The Attention Hillingdon Programme

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The dilemma........

- How could we better equip setting based practitioners to meet the needs of young children with a diagnosis of ASD or with social communication difficulties?
What we did........

• We worked with Gina Davies a highly specialist speech and language therapist from Attention Autism
Created an eight week intervention........

- Trained LA team & advanced skills teachers, ASD support, speech and language therapists & EP
- Purchased resources for the intervention
- Established a pre and post intervention training programme (2 hour sessions)
- Pre & post intervention sessions for parents
The model....

• We model (weekly)
• Setting based practitioners replicate the session
• Children filmed, weeks 1, 5 & 8
• Joint discussion
• Practitioners run the intervention a minimum of three times during the week
• We return and model the next session
An overview of The Attention Hillingdon Programme

Stage 1  The bucket - Focus

Stage 2  The attention builder - Sustain

Stage 3  The interactive game - Shift

Stage 4  The table activities - transition
Attention Levels in typically developing children—Cooper, Moodley, Reynell 1997

Stage 1. 0 -1 year
Fleeting attention. Extreme distractibility. The child’s attention is held momentarily by whatever is the dominant stimulus in the environment and is easily distracted by any new stimulus.

Stage 2. 1 -2 years
Rigid attention. Attention inflexible. The child can concentrate for some time on a concrete task of their own choosing. The child has difficulty tolerating intervention or attempts to modify the task by an adult.

Stage 3. 2 -3 years
Single channelled attention. Some flexibility is developing in that they can tolerate a well timed intervention or interruption more readily. The child can only cope with doing one thing at a time.

Stage 4. 3 -4 years
Attention focus under voluntary control. The child is beginning to control their own attention. Attention is still single channelled but it can be stopped /restarted under the child’s control without adult support.

Stage 5. 4 - 5 years
Two channelled attention. At this stage the child can do 2 things at once. The child’s attention span may be short but they can be taught in a group. The child is ready for whole class teaching.

Stage 6. 5 -6 years
Integrated attention. Well established and sustained. The child can easily listen to information whilst doing something else at the same time even in a distracting environment. The child can cope in a group learning situation for long periods of time.
The Attention Builder - creating an irresistible invitation to look........
Watching with really focused attention as one of a group
We make the activities.....

✓ motivating
✓ a shared experience
✓ worth communicating about.

Is it worth the effort for the child?
We use what we know about the learning strengths of children with autism

- Memory for - things that interest them - experiences with emotional impact
- Physical and practical
- Energy
- Logical
- Visual skills
The interactive game - providing opportunities for children to share laughter with an adult or with a friend...
Adults always ‘go first’ using their involvement as a model for:

• how to join in and that taking the risk is worth it
• demonstrating what’s expected
• enthusiasm and fun
• shared attention
Activities that involve fun and laughter are...

- motivating
- remembered
The table activities - are added in week five
Take it to the table

- children to learn to transition from one activity to another
- Adults go first
- Independence skills
- Opportunity to ‘recreate’ learning
We use pictures to...

- share the message clearly
- lower anxiety
- add structure
- make it easy to take the risk and join in
Carries on after the eight weeks........

- Helping settings to sustain the programme
- Generating new activities within the taught structure
- Generalising skills into the day - adult and child
- Accreditation for settings
How the programme has evolved........

- Running in more than two thirds of our settings
- Developed a Champion setting status
- Weekly tip sheets developed for parents (giving ideas for home & making links to the EYFS)
- Data collected to demonstrate impact for children
How the programme has evolved........

- Also running in Children’s Centres - parent and child
- Working with younger children
- Pathways developed with health
- Two members of the team are Attention Autism advanced practitioners
- Forms part of the Local Offer
How the programme has evolved.......  

• Making stronger links between AH and other areas of learning ie creativity & storying
Feedback from a recent course........

- OMG
- I am LOVING story time
- We are all LOVING story time
- And for the more able we are ticking all sorts of boxes for literacy with excited children retelling the story to parents two hours after they heard it!
- Thank you so much!
How the programme supports the implementation of the SEND code of Practice 0 - 25

5.1 All children are entitled to an education that enables them to:

• Achieve the best possible outcomes, and
• Become confident young children with a growing ability to communicate their own views and ready to make a transition into compulsory education
• Supports partnership working with parents
• Forms part of the graduated approach, ‘plan, do & review’
• Has led to greater synergy between early education and health
• Provides information towards an EHC assessment