

Teaching and Learning approaches

The Attention Autism Programme ('Bucket')



The Attention Autism programme progresses through a series of 4 stages, building on different skills at each level to develop attention skills, social engagement skills, turn-taking and participating as part of a group. Learners sit in a semi-circle with an adult at the front of the circle, going through the different stages. Other adults sit alongside the learners and model attending to the adult, but must not take the attention away from the adult who is leading.

Stage 1 'Bucket' is to **focus attention**, where learners focus attention on the adult leading the group, during the presentation of three short highly motivating activities from a 'bucket', without being hands-on.

Stage 2 'Attention Builder' is to **sustain attention** for a longer period of time (up to 10 minutes) and to share attention with other group members.

In Stage 3 'Watch-Participate-Watch', learners become **more involved**, whereby if offered, they come and take an individual turn and then return back to their seat. Within this stage they will also watch their peers take a turn while they wait, and sometimes accept that they won't have a turn today.

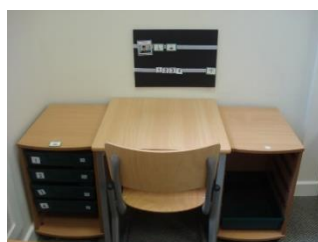
In Stage 4 'The Table Activities', learners **transition** to their table top. They will watch the lead adult demonstrate a simple task, transition to carry out the task and then return with completed task to the group.

Let's Connect



Let's Connect is an adapted version of the Attention Autism Programme, for learners who may not yet be ready to engage with all of the stages. Let's Connect involves Stage 1 'Bucket', followed by sensory play with communication opportunities.

TEACCH



The aim of TEACCH is to develop learners independent work skills so that the learner can begin a task independently and sustain independence and concentration within the task or set of tasks.

TEACCH covers many things but often a work system or tray approach is used. The work system should be set up in a clear way for the learner. It should always tell the learner what is expected of him/her during it, how much is supposed to be accomplished, and what happens after the work is completed.

The activity or task should be performed from top to bottom and from left to right. No verbal prompts should be used during this time as this approach is all about the learner becoming as independent as possible. Therefore, all activities given during this time should be work/tasks the learner has already mastered and should be able to complete independently. Any physical prompts given should be decreased and faded out.

Intensive interaction



Intensive interaction is an approach to teaching the pre-speech fundamentals of communication to those who are still in the early stages of communication development.

The approach is based on the 3 Cs principle; See, Copy, Celebrate. An adult should see a learner and an opportunity to interact. Firstly, the adult sits or stands next to the learner; with the learner tolerating, accepting and then enjoying the sharing of space. The approach works by progressively developing enjoyed and relaxed interaction sequences between the interaction partner and the person doing the learning. The adult must allow the learner to lead, and they should respond positively by joining in. These interaction sequences are repeated frequently and gradually grown in duration as the learner begins to trust the adult. As this happens, the fundamentals of communication are gradually rehearsed and learnt in a free flowing manner.

The fundamentals of communication are as follows: giving brief attention to another person; sharing attention with another person; extending attending and concentrating on another person; developing shared attention and taking turns; use and understand non-verbal communication such as eye contact, facial expressions, gesture and body language; use and understand vocalisations, having vocalisation become more varied and meaningful.

The Waldon approach



Children with autism are often limited in their movements and handling of objects. This means less exploring, less experience and less confidence in their movements and the use of their hands. This in turn impacts their cognitive development as in the early years we learn by doing and exploring our environment (physical world).

Within a Waldon session the aim is to stimulate the learning conditions for the developmental stage where children learn by doing. The adult is the facilitator who arranges the activities for the learner. The instructions are non-verbal; they are given by modelling, gesture and/ or physical prompt (including hand over hand at the start). Within the session, the activities will be repeated whilst introducing variations, for example changing the objects or containers.

The session structure includes three key elements: 1) focus on effort, movement and use of space, 2) continuant behaviour activities and 3) focus on the Learning-to-learn-tools at the child's developmental level. This includes putting in and taking out, sorting, matching, building, sequencing, drawing, brick building and using tools.

TACPAC



TACPAC draws together touch and music to create a structured sensory communication between two people. TACPAC creates sensory alignment and helps people of any age who have sensory impairment, developmental delay, complex learning difficulties, tactile defensiveness, and limited or pre-verbal levels of communication. Specific music is chosen to reflect the texture of objects so that the receiver experiences total sensory alignment.