Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD): Attention Autism

Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD): Attention Autism

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This Action Research case study was completed as part of the Department for Education (DfE, UK) nasen Universal SEND programme.

Abstract

Context: The study investigates the effectiveness of the Attention Autism programme as a strategy for enhancing attention and engagement among learners with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) in a special school setting. It aims to understand how structured interventions can nurture communication skills in children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Aims: The primary aim of the research is to explore the impact of focusing on attention as a means to foster spontaneous communication and engagement among students with PMLD. It seeks to determine whether the implementation of stages 1-3 of the Attention Autism programme can lead to improved periods of focused attention and responsiveness in classroom settings.

Methods: The research employed an action research approach, consisting of cycles that included planning, implementing, and reviewing specific interventions linked to the Attention Autism framework. Ethical consent was obtained for the publication of anonymised data, ensuring the protection of participants' identities throughout the research phase.

Findings: Learners demonstrated increased periods of focused attention and greater responsiveness during sessions. Staff noted improvements in anticipation and engagement, aligning with the Engagement Model's assessment criteria. Although Stage 4 was not reached due to time constraints, pupils showed readiness to progress. Learning Support Assistants reported positive impacts and identified practical considerations for scheduling.

Implications: The study supports the integration of Attention Autism as a quality-first teaching strategy across the school. It highlights the value of structured, visually engaging interventions in promoting attention and engagement for learners with PMLD. Future research will explore quantitative assessment tools and the Curiosity Programme as a precursor to Attention Autism.

Keywords

Inclusion, special educational needs and disabilities; Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD); autism; Attention Model; Engagement Model

Codina, G., King, S. & Doak, L. (2025). Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities: Attention Autism. In G. Codina, S. King & L. Doak (Eds.). *Action research for ISEND* Derby, UK: University of Derby. Retrieved from: https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14069/1008

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Action Research for Inclusion and Special Educational Needs and Disability (ISEND): Case Study

Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD): Attention Autism

Narrowed from a focus on developing spontaneous communication to a focus on attention, the school found that learners with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) who had engaged with stages 1-3 of the Attention Autism programme exhibited increased periods of focused attention and greater responsiveness during sessions. Initial findings suggest that this could be a useful approach to embed in the special school as part of their universal offer to all children in the setting (Through School, Special School)

Contents

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Type of setting	Special school for students aged 3–19 identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The school supports a diverse range of needs, with all students having Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Students have a range of labels and diagnoses, including autism, Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), Severe and Complex Learning Difficulties (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). Many of the students also have physical disabilities and medical conditions.
Age range of pupils	Year 9 to Year 11 (age 13-16) with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD)
Roles of the Research Team	Head Teacher, two class teachers

ACTION RESEARCH CYCLES

See Appendix 1 for the Action Research Cycles.

Ethical consent has been sought to publish this data anonymously.

SUMMARY

Research focus	PMLD, attention, engagement, Attention Autism
Research question	What is the effectiveness of the Attention Autism intervention for increasing the level of attention of students with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD)?
Overview/Key information	- The school's Improvement Plan key priority for 2024-2025 was to research and implement the *Attention Autism* strategy for children with autism in Key Stage One (age 5-7). - The class teacher accessed Level One Online Attention Autism training. - Training was cascaded to all teachers via an INSET (in-service training) day in November 2024. - **The class teacher of students with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) narrowed the focus to increasing the level of children's attention.** - The class teachers worked together to deliver the Attention Autism intervention to the PMLD class. - After the Attention Autism intervention, students demonstrated increased attention over a six-week period. - Following this Action Research project, the school will include this intervention in curriculum planning across all classes in the school. - The Curiosity Approach will also be explored.
Evidence-informed theory	Narrowed from a focus on developing spontaneous communication to a focus on attention, the school found that learners with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) who had engaged with stages 1-3 of the Attention Autism programme exhibited increased periods of focused attention and greater responsiveness during sessions. Initial findings suggest that this could be a useful approach to embed in the special school as part of their universal offer to all children in the setting.

