



Evidence-Based Intervention: Attention Autism/ Bucket Time

1. Introduction

Attention Autism is a structured intervention developed by speech and language therapist Gina Davies. It aims to develop attention, communication, and social interaction skills in children, particularly those with autism or other communication difficulties. The approach is playful, engaging, and visually stimulating, using a "bucket" filled with exciting objects to capture attention.

2. Purpose of Intervention

The primary goals of Attention Autism are to:

- Develop **shared attention** and **focus**.
- Build **communication** and **language skills**.
- Encourage **turn-taking**, **waiting**, and **engagement**.
- Promote **positive social interaction** through fun and motivating activities.

3. Target Audience

- Pupils who have a diagnosis of **autism**.
- Pupils with **attention difficulties**, **language delay**, or **social communication needs**.
- Attention Autism is typically used in **early years**, **primary**, and **special education settings**, but is adaptable for older pupils with similar needs.

4. Who Can Deliver the Intervention

Professionals delivering Attention Autism should have been trained in the approach. This may include:

- Speech and language therapists.
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinators (SENDCOs).
- Learning Support Assistants.
- Teachers.

5. Session Structure

There are four stages to the intervention, each building on the previous stage:

Stage 1 – The Bucket: A bucket filled with visually stimulating items is used to capture and sustain attention. The adult takes out the items one at a time and models excitement and engagement.

Stage 2 – Attention Builder: A fun, engaging activity is demonstrated by the adult to maintain shared attention, and the children are invited to participate.

Stage 3 – Turn Taking: Children take turns participating in a simplified version of the activity, taking turns with their peers.

Stage 4 – Independent Work: Children complete a related task independently, promoting generalisation and focus.

Not all children will reach Stage 4 and progression depends on individual readiness.

6. Frequency and Duration

Sessions typically last 10–30 minutes, depending on the stage and group. Sessions should be delivered regularly (e.g., daily or several times a week) to build routine and reinforce skills.

7. Key Principles



- **Engagement through motivation:** Activities are chosen for their visual appeal and excitement.
- **No demands:** Children are invited to watch and participate, but not pressured.
- **Predictability and structure:** Sessions follow a clear routine.
- **Adult-led:** The adult models enthusiasm and attention.
- **Fun and novelty:** Keeps children curious and attentive.

8. Training and Implementation

Training is available through the **Gina Davies Autism Centre** or accredited providers. Courses include:

- Introductory workshops
- Practitioner training
- Whole-school implementation support

9. Evidence and Outcomes

Most evidence comes from small-scale, school-based action research studies, and more rigorous evaluation would be helpful. Marsh (2019) summarises research into Attention Autism and reports:

- Improvements in children's joint attention skills.
- Increased engagement, motivation and participation during sessions.
- Some gains in communication and independence, although these are less consistent.

10. Feedback

- Feedback from schools and parents is generally very positive.
- Children often show increased excitement and engagement.
- Staff report improved group dynamics and communication.

11. Further Information and Resources

- [Home - Attention Autism Ltd | UK & Ireland](#)
- [Attention Autism - YouTube](#)
- [Attention-Autism-March-2019-Fiona-Marsh.pdf](#)