



Using Bucket Time* Stage 1 to support your child

Bucket Time Stage 1 is an intervention to support and encourage your child's:

- Enthusiastic attention towards an activity not of their choosing
- Ability to remain focused on an activity of your choosing
- Communication skills including verbal and non-verbal skills
- Opportunities to share attention and fun together

Tips or things to think about:

- ✓ Try to find a quiet distraction free time and space ~ Turn off and put away all electronic devices.
- ✓ Do not worry if the activity does not go to plan to start with, keep trying and think about things your child might enjoy when choosing toys to use.
- ✓ When you first start to use Bucket Time, you might need two people, one to do the Bucket Time and one person to help your child to sit, watch and pay attention.
- ✓ Remember, the intervention is about engaging your child's interest, so they learn to enjoy the interaction with you ~ never insist on them sitting for Bucket Time.
- ✓ The intention is that your child can sit, watch and share enjoyment and excitement of the toys and you without touching the toys. This is important because it helps to develop their attention and focus. The aim is for your child to be able to sit for up to five minutes during the Bucket Time.
- ✓ Keep the Bucket Time toys only for Bucket Time so they stay special.
- ✓ The more fun and entertaining you are the more successful the activity will be ~ use lots of facial expressions to show excitement and enjoyment.
- ✓ Give lots of praise using your child's name especially for 'Good looking' or 'Good sitting'.
- ✓ Relax and have fun together.



*Bucket Time is an intervention first developed by Gina Davies,
Speech and Language Therapist.



What you need



A bucket or box with a lid:

- To put the toys in.
- You want your child to be surprised and excited about what is coming out of the bucket so make sure you cannot see what is inside.



Two to five toys that are only for Bucket Time:

- Any toy that is motivating and your child might enjoy watching, e.g. toys that light-up, make a sound, vibrate or that changes shape.
- Toys that the child does not play with during the day ~ the Bucket Time toys should be special and only for Bucket Time ~ **keep the toys out of reach of your child when not doing Bucket Time as the toys may not be suitable for your child's age / stage of development ~ refer to any safety labels for details.**
- Toys that will fit in the bucket, e.g. balloons, bubbles, party blowers, light-up / wind-up toys.
- As your child gets to know the routine, you can change the toys in the bucket to maintain their interest. Begin by changing only one toy at time to ensure familiarity.
- See suggestions of what to put inside the bucket at the end of the sheet.



A reward toy:

- Any toy that your child might enjoy having as a reward after Bucket Time is finished.
- As your child gets to know the routine, they can choose their reward - see below for some ideas for reward toys



Dinosaur



Push and Go Cars



Car Run



Peppa Pig toys



How to do it

Tips:

- To help you decide where to do Bucket Time, look for opportunities where your child is already sitting or where you know they are happy to sit, e.g. sitting with cushions around them or at a table after they have been taking part in an activity or eaten a snack.
- If you have a helper (parent/carer, an older sibling or grandparent), let them know beforehand that their job is to sit near (next to or just behind) your child and be ready in case your child needs reminders to sit. They do not need to do anything else ~ the focus should be on you and the bucket.

Preparing for Bucket Time:

1. Find a distraction free space ~ turn the TV off / place mobiles out of sight and decide where you and your child and/or helper will be sitting, e.g. on the floor, sofa, chairs etc.
2. Prepare your bucket ~ place the toys in the bucket and place the lid on so that your child cannot see inside.
3. Choose a reward toy to give your child at the end of the session. You may wish to hide the reward toy behind you / under a cloth while you do Bucket Time to help your child focus on the Bucket Time toys.

Doing Bucket Time:

1. Sit down with the bucket (either in front of you / on your lap or beside you, as long as your child can still see your face). Sit at least 1 metre away so your child is not tempted to reach for the toys.
2. If you have another person to help, they can sit next to your child. Their job will be to remind your child (if needed) to stay sitting and to not touch the toys. They can do this as quietly as possible by saying '**Good sitting / looking / listening**' or using visuals of 'Good sitting / looking / listening'. 





3. Start the Bucket Time by tapping the bucket on the lid and say, '**It's Bucket Time**' in a fun and exciting way.
4. Take out one toy, say the name of the toy as you start to play with it enthusiastically.
5. Use lots of facial expressions and *intonation* in your voice, try to create an irresistible invitation to look and listen (you could pause, make sudden sounds and words or say 'Ready steady...go', gasp in surprise, say 'Wow' or other fun sounds to create fun and anticipation).
6. Keep language **simple** and consistent, model one or two key words related to the toy and repeat (see the examples in the suggested toys section below or you can use your own words and sounds), e.g. If you take out the blower, you could say '**Up, up, up - Wow, Blow, Wind, Ready steady go...**' or just say '**Blower**' and blow the toy. 
7. Play with each toy for as long as your child appears interested (this could be any amount of time from a couple of seconds to a minute or more).
8. If your child is enjoying a toy, you can spend a little longer on that one but if they look less interested then move quickly on to the next one.
9. When you think they are about to lose interest in the toy you can then put the toy back in the bucket and say '**finished**' as you take out the next toy.
10. Repeat the process of taking a toy out, playing with it and putting it back in the bucket for each toy and stop when your child starts to lose interest.





