

**What’s in the Bucket?**

What’s in the Bucket is an adapted model of Attention Autism, 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 stimulating and highly motivating objects. It also supports the idea of gaining the attention of ASD learners for gradually longer periods of time.

**The role of the adult**

**As the Lead Adult: Remember the bucket belongs to you and only you!**

* Be the most interesting and amazing thing in the room
* Use simple relevant language
* Teach and avoid testing
* Practice and have fun

**If you are a Supporting Adult:**

* If you are in the room, then you participate
* You do not leave your seat – this would give a message to the child that they have permission to leave too!
* You do not record anything
* You model how to sit and look at the bucket as if it is the most exciting thing you have ever seen
* Aim to prevent a child from touching without speaking

**Stages of Attention Autism**

The What’s in the Bucket programme progresses through a series of stages, each building attention skill levels. Each new stage is introduced when the group is ready to further expand attention skills.

**Stage 1: The Bucket to Focus Attention**

A bucket 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 and Re-engaging Attention**

The Lead Adult demonstrates a simple activity, often modelled with another adult in the group. Some children are then invited to have a turn but only if they are comfortable to do so. Not every child in the group will get a turn, which then teaches important emotional regulation skills, as well as the essential skills of waiting, turn-taking and learning through modelling.

**Stage 4: Shifting and Re-engaging Attention**

Stage 4 aims to develop the skill of engaging and shifting attention. The Lead Adult 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.

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

**Stage 1 – What’s In The Bucket?**

**Aims:**

* To improve joint attention
* To increase attention in adult-led activities
* To increase non-verbal and verbal communication through commenting
* To have fun!
* To be the most interesting and amazing thing in the room!

**The Rules:**

* It’s my bucket
* It’s for the group
* Show first, then add words
* Name the object for the children
* Give time for thinking and looking
* Stay quiet
* Practice to make sure toys work
* Supportive adults support
* Sing to the bucket
* Do not bang or shake the bucket
* Move the bucket out of eye line of the children
* Only sing the song once

**Activity: The Bucket to Focus Attention**

* Create a surprise bucket filled with visually engaging objects and toys.
* Sing the “what’s in the bucket song” whilst looking and pointing at your bucket.

The song lyrics: *“I’ve got something in my bucket, in my bucket, in my bucket, I’ve got something in my bucket, I wonder what it is!”*

* The adult shows each item to the child.
* Show the child 2 or 3 objects per session
* If the child is not motivated, forget that toy and move onto something else.
* Tell the children the name of the object.

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| **Suggested Resources** | | | |
| Jack in the box | Toys with lights | Flip puppy | Horns |
| Hex Bugs | Toys with sound | Wands | Flashing glasses |
| Wind up toys | Toys that move | Shiny objects | Bells |

**Stage 2 Attention Autism- Attention Builder**

**Remember:**

* The adult still leads
* The activity can be anything that is motivating and worth the child’s effort
* Use shower curtains to minimise mess
* Set up boxes ready to go so you do not spend time getting resources ready and increasing children’s waiting time
* Lay the resources out and label these for the children
* When finished, pack away and show the children the tidying process whilst moving the items now to your left
* Do not let other adults help you

**Stage 2**

* Tell the children what activity you are doing e.g. “ now time for ….”
* Lay out the shower curtain or builders tray.
* Label the items you are using for the activity.
* Proceed to complete the activity.
* You may wish to name and label key language for the children.
* Once finished, start to pack all the items away.
* Move all the items to your left to show this is finished with.
* Cross out the activity on the whiteboard.

**Stage 3 Attention Autism- Shifting and Turn Taking Attention**

**Remember:**

* Supporting adult gets the first turn
* Offering a turn – hand towards the child palm up near their hand
* Avoid predictable patterns of turn taking
* Practice not getting a turn
* Let anxious children watch for several turns
* And yes you can turn a stage 2 into a 3 by adding a turn taking element!

**Stage 3**

* Tell the children what activity you are doing e.g. “ now time for ….”
* Lay out the shower curtain or builders tray.
* Label the items you are using for the activity.
* Proceed to complete the activity.
* You may wish to name and label key language for the children.
* Allow the supporting adult a turn.
* Now invite the children to take a turn, provide hand over hand if children struggle.
* Once finished, start to pack all the items away.
* Move all the items to your left to show this is finished with.
* Cross out the activity on the whiteboard.

**Stage 4 Attention Autism – Independent Workstations**

**A workstation will show the pupil**

* What to do (using visual /structural cues eg. A photo of the completed activity)
* How much work to do
* When the pupil will be finished
* What happens next

**A good workstation will...**

* Only use activities the pupil can do independently and has a high chance of succeeding at.
* Use activities which are interesting to the pupil.
* Use activities which are presented visually/structurally so pupil knows what to do e.g. inset jigsaw, colour sorting items with colour trays to sort into.
* Use concrete, practical activities using physical skills.
* Require minimal support e.g occasional guidance.
* Have limited distractions.
* Develop organised working pattern e.g. top to bottom or left to right.

**Outcomes for managers**

Following this workshop your staff will be able to:

* Engage children who have difficulties with showing joint and shared attention, by planning and providing short motivating activities to gain joint attention.
* Plan and implement fun and motivating activities to increase children’s opportunities to interact socially and turn take in a group.
* Prepare interventions that can easily be differentiated for children of all abilities to extend inclusive practice.
* Know the different types of resources which can be used and how they can adapt resources and extend them according to the needs of children taking part.
* Understand how to provide a low stimulation environment quickly and easily within a busy setting.

For further information about Attention Autism, visit the Centre for Autism Website at <http://best-practice.middletownautism.com/attention-autism>

Merton Council

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