

Attention Builder

The Attention Autism approach by Gina Davies is designed to help children develop attention skills by doing exciting activities that engage them and build vocabulary. It also helps develop more long-term targets including intentional communication (e.g. asking for more, making a choice or request) and social communication skills (e.g. turn-taking).

What is your role?

This approach works best with two adults (or an adult and an older sibling). The **lead adult** should be the most exciting thing in the room! Make sure you aren't competing with anything around you. Make sure you use a visual timetable – this can be as simple as drawing your plan on a piece of paper or whiteboard and crossing things off as you go.

The top tips for being the **lead adult** are:

- Reduce your language – use key words
- Use lots of pauses
- Vary the tone and volume of your voice
- Make it exciting and have fun!

The **supporting adult** (or older sibling) will model the desired behaviour to the child. Show your attention to the lead adult, show the child how to join in and make sure to show the child enthusiasm and fun! Focus on the lead adult and show your child what you would like them to do in the activity e.g. talking about an object or taking turns.

There are four stages of the Attention Autism approach. The following activities are based around Stage 2: The Attention Builder. This stage is about an activity that follows a sequence to build to a final fantastic experience! These activities must be:

- Highly visual
- Highly appealing
- The only exciting thing in the room
- Delivered on the adult's agenda – the lead adult takes charge, while the supporting adult models listening and waiting to the child

Flour Castles

You will need:

- Something to contain the mess e.g. newspaper, cling-film, aluminium foil or a tray
- Flour
- Small containers

Steps:

1. Pack the flour into the container
2. Tip the container over and lift gently to reveal the flour castle
3. Hit the castle with your hand to flatten it

Rainbow Sponge

You will need:

- Something to contain the mess e.g. newspaper, cling-film, aluminium foil or a tray
- Red, yellow, green and blue paint
- Sheet of paper
- A sponge

Steps:

1. Place the paper on your covered surface
2. Drop the paint in spots side-by-side in a horizontal line on the left side of the paper
3. Using the sponge, drag the paint in an arc across the page to form a rainbow

Bubble Snake

You will need:

- Something to contain the mess e.g. newspaper, cling-film, aluminium foil or a tray
- A plastic bottle with the bottom half cut off and the lid taken off
- A sock
- Bowl of water and detergent

Steps:

1. Place the sock over the end of the bottle
2. Dip the sock into the bowl
3. Blow into the neck of the bottle and watch the bubble snake form

Magic Milk

You will need:

- A shallow container
- Milk
- Food colouring
- Detergent

Steps:

1. Pour the milk into the container
2. Add some drops of food colouring to the centre – you might like to use 2 or 3 different colours.
3. Drop some detergent into the middle of the food colouring and watch the colours run away!

Flowerpot Rocket

You will need:

- Something to contain the mess e.g. newspaper, cling-film, aluminium foil or a tray
- 2 plastic flowerpots, one with holes in the bottom
- Shaving foam
- Glitter, paint or food colouring

Steps:

1. Place a flowerpot on your covered surface with the base facing upwards
2. Spray the foam on top of the base
3. Sprinkle some glitter, paint or food colouring onto the foam
4. Quickly push the flowerpot with the holes over the foam. The foam will push through the holes, creating your rocket

Lemonade Volcano

You will need:

- A large, deep tray (you might also want to be in a larger and possibly easy to clean space for this one, like a kitchen or garden)
- A bottle of lemonade
- Food colouring
- Glitter
- Salt

Steps:

1. Open the lemonade bottle and place it in the centre of the tray
2. Add a few drops of food colouring
3. Sprinkle in some glitter
4. Pour in some salt slowly. Your lemonade will fizz up and pour over the bottle like a volcano

Need some more guidance or more ideas?

Check out the [Gina Davies Autism](#) Facebook page!