RESEARCH TIMELINE

November	December	January	February	March
Action Research Cycle 1 Step 1: Establish the research focus	**Action Research Cycle 1** Step 2: Study Steps 3-5: Plan 1	Step 6: Do 1 Steps 7-8: Review 1 **Action Research Cycle 2** Step 9: Study 2 Steps 10-12: Plan 2 Step 13: Do 2 Step 14-15: Review 2		Share and disseminate the research (anonymised) with other interested parties.

ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE 1

RESEARCH FOCUS: Step 1

Initial research interest, aim/question (Step 1)	What is the impact on children's ability to sustain attention when using Attention Autism with students who have Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD)?

KEY LITERATURE SHAPING THE RESEARCH (STUDY 1): Step 2

Reference	Attention Autism. (2025). *The Attention Autism Programme.* https://attentionautism.co.uk/
Key point(s) of note	Attention Autism is a structured intervention developed by speech and language therapist Gina Davies which aims to 'develop **natural and spontaneous communication skills** for autistic children through the use of visually based and highly motivating activities' (Attention Autism, 2025). 'The origins of the approach are in the idea that successful communication is dynamic, engaging and joyful. People learn best when they are filled with enthusiasm, motivation and creativity. The Attention Autism approach should provide children with a learning experience that they want to communicate about' (Attention Autism, 2025). The Attention Autism programme is structured into four progressive stages designed to build attention and communication skills in children with autism: **Stage 1** – Focus: Use a bucket of exciting toys to grab the child's attention and build anticipation. **Stage 2** – Sustain: Show a fun, visual activity that keeps the child engaged for longer. **Stage 3** – Shift: Introduce turn-taking games to help children switch attention between people. **Stage 4** – Transition: Children watch, then do an activity on their own, and share their work with the group. For more information, see *Appendix 2 – Attention* **Autism**

Reference	Moore, N. (2020). *An Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Attention Autism intervention on the joint attention and joint engagement of autistic children in Ireland.* [Doctoral Thesis, Mary Immaculate College]. Mary Immaculate Research Repository. https://dspace.mic.ul.ie/bitstream/handle/10395/2908/Moore%2c%20N%20%282020%29%20Running%20head%20%20evaluation%20of%20attention%20autism%20An%20evaluation%20of%20the%20effectiveness%20of%20the%20Attention%20Autism%20intervention%20on%20the%20joint%20engagement%20of%20autistic%20children%20in%20Ireland.Phd.pdf.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y
Key point(s) of note	Attention Autism has not undergone rigorous efficacy testing to date. Research in this area is currently limited to master's-level theses and action research conducted by schools in the UK. Attention Autism is a social communication intervention that explores joint attention and joint engagement. Joint attention remains central to supporting the participation of children with autism; the need to provide effective intervention to promote this core skill in the school setting is considered essential.
Reference	Buckingham, K. (2012). *The impact of the Attention Autism approach on joint attention skills in a Key Stage One class in a special school.* [M.Ed. Thesis, University of Birmingham]. South Hampton Inclusion Partnership. https://www.southamptoninclusion.net/_files/ugd/71d064_937245b15c7f4bf8896bbe6e62febc4a.pdf
Key point(s) of note	It is necessary not only to measure the impact of Attention Autism on joint attention, but also to consider the ability of the pupil to transfer the newly acquired skills to a new context. Qualitative data should be gathered using a reflective journal and classroom observations over at least a six-week period. Structured and unstructured observations are critical in gathering information in classrooms, and the use of Gina Davies' assessment sheet should be explored.
Reference	Kenny, N., Rogers, N., & Goodall, C. (2025, January 21). "He is trying his best to get his voice out": A case study exploring the impact of Attention Autism for supporting development in communication and engagement amongst Autistic Pre-School Children within a Special School Setting. https://doi.org/10.35542/osf.io/2vhmc_v1
Key point(s) of note	This study considered whether parents/carers could identify any communicative benefits when Attention Autism is used with their child. Parents observed meaningful improvements in their children's spontaneous and transferable communication following

