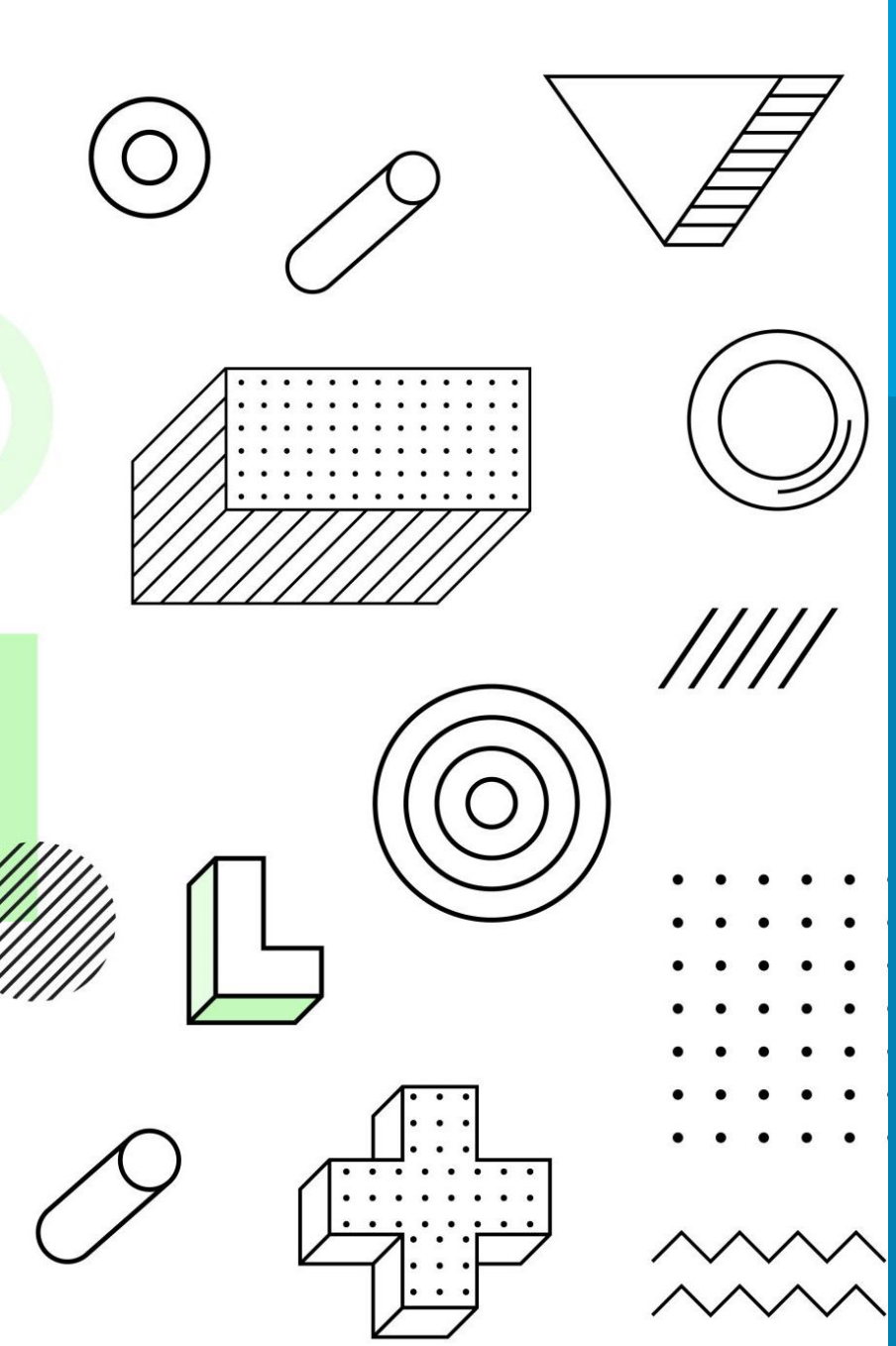


ATTENTION AUTISM

Sharing good practice

What is attention Autism?

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. Gina's primary objective is that the sessions are fun and "*offer an irresistible invitation to learn*"!

Do you offer an irresistible invitation to learn?

Does your activity inspire the student's attention?

