

# Attention bucket groups

Attention: getting it, keeping it, and sharing it!

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NELFT Barking and Dagenham  
Speech and Language therapy team

# Aims for today's session

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- What is Attention bucket?
- Who is Attention bucket for?
- What are the 4 stages of Attention bucket?



# Aims of Attention bucket

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To build

- Attention
- Interaction
- Communication
- Learning



# Activities need to be.....

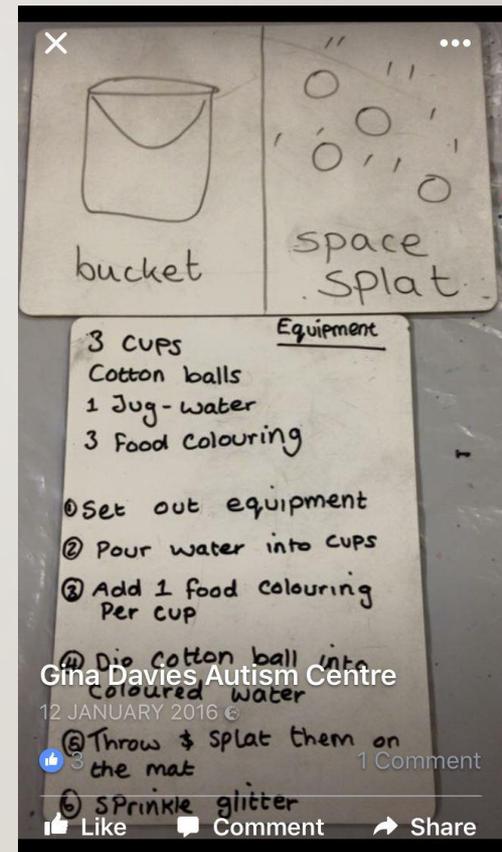
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- Motivating
- A shared experience between adults and peers
- Worth communicating about



# How-to for all stages

- Use pictures
- Adults need to model activity (if leading the session) and model being engaged (if supporting)
- We need to start where the child is, not where we wish they were



# How-to for all stages

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- Minimum twice a week
- Work out the best time to run the group
- Limit distractions
- Sit children in a horseshoe with no tables
- Supporting staff sit next to children (not behind)
- 1.5-2 metres between the leading adult and the group

# How-to for all stages (supporting adult)

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## **DO:**

- Model by looking interested in what is happening
- If your colleague is struggling with their student, don't get up and help (within reason)
- Relax and enjoy the activity
- The person running the group is the only speaker

## **DON'T:**

- Don't physically help your child to stay
- Don't give verbal prompts e.g. look, sit down
- Don't look at the student to see whether they are looking too

# Attention group stages

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- Stage 1 – The bucket = focus (3-5 minutes)
- Stage 2 - The attention builder = sustain (5 minutes)
- Stage 3 – The interactive game = shift (5-10 minutes)
- Stage 4 – The table-top activities = transition (5 -10 minutes)

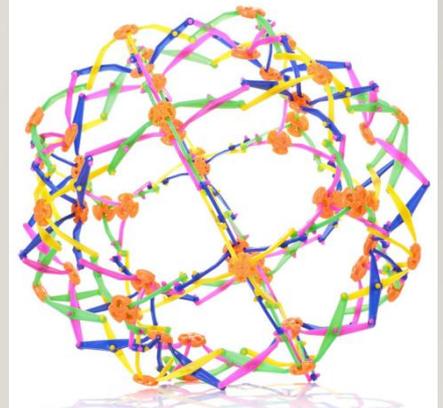
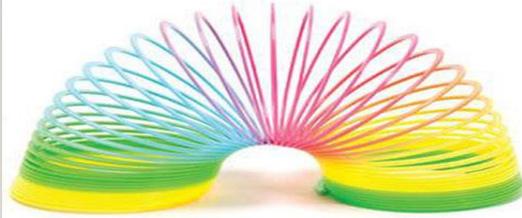
# Stage 1 - THE BUCKET...

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The objectives:

- to focus their attention on an adult-led agenda
- to engage their attention with enthusiasm
- to relax and enjoy
- to build anticipation





# Stick to the rules for the bucket!

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- Carry out bucket time minimum twice a week, with 3 toys
- Only the adult should touch the toys in the bucket. The child is not allowed to touch the toys
- The Attention Bucket toys should ONLY be used in the Attention Bucket (not for other activities)
- The supporting adult will need to SHOW the children expected behaviours such as 'sitting down'. Leader also shows the child the toys first, then adds a word



# Stage 2 - THE ATTENTION BUILDER

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The objectives: to build attention that is sustained for longer

Offer an activity that has a sequence, building to a final fantastic experience.

The attention builder must be:

- Highly visual activities
- Highly appealing activities
- The only thing available
- Delivered on the adult agenda



# Stick to the rules for the attention builder

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- Keep it simple
- Go for things children love, while avoiding obsessions
- Organise everything in advance
- Sell the activity
- Make sure to do the activity, tidy it up, then cross it off the whiteboard

# Common mistakes

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- Making it too complicated
- Over-talking
- Playing it safe to avoid mess
- Worrying about the activity
- Rushing through the activity

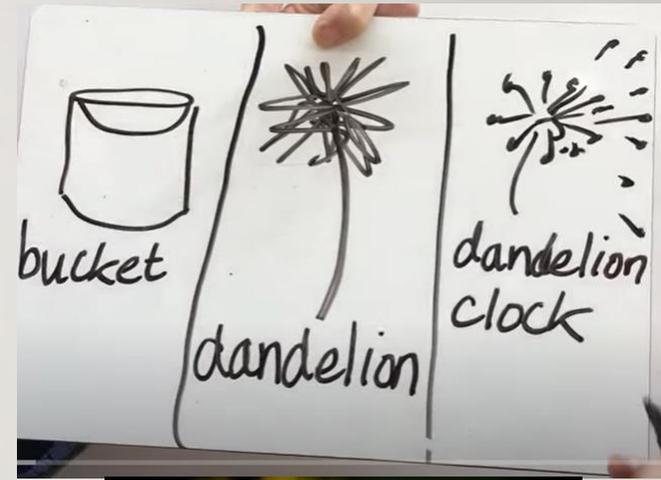


# Stage 3 – INTERACTIVE GAMES

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The objectives:

- Focusing attention in a group to watch a demonstration
- Waiting for their turn
- Focusing attention for their participation
- Returning to the group (transition)
- Continued focus attention in a group



# Stick to the rules for the interactive games

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- Supporting adult gets the first turn
- Offering a turn –open hand towards the child, position your palm near their hand
- Invite saying ‘It’s Lauren’s turn’
- Transition them to sit down saying ‘Lauren’s turn finished’
- Minimise prompting

# Stage 4 – TABLETOP ACTIVITIES

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The objectives:

- Student attends to a demonstration
- Student transitions to personal workstation
- Student completes activity as independently as possible
- Student transitions back to group
- Group celebrates each other's achievements
- These activities are often linked to curriculum tasks

# Resources

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- [Practical Help with Autism | Gina Davies Autism Centre](#)
- Gina Davies Attention Autism page on Facebook
- NELFT Speech and Language therapy Attention bucket videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aC9Cnu8x1DI>
- Some good examples of Attention bucket stages:
- [Attention Autism Stages 1-4 – YouTube](#)
- [Attention Autism Session Stage 1 Bucket, Stage 2 Hot chocolate, Stage 3 get ready/dress up warm! - YouTube](#)