	participation in the Attention Autism programme. Despite initially having limited awareness of Attention Autism and Early Intervention strategies, they expressed positive perceptions of the programme's impact across home and school contexts. These insights highlight the importance of involving parents in neuro-affirming approaches to support communication development in autistic children. **Takeaway questions** Is it appropriate to involve parents/carers in the research study? Consider using a questionnaire to be completed at home.
Reference	Courtman, Sarah. (2018). *An evaluation of the effectiveness of using the Attention Autism programme as an intervention for increasing the level of attention during an adult-led activity in pupils with Autism Spectrum Condition*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322939272_An_evaluation_of_the_effectiveness_of_using_the_Attention_Autism_programme_as_an_intervention_for_increasing_the_level_of_attention_during_an_adult_led_activity_in_pupils_with_Autism_Spectrum_Conditio
Key point(s) of note	This study considered the use of a questionnaire to be completed by classroom-based staff to explore the transfer of joint attention to other contexts. Parents were informed about the study and gave consent for their children to participate, highlighting the importance of ethical collaboration with families in educational research. Although the study did not directly assess parental perspectives, it acknowledged that parent involvement could enhance the generalisation and maintenance of joint attention (JA) skills beyond the classroom. Future iterations of the study propose incorporating parent feedback and observations to better understand how Attention Autism impacts children's communication and engagement across home and school environments.

PLAN 1: Step 3

As part of the process of planning Action Research Cycle 1 and having completed the 'study' phase, the research question can evolve and become further refined.

Revised research question	What is the effectiveness of the Attention Autism intervention for increasing the **level of attention** of students with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD)?

PLAN 1 and DO 1: Steps 4 and 6

Methods of data collection: 1
- Pre-intervention Continuing Professional Development (CPD) session for all class teachers at school INSET (in-service training) day.

Description of research sample, timing and location
After completing Attention Autism Level One online training, the autism class teacher led an INSET day session on how to deliver Attention Autism. The slides and handouts from the session were shared with all class-based school staff. Staff who attended provided a written evaluation at the end of the session via Microsoft Forms.

Methods of data collection: 2
- Pre-intervention Continuing Professional Development (CPD) session for Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) class teacher.

Description of research sample, timing and location
PMLD class teacher observed autism class teacher deliver Attention Autism in class over two weeks (six sessions via video and in-person observations). Discussions of implementation fidelity took place.

Methods of data collection: 3
- PMLD class teacher delivered Attention Autism Stage One and Stage Two interventions to the class 3 times per week for 3 weeks.

Description of research sample, timing and location
Eight pupils took part in the research sample: two girls in Year 9, one girl and two boys in Year 10 and three boys in Year 11.

One class teacher led the intervention sessions at Stage One and Stage Two, supported by five Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). One member of staff is an apprentice LSA, two are LSAs, and two are LSAs who give 1:1 support for two students in Year 10.

The interventions were delivered in class, as part of the timetabled curriculum, strictly adhering to the Attention Autism principles and expectations. It was anticipated that Stage 3 and Stage 4 would be introduced and delivered to the pupils when the group is able to sustain attention for the duration of an activity. Stage 3 involves the ability to re-engage attention and take turns in an interactive game. Stage 4 involves the pupils showing the ability to shift and regain their attention to a specific activity.

PLAN 2: Step 5
Ethical consent was sought from participants to publish this data anonymously.

REVIEW 1: Step 7-8

Data Analysis: process
Observations were conducted of the Attention Autism sessions as they were delivered in the PMLD class. Qualitative data was gathered and observations made by the autism class teacher. Observations also acted as mentoring sessions, whereby the autism class teacher gave pointers and suggestions on how the PMLD class teacher could improve and enhance practice in the classroom and maintain fidelity to the Attention Autism programme. Observations took the form of written notes using our school lesson observation proforma and a more narrative type journal entry.