Activities need to be motivating

A shared experience

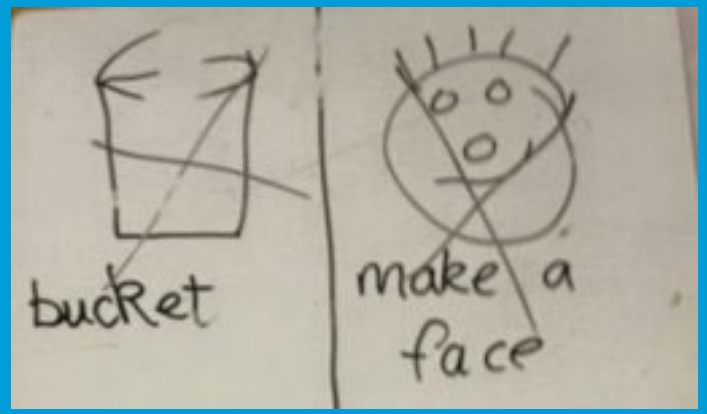
Enticing and worth communicating about

The reasons why?

- To engage attention
- To improve joint attention
- To develop shared enjoyment in group activities
- To increase attention to adult-led activities
- To encourage spontaneous interaction in a natural group setting
- To increase non-verbal and verbal communication through commenting
- To build a wealth and depth of vocabulary
- To have fun!

What is going to happen? Paring picture with words.

Use the picture to:



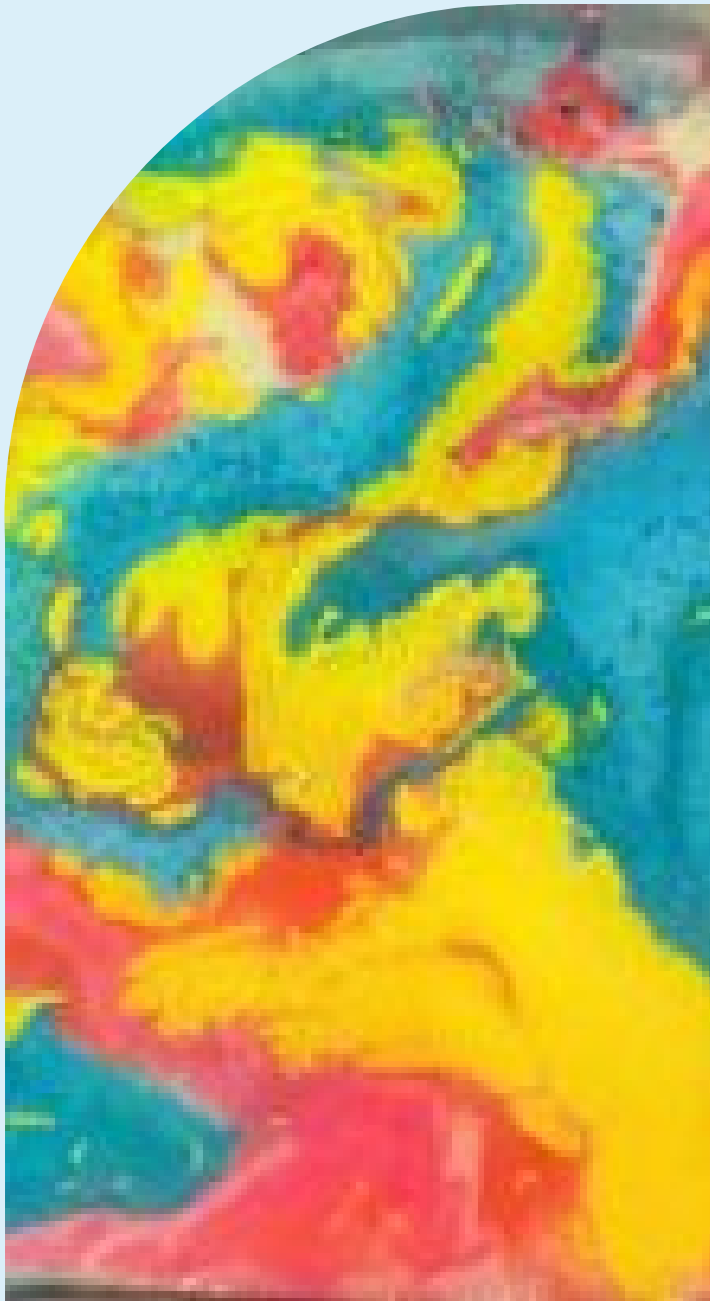
Share	Share the message clearly
Reduce	Reduce anxiety
Add	Add structure
Encourage	Make it easy to take the risk and join in.

