Engage their attention with enthusiasm
- ☺ Relax and enjoy
- ☺ Anticipate shared good times



What to do:

- Fill a bucket with exciting objects
- Sing a song before taking an item out to add structure and develop anticipation
- Focus on the activity and use simple language to comment on it (e.g. Wow, flashing!)
- Don't offer the object to the children to touch/have a turn with
- When you have finished with one object, put it back in, sing the song again and take out another

Toys for the bucket:

Anything which is motivating for your child to watch, e.g. flashing toys, and spinning toys. They have lots of good things in pound shops, amazon is also great! But, you can also make any object exciting; remember you are the thing that makes it exciting – be creative!!





2. Teaching your child how to sustain their attention - “The Attention Builder activity”

Offer an activity that has a sequence, building to a final fantastic experience. It must be:

- ☺ Highly visual
- ☺ Highly appealing
- ☺ The only thing available in the environment
- ☺ Delivered on the adult agenda

What to do:

- These activities need to be: highly visual and highly appealing
- To start with, don't use too many words so that they can focus on the visual activity. Later, you can add words linked with the topics which your child is working on

Below are some activity ideas:

Flour	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Flour shaking	flour black paper sieve	shake flour in patterns, left to right over black paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shake over hand / stencil, puzzle piece (with knob on top) • use 3D objects, e.g. animals • Use glitter instead of flour • Use powder paint
Flour castles	flour black paper container, e.g. jelly mould	pack flour into container and put onto paper, then squash / step on “flour castle”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use different size containers, e.g. ice cube moulds • Hide something in the container, to be revealed when castle is squashed • Put flags on top of castles • Put glitter in container first, then flour

Cornflour	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Sticky rain	cornflour spoon with holes / colander with small holes/pizza tray with small holes shower curtain	mix water and cornflour to single cream consistency drip through holes of spoon, make patterns, e.g. circular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use food colouring in cornflour • Use black paper on shower curtain • Drop onto foil (experiment with exact proportions of cornflour and water beforehand)
Spinning Susan	cornflour Lazy Susan spinning plate	drip cornflour onto lazy susan and spin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add food colouring

Tapioca/lentils/rice	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Cake castle	Cake tins (x4 all different sizes) Tapioca	Stack the cake tins (dramatically) Pour the tapioca onto the top tier and let it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different containers (plastic cartons, fruit cartons, corrugated plastic roofing, plant pots) • Pour other items (? Lentils/chick



		tumble down. When finished brush it of the top layer	peas, beads if group are trusted not to put them in their mouths)
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Transparent tube	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Tapioca Tumble	transparent tube tray tapioca (black paper)	slowly pour tapioca through tube onto tray (and paper)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use transparent cups to pour • Pour over xylophone • Pour over drum • Use dried beans • Pour onto foil • Pour into water
Car Wash	transparent tube car bowl bottles of water shower curtain	roll car through tube into bowl of water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add food colouring into the water
Bell Drop	small bells small containers tube bowl	drop bells into small containers; tip bells out of containers one by one into tube, fill up tube then let drop into bowl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let them roll onto different surfaces which make different noises

Shaving foam	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Foam chicks	foam muffin cases googly eyes paper for beak food colouring spray	spray foam into cases, add eyes and beak, then food colouring, SPLAT!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprinkle glitter on top

Tinsel or glitter	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Tinsel Sprinkle	Tinsel pieces bowl coloured paper straw	sprinkle tinsel onto bowl, then blow off with straw, lift bowl to reveal shape on paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put a nose, eyes and mouth on to make a face
Glitter fall	Glitter Cup Paper Straw	Pour the glitter into a cup. Pour it from the cup to the paper Use the straw to blow a picture in the glitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different coloured paper • Use powder paint • Over objects/stencils etc.

