

Attention Autism

Attention Autism is an exciting and engaging way to develop the communication and attention skills of our learners with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or similar needs.

Intent

- To “offer an irresistible invitation to learn!”
- Improves and develops pupils’ attention and focus
- Encourages and develops independent skills
- Supports communication
- Develops behaviour for learning
- Develops spontaneous communication through the use of visually motivating toys and activities
- Benefits for all learners with limited attention and communication, not just those with ASD.

Implementation

- Attention Autism sessions should be delivered several times throughout the week to build on and develop attention skills
- Attention Autism progresses through 4 stages, where each stage builds on each skill:
 - Stage 1 – The ‘Bucket’. This is used to focus the attention of individuals. A bucket is filled with highly motivating, visually engaging toys which are aimed at teaching pupils to focus their attention. Simple vocabulary is used to comment on the objects. It is important for supporting adults to role model good listening and attention skills during this stage.
 - Stage 2 – The Attention Builder. This stage involves highly appealing practical activities that are also visually stimulating. The adult leader presents the activity to the group and its aim is to sustain concentration and attention for a longer period of time.
 - Stage 3 – The Interactive Game. The third stage involves turn taking and shifting the attention of the individuals. The adult leader will demonstrate a simple engaging activity; following this, individuals are invited up to take their turn. At this stage, supporting adults may be asked to take a turn to model to pupils. Pupils will learn how to shift their attention to their own participation and back to the group. Individuals will also learn skills such as sharing, understanding missing a turn, including how they feel about this, turn taking and waiting.
 - Stage 4 – Individual Activity. The final stage of Attention Autism centres around focus, shift and re-engage attention. For this stage, the adult lead will demonstrate a simple creative task, to then complete themselves with their own individual kit. Again, supporting adults may be asked to model moving from the group to the table with their individual pack and back to the group. Individuals will focus their attention in the group to watch the demonstration, they will then shift their attention to complete their individual task and back to the group to show their completed task. In this stage, pupils will build on their independence skills and their ability to follow instructions.

- Each stage of Attention Autism is introduced when the individual, or group are ready to expand their attention skills, starting with Stage 1 over a number of sessions to gradually progress to the next stages. There is no set time frame to move onto the next stage as it is child led when they are ready.
- Each Attention Autism session begins with Stage 1 and moves through each stage as appropriate.
- Attention Autism sessions can be stand alone, or can be tailored to fit to the curriculum topic including English texts and Maths topics.
- Records are kept to track pupil responses and engagement. This helps to inform planning to move onto the next stage.

Impact

- Pupils with autism (or similar needs) develop better attention and focusing skills.
- Pupils' improved attention and focusing skills positively transfer to other sessions.
- Regular Attention Autism sessions improves joint attention and develops a shared enjoyment to group, and adult-led activities
- Encourages spontaneous interaction in individuals, either verbally or through the use of their AAC system.
- Increases non-verbal and verbal communication through their responses verbally, gesturally or physically.
- Develops and builds on a wealth of vocabulary.
- Progress is recorded and monitored on Evidence for Learning / monitoring sheets.