Use your own involvement as a model for…

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

Beginners' mistakes

- Talking too much
- Conversing with the supporting adults
- Asking questions
- Giving the children the toys
- Letting the child dictate the start and finish
- Making the tasks too complicated
- Playing it safe to minimise mess/risk
- Worrying when things go wrong
- Rushing when activities should be admired and celebrated.



The Stages of Attention Autism

Stage 1	The bucket or the box – the focus
Stage 2	The attention builder – sustain
Stage 3	The interactive game – shift ‘have a go’
Stage 4	The table activites

Stage 1 – The Bucket!

Your equipment

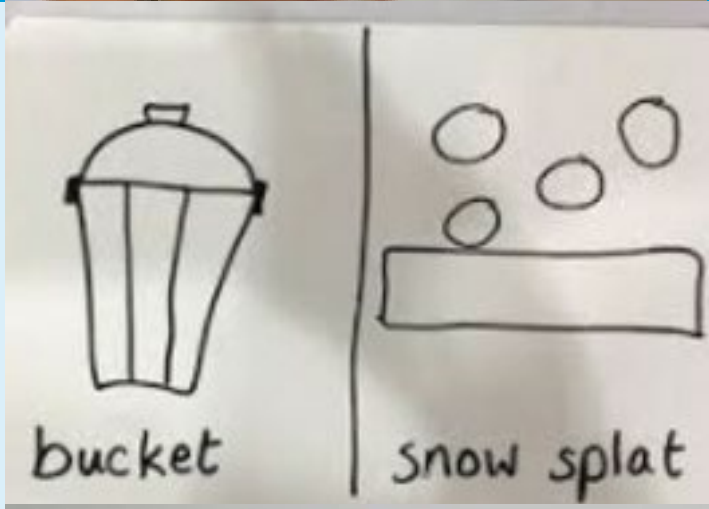
Highly engaging toys and items that the children will (hopefully) enjoy watching.

A bucket with a lid, to put the toys and items in.

A pen and whiteboard for you to draw pictorial information to show the children what the next activity is.

Stage 1 – The Bucket.

- The session is begun by drawing a picture of the next activity on the whiteboard and introducing this to the group.
- After the pictures have been introduced, a song about the bucket can follow as another familiar prompt to start the session.
- The leading adult then takes an object 1 at a time and models playing with it.
- The leading adult should model key words related to the toy or object. These words should be reinforced by supporting adults then hopefully the students!



What is in the bucket?

Stage 2: Attention builder.

Visually stimulating activities are shown to the group by the leader, aiming to sustain attention for a longer period.

These activities are fun, engaging and often a delightful mess!

This is to sustain attention!

Stage 2: Turn taking and re-engaging attention.

- The adult leader demonstrates a simple activity.
- This is often modelled with another adult.
- Some children are then invited to have a turn if they are comfortable to do so.
- Not every child will have a chance to participate, which in turn teaches 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 adult leader demonstrates a simple creative task and then gives each child a kit to complete the same task.

The children take this task to the table and complete it independently.

Finally, everyone returns to the group to show their completed tasks.

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

Targets

Attention targets:

- Attention focused when in a group
- Attention led agenda
- Attention shared with lead adult, supporting adult or peer
- Attention sustained for 2 minutes
- Attention sustained for 5-10 minutes
- Attention shifted and focused with adult support

Communication targets:

Non-verbal/body language signals for:
- Focused attention
- Anticipation
- More/repetition
- Enjoyment

Teaching for understanding in context
- Core vocabulary
- Concepts e.g. in colour, length
- Phrases

Expressive opportunities in a social context.
Vocalisations of anticipation/ excitement
Use of single words/symbols to request or voice approval

When can I do Attention Autism?

Attention Autism is a tool that can be utilised for many lessons including numeracy and literacy. When students are in a heightened mood it can be used to bring their attention back to you, refocusing them.

Don’t be afraid to make a mistake or a mess. Give those ideas you have a chance.

Thank you for listening.