The PMLD teacher also recorded her findings in a journal that was updated over the three weeks of intervention sessions. Discussion took place between the two class teachers about only including Stage Three and Stage Four of the Attention Autism programme in Action Research Cycle 2, due to time constraints and cover implications. This was then built into the planning for Action Research Cycle 2.

Summary of Findings

Research Question
What is the effectiveness of the Attention Autism intervention for increasing the **level of attention** of students with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD)?

Both teachers felt that the delivery of Stage One and Stage Two of the Attention Autism programme was having a positive impact **on the attention of pupils** in the PMLD class.

The qualitative observation data gained by the autism teacher from observing the attention and engagement of the pupils, and the anecdotal information, confirmed that pupils were sustaining their attention for longer periods of time than they typically would. Though this attention could be described as fleeting for some students, the amount of time spent attending to the given stimulus increased.

Assessment: Engagement Model[1]
As children demonstrated their awareness by focussing on the bucket at Stage One, we have been able to further assess children's **anticipation**[2], as defined in the Engagement Model,

Additional Findings Emerging from the Research
- Attention Autism intervention strategies could be deemed as quality first teaching strategies for all classes in our school.

Analysis and next steps leading into Action Research Cycle 2

The findings from Action Research Cycle 1 suggest that the Attention Autism programme is having a positive impact on **increasing the level of attention in our pupils**. This suggests that a further increase in the level of attention of pupils would occur when all four stages of the intervention are used in class.

Next Step(s): Action Research Cycle 2
In Action Research Cycle 2, all four stages of the Attention Autism intervention will be delivered by the PMLD class teacher. However, due to time constraints and cover implications, only Stages 3

[1] **Standards and Testing Agency. (2020).** *The Engagement Model*. GOV.UK. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-engagement-model

The Engagement Model is a statutory assessment tool used in England to evaluate progress for pupils working below the level of the national curriculum and not engaged in subject-specific study.

It focuses on five areas of engagement—**exploration, realisation, anticipation, persistence, and initiation**—to capture meaningful progress in physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.

The model supports a pupil-centred, observational approach that values all forms of progress and helps schools tailor provision to individual needs.

[2] **Anticipation** (as defined in the Engagement model) is when a pupil shows they are expecting something to happen, like looking excited before an activity begins. It reflects their growing understanding and connection with routines, people, or objects.

Methods of data collection

- PMLD class teacher delivered Attention Autism interventions to the class 3 times per week for 3 weeks.
- Learning Support Assistants' reflections were gathered on the value and benefit of delivering the Attention Autism interventions and the impact on the attention of the students.
- Post-intervention discussions of the research team.

Description of research sample, timing and location

Eight pupils took part in the research sample. Two girls in Year 9, one girl and two boys in Year 10 and three boys in Year 11.

One class teacher led the intervention sessions, supported by five Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). One member of staff is an apprentice LSA, two are LSAs, and two are LSAs who give 1:1 support for two students in Year 10.

The interventions were delivered in the classroom as part of the timetabled curriculum, strictly adhering to the Attention Autism principles and expectations.

and 4 will be observed and analysed by the autism class teacher. This was decided during Action Research Cycle 1 after discussions between the teachers involved. The data from both Action Research Cycle 1 and Action Research Cycle 2 will then be analysed together and conclusions drawn.

ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE 2

KEY LITERATURE SHAPING THE RESEARCH (STUDY 2): Step 9

Reference	No further literature was drawn upon.

PLAN 2: Step 10

Revised research question	Following completion of Action Research Cycle 1, the researchers continued to explore the original question further; thus, no revisions to the original research question were needed for Action Research Cycle 2.

PLAN 2 and DO 2: Steps 11 and 13

PLAN 2: Step 12

Ethical consent was sought from participants to publish this data anonymously.

