

Handy Tips for 'What's in the box?'

Do consider the child's interests when choosing items for your box. For example, do they like things that flash or spin? The items in the box need to be exciting and immediately engaging. Other ideas are:

- A torch or flashing object you can turn on or off
- A sensory ball you can squeeze and then stop
- Bubbles
- A fan you can turn on and off
- A toy that pops up with a button

Do change the objects in the box regularly so that you maintain the child's interest.

Do 'quit while you are ahead'. End the activity on a successful note after bringing 3 or 4 items out of the box rather than continuing for a long period of time and losing the child's interest.

Do accept any interaction with you, verbal or non-verbal as a request for more. If you wait for the child to give even more interaction you risk losing their attention altogether.

Do remember to keep the items in the box as 'special' objects they can only interact with during this activity. If they have free access to them they will not be motivated to interact with you for 'more'. Ensure any touching or handling of the object by the child is brief and minimal.

Do keep language to a minimum. Limit this to naming the object and 'more' and 'finished' along with the Makaton signs for these.

Do try to do this activity in a quiet area of the setting or school with minimal distractions.

Note: Attention Autism looks at 'What's in the Box?' in more depth with multiple stages. The activity demonstrated in the video clip is to support children who are not yet sharing any attention with others.