Watering can	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Rainbow rain	watering can water	pour water and food colouring into watering	



	food colouring white shower curtain	can, sprinkle onto shower curtain from a height	
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Washing up liquid	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Bubblastic	containers washing up liquid bottles of water bowl shower curtain straw	pour water, then food colouring, then washing up liquid into containers, blow through straw make bubbles, then POP!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a tower of containers and let bubbles cascade down • Slot several straws together to make one long straw

Fan	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Paper float	Fan Pieces of paper	Turn fan on facing up, let paper go and fly up, watch it come down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sizes of paper • Different materials

Water	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Water	Plastic sheet Bottles (with sports caps) Water Food colouring (String = optional)	Pour water into the bottles. Pour in food colouring Put sports cap on the bottles Swing the bottle around upside down onto sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different colours • Mixed colours

PAINT	Materials	Description
Swirly painting	Plastic sheet Turning plate/lazy Susan Liquid paint in transparent/ appropriately coloured containers	Sheet out Turning plate/Lazy Susan on sheet Squirt layers of paint onto the plate Spin plate (paint will spray sheet). Stop plate to end



3. Teaching the children how to shift attention to their own personal involvement and to their peer/adult
- “The interactive game”

What to do:

- At this stage the activity becomes an interactive game
- The adult has a turn to demonstrate the task...(this is important so that your child knows exactly what to do)
- ...then your child takes a turn

Below are some activity ideas:

Treacle	Materials	Description
Treacle Tracks	treacle forks pot (to put forks in) shower curtain	dribble treacle off fork onto shower curtain

Umbrella	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Raining on you	Umbrella (transparent) bottles of water watering can shower curtain chair	person sits on chair holding umbrella, you pour water on the front of the umbrella	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add food colouring to water • Use rice in see through container instead of water • Use sequins instead of water • Sprinkle tinsel instead of water • Put foil on floor • Put baking parchment on floor • Put bowls of water on floor

Foil blanket	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Windy on you	Foil blanket Stool 2 people to hold foil	Child sits on stool, 2 adults hold foil above and waft it up and down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put 2+ children on stools under foil (NB higher level skill - sharing your turn with others)

Stool	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Standing on the stool	2 stools 2 adults to model	2 adults stand on 2 stools, sing “I’m standing on the stool, I’m standing on the stool, e l e l I’m standing on the stool 1 2 3”, jump off. Then repeat with 1 adult, 1 child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put 2+ children on the stool

Tinsel	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Sparkling on you	Tinsel stool	put tinsel in transparent container, person sits on stool,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use umbrella for sensitive students • Students can take a turn to “be the teacher” and sprinkle tinsel



		sprinkle tinsel on their head, sing!	
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Tickle stick/ feather duster	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Tickle stick	2 stools duster (venetian blind cleaner)	sit on stool, sing “are you ready, tickle stick, tickle tickle” etc to <i>Frere Jacques</i> ; creep up to student on stool and tickle with the song	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than one child come up to share a turn

FOAM PUMP ROCKET	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Zoom Zoom Zoom	Foam pump rocket	Sing “zoom zoom zoom we’re going to the moon”, on blast off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have 2 rockets, then model it with adult helper, then you and student have a go

TWIRLY RIBBONS	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Twirly Whirly	2 stools adult helper to model	Twirl the ribbons sing a song, e.g. “twirl twirl twirly whirl....WEEE” to the tune of row your boat	



4. Teaching the children how to shift and refocus attention for an individual activity and then back to the group – “The table top task”

What to do:

- Demonstrate the activity using key words to label objects and actions
- Ask the supporting adult to come and collect their box of equipment first so that they can model moving to the table etc.
- Then you can ask your child to come up and get their box
- They will need to transition to the table, complete their activity independently and bring it back again completed

Below are some activity ideas:

Lentils	Materials	Description
Treasure hunt	Lentils Spoons Sequins/gems Small pot	The children need to use their spoons to find the treasure in the lentils and put each bit into their pot
Lentil pot	Lentils Spoons Different shaped containers	The children need to use the spoon to put all of their lentils into the container

Cotton reels	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Threading	Cotton reels Thread	Children take out their thread and thread all of their cotton reels on to it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have one central box of cotton reels. The children need to thread the ones which are the same colour as their thread. • You will need to model this clearly first

Playdough	Materials	Description
Sausages	Playdough Plastic knife	Roll the playdough into a sausage Cut the sausage into four pieces
Monsters	Playdough Spaghetti Googly eyes	Roll the playdough into a ball Stick eyes in Stick spaghetti in for hair

Lego/duplo	Materials	Description	Comments / Variations
Lego tower	Lego/duplo	Build the lego pieces into a tower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You could use a picture and model making the same structure with your lego e.g. red, blue, red, blue alternating tower