REVIEW 2: Steps 14-15

Data Analysis: process
Observations were conducted of the Attention Autism sessions as they were delivered in the PMLD class. Qualitative data was gathered and observations made by the autism class teacher. Observations took the form of written notes using our school lesson observation proforma and a more narrative type journal entry. The PMLD teacher also recorded her findings in a journal that was updated over the three weeks of intervention sessions.

Learning Support Assistants were involved in discussions around the use of the Attention Autism intervention and its impact on the pupils in the PMLD class.
A post-intervention discussion meeting was held with the researcher and two teachers involved.

Summary of Findings

Action Research Cycle 2 Research Question
What is the effectiveness of the Attention Autism intervention for increasing the level of attention of students with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD)?

After completing the programme of Attention Autism interventions, all staff involved suggested that it had a positive impact **on the attention** of the students with PMLD.

Due to the time constraints of the Action Research and the notion that Attention Autism is a child-led approach, we were unable to reach Stage 4 within the six weeks. There were two factors contributing to this: pupil absence and cancellation of sessions due to staff absence or cover implications. The pupils needed to demonstrate that they were ready to move on to Stage 4, having developed and embedded the skills incorporated in Stage 3. Observations showed that pupils were beginning to show that they could attend to an activity without continual support from an adult, and a longer period would have enabled the introduction of Stage 4.

Learning Support Assistants were very positive about the use of the intervention.

Some challenges: Learning Support Assistants felt that challenges included finding the most appropriate timeslot where medication/feeding/personal care weren't taking place. This ensures that all staff are involved and can support the pupils effectively.

Analysis and next steps

During the post-intervention discussion, the research team reflected upon the findings and explored how they could now be used across the whole school to have an impact on all pupils. The initial School Improvement Plan priority was to research and introduce Attention Autism in the autism class; this Action Research study demonstrated to all involved the impact that the programme can have for pupils, and the team felt that this could be applied to all pupils within our school.

The team agreed that further training for class teachers (Level One Online Attention Autism) was the next step, as dissemination of CPD can often lead to diluted messages and a lessened fidelity to the original intervention programme. Training delivery will be explored as there are several methods we could employ, including training teachers individually or a 'train the trainer' approach.

For the pupils in the autism and PMLD classes receiving the intervention, a discussion of how their progress could be recorded took place. The team agreed that details of pupil progress could feature in our Pupil Profile documents (used to record individual pupil progress) in the five areas of engagement.

CONCLUSION

Research aim/question

What is the effectiveness of the Attention Autism intervention for increasing the **level of attention of students** with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD)?

Conclusion(s)

Findings from this case study demonstrate that the implementation of Attention Autism significantly enhances attention levels in learners with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD). Through structured, engaging, and visually stimulating activities, **learners exhibited increased periods of focused attention and greater responsiveness during sessions**. These findings support the value of Attention Autism not only as an effective tool for promoting engagement but also as a meaningful contribution to the wider educational and therapeutic strategies for individuals with complex learning needs.

Finally, **Attention Autism is a pedagogical tool that can be used effectively in all classrooms in school, improving and increasing sustained attention for all pupils**.

Next Steps

Our research team would very much like to conduct Action Research Cycle 3 next term. This would involve using the assessment sheet produced by Gina Davies to gather quantitative data for further analysis to support the conclusions drawn in the first two Action Research Cycles.

Future research around Attention Autism could explore the long-term impact of sustained use and its potential benefits across other areas of development, including communication and social interaction.

Our team is also passionate about exploring the Curiosity Approach[3], also developed by Gina Davies. The Curiosity Approach is designed to support children who need to work 1:1 before starting the Attention Autism programme. These students would benefit from a programme to encourage them to flourish in the earliest stages of communication, interaction and attention development.

Further actions would include sharing our findings from our research across our Trust and exploring the use of Attention Autism in other Trust schools to have a wider impact for pupils.

[3] **Attention Autism.** (2025). *Curiosity Programme*. https://attentionautism.co.uk/curiousty-programme/

For more information, see:
Clarke, T. (n.d.). What is the Curiosity *Programme* [Leaflet]. Swindon Borough Council. https://www.swindon.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/9814/curiosity_programme_leaflet.pdf

Adapted from The Curiosity Programme – Gina Davies, by Tamsin Clarke Speech and Language Therapy Support Practitioner.

Appendix 1 – Action Research Cycles

Action Research Cycle 1	**Establish the research focus**	**Step 1:** Identify the ISEND area for development which requires research.
	Study 1	**Step 2:** Review the research literature.
	Plan 1	**First Plan**
		Step 3: Start the process of refining the research.
		Step 4: Decide what kind of direction you are going to take (direct or enquiry).
		Step 5: Consider research ethics (engage with the ethics checklist).
	Do 1	**Step 6:** Implement the first plan (either direct action or enquiry as action).
	Review 1	**Step 7:** Review and Reflect.
		Step 8: Analyse the meaning of the data gathered.
Action Research Cycle 2	**Study 2**	**Step 9:** Review further literature if required.
	Plan 2	**Second Plan**
		Step 10: Based on the 'reflect' phase, refine the research (this may involve revising or developing the research questions) and plan the next actions.
		Step 11: Decide what kind of action you are going to take (direct or enquiry).
		Step 12: Seek any further ethical permissions if needed (engage with ethics checklist).
	Do 2	**Step 13:** Implement the second plan – (either direct action or enquiry as action).
	Review 2	**Step 14:** Review and reflect.
		Step 15: Analyse the meaning of the data gathered.

Appendix 2 – Attention Autism

Oxford Health, NHS Foundation Trust (2020) Speech and Language Therapy Attention Autism. Oxford: Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust. https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2021/08/Attention-Autism.docx#:~:text=Attention%20Autism,switching%20attention%20and%20turn%2Dtaking.

Speech and Language Therapy

Attention Autism

What is it

Attention Autism is an intervention approach by Speech and Language Therapist Gina Davies which aims to work on the early fundamentals of language including awareness of others, attention, listening, shared attention, switching attention and turn-taking.

Attention skills are an integral part of how we connect with people, the world around us and how we learn. These early skills can be particularly difficult for children with Autism. Gina Davies suggests that the answer is to make your interactions irresistible by using activities that are worthy of the child's attention. If the child is having fun, they will be more likely to join in and engage.

How does it differ from traditional therapy approaches?

Traditional therapy approaches are often not as effective for children with Autism compared with typically developing peers. For example, A child is shown a picture, the therapist explains that 'The boy is riding a bike' and then asks the child, 'What is the boy doing?' This requires many skills from the child including attention, listening, memory, social skills, language, and many other skills that children with Autism find difficult. This can often lead to confusion and lack of engagement in therapy.

Children with Autism are often visual learners and have a good memory for things they find interesting. Attention Autism uses these areas of strength to scaffold learning. It aims to engage children using highly motivating activities and using this as a base to introduce other skills including joint attention, turn-taking and vocabulary development. The aim is to get spontaneous engagement from the child rather than simply telling the child to listen, look and attend to an activity.

How does it work?

The approach consists of 4 stages. These steps follow the typical pattern of attention development shown in young infants, starting from highly distractible, fleeting attention, and working up to multi-channelled well-established attention.

Children learn through play so remember to keep the activities fun! Stage 1: FOCUS- The Bucket

The aims are for the child to...

- Focus their attention on the adult led activity

- Engage their attention with enthusiasm
- Relax and enjoy these times
- To anticipate shared good times

What do you need?
A bucket filled with highly motivating, visually appealing items (e.g. wind-up toys, flashing toys). Take one out at a time to show the child. Do not let the child touch the toys, and do not use the toys for any other activities outside of bucket time.

What is it?

- Fill a bucket with highly motivating, past paced toys.
- Sing the bucket song: *'I've got something in my bucket, in my bucket, in my bucket. I've got something in my bucket, I wonder what it is?'* to build anticipation.
- Produce an object that offers excitement immediately. Repeat for 3 or 4 objects.

Things to remember:

- Show first then add words
- Give time for thinking and stay quiet!
- Remember rushing adds anxiety
- Practice and make sure the toys work
- Get your colleagues/parents on board!
- Enjoy the toys

<u>Stage 2: SUSTAIN- The attention builder</u>
Offer an activity that has a sequence building to a final fantastic experience. This can get long or short as you like depending on attention levels. Additional vocabulary can be added at a later stage.

It must be:

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

Things to remember:

- Keep it simple
- Go for things children love
- Avoid obsessions
- Add colour
- Organise everything you need in advance
- Check the background
- Make sure everyone gets a good view
- Sell it with body and soul

<u>Stage 2 Attention Builder Activity Ideas:</u>

Salt Streaming

You will need:

- A black piece of paper
- clear box filled with salt
- a plastic cup with a hole in the bottom

What to do:

- Place the black paper on the floor
- Open the box and fill the cup with salt (place your finger over the hole to stop the salt coming out)
- Hold the cup over the black paper and take your finger off the hole
- Let the salt stream onto the paper and make patterns with the salt
- Hold the cup up high so it is more visually appealing.

Variations of salt streaming: Use rice, coloured sand, glitter, salt onto a different surface.

Flour Castles

You will need:

- Flour
- Plastic container to place flour in
- Plastic cup (different sizes)
- Plastic sheet

What to do:

- Lay the plastic sheet out on the ground
- Place the plastic cup into the flour tub and fill it with tower
- Then place the cup upside down on the plastic sheet and lift up the cup to leave a cup shaped flour castle behind.
- Do this again until you've created about 4 flour castles.
- Then one at a time, squash the castle with your hands
- Take time folding up the plastic sheet and pouring the flour back into the tub.
- If children are still attending, make more flour castles.

Variations of flour castles: Spray castles with food dye, use different shaped containers to make flour castle.

Sound Sprinkle

You will need:

- Plastic sheet/wipable work surface
- Different containers (e.g. plastic bowl, tin sheet etc.)
- Rice/ couscous/ dried lentils
- Tinned spaghetti/baked beans/ custard
- Plastic cup/ bowl
- Bowl of water/ toy drum
- Funnel

What to do:

- Lay the plastic sheet on the floor and place your different containers down
- Count the containers as you put them down
- Use the plastic cup to scoop up your rice/couscous/ lentils
- Hold the plastic funnel over each container and pour your rice/ couscous into it – try to comment whilst completing this e.g. 'pouring'
- Listen to the sound it makes – again comment e.g. loud/quiet

Variations of sound sprinkle: Use different materials to pour (e.g. beans, small rocks), pour onto metal tray for different sound, pour onto a xylophone.

Football Frenzy

You will need:

- Small paper footballs (cut out from paper, preferably tissue paper)
- Shower curtain
- Watering can
- Bottle of water and green food dye

What to do:

- Lay the shower curtain on the floor.
- Take out the bottle of water and place drops of green food dye in it. Put the lid on and shake it.
- Get the watering can and pour the green water into it.
- Stand over the shower curtain and pour the green water over the shower curtain.
- Then open the box with the paper footballs, stand over the shower curtain, and drop the footballs onto the shower curtain (hold them up high) and watch the drop onto the green surface. Drop one at a time

Variations: Fish in the sea using blue dye and paper fish, drop numbers or letters onto surface, use different colours/topics to target curriculum vocabulary.

<u>Stage 3: SHIFT- Interactive game</u>

Once the children are attending to an adult led activity for a longer period, it is time to begin modelling turn-taking skills and how to shift attention from self to the rest of the group.

Stage 4: 1, 2 & 3 TRANSITIONS- Table top activity

Once they have reached stage 4, it is time to practise attending to a self-led activity. The children should watch a demonstration of the activity carried out by an adult, take their pack of resources, go to their own space and carry out the activity independently. The focus should be on the progress and attention rather than the end result. The children should then come back together and share in celebrating the end result!