Finishing the Bucket Time session:

1. You will know when to finish Bucket Time, when your child has started to lose interest in the toys and begins to look away or fidget or tries to get up. You know your child and will know best when they have had enough. Remember, the session can last anywhere from 30 seconds to 5 minutes.
2. At the end of Bucket Time, place the last toy in the bucket, put the lid on and say, '**Bucket time has finished**'. Then say the name of the reward '**Now (name of reward) time**'. Give your child their reward toy straight away as they have sat and given attention without touching the toys.



To encourage your child's eye contact and interest in Bucket Time:

- As your child learns to enjoy Bucket Time, they may gradually give you more eye contact. Initially they may look at the toy but then, hopefully, they may begin to look at you to share the experience and request more. You can encourage this by, for example, switching a favourite light-up toy off for a few seconds, say '**Ohhh or wow**' using lots of facial expression, wait for your child to look at you before switching it back on. Your child might soon learn that this is a great way of making a request.
- Once you have done Bucket Time a few times and your child learns the rules, you can start the activity by singing a song to introduce it. This can be especially useful if your child likes singing. As you hold the bucket, you could sing a simple song such as, '**I've got something in my bucket, in my bucket, in my bucket, I've got something in my bucket, in my bucket**' to the tune of *London Bridge is Falling Down* or an alternative tune.



What if I am on my own, can I do Bucket Time with one adult?

- ✓ Yes, try sitting your child in a chair with arms or a bean bag to provide the comfort and support the extra adult would give.
- ✓ Keep Bucket time really short with maybe just one toy to get your child used to the routine of coming to sit for Bucket Time.

What if I have limited space and my child wants to touch and hold the toys in the bucket?

- ✓ Try to put the bucket further away / to the side so that only you can reach the toys.
- ✓ Make sure your helper knows how to remind your child to do '**Good sitting**' and sit back down. You can put the toy back in the bucket with the lid on while you wait.
- ✓ You could use bubbles in between each toy to keep your child's attention.

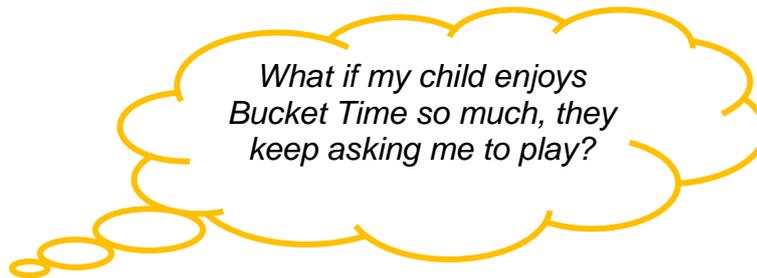
What if my child is easily distracted and walks away after the first toy?

- ✓ Remember it can take several attempts to learn a new skill. Try not to be disheartened, try again another time ~ most children really enjoy it once they have had a few sessions.
- ✓ If your child does walk away, let them and just say '**Bucket Time has finished**' and

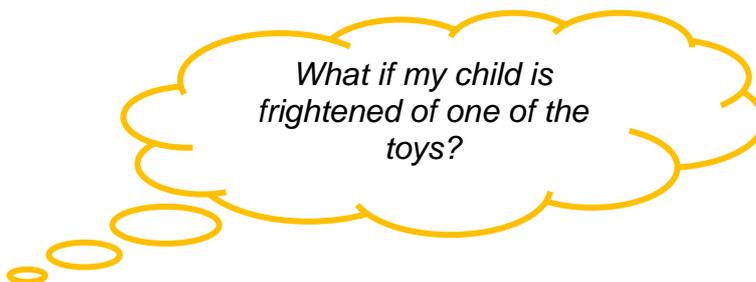


try again another day. 

- ✓ You may wish to try using a **First and Then board** which can be used to help your child to understand that they will receive a reward toy after Bucket Time has finished. Show your child the First and Then board and say, '**First Bucket Then [Name of a toy your child enjoys such as Lorry]**'. 
- ✓ Try to find toys you know your child is really interested in, e.g. if they like light-up toys, sound making toys, bubbles etc. put one of these in the bucket (look at the suggested toys below for ideas).



- ✓ Make Bucket Time part of your daily routine. For a child who asks all morning for Bucket Time, do it first thing in the morning.
- ✓ Use the First and Then board or a Visual Timetable to support your child's understanding of what is happening first and then to help them to wait and anticipate what comes next - see *First and Then in the Home / Visual Timetables in the Home* information sheets to support with this.



- ✓ Choose toys you know your child might enjoy and do not use the toy they are frightened of again.
- ✓ Be careful to not aim the toys at your child as this can be frightening ~ always follow your child's interests, a tentative child might be more motivated by light-up toys that are still visually exciting but less surprising.



How often should I do Bucket Time?

- ✓ Ideally only do Bucket Time once a day to keep it special and stop your child getting bored.
- ✓ The best time of day is when your child is happy and calm and when you can give your child your full attention, e.g. when coming in from some outside time or when a sibling is resting or occupied.
- ✓ Try to keep it to the same time every day.

To find out more / Useful links

- <http://ginadavies.co.uk/> ~ for further information on Bucket Time
- Most Bucket Time toys and resources can be purchased online from retailers such as Amazon or eBay ~ check toys for safety messages and keep out of reach of your child as some toys may not be suitable for your child to play with unsupervised.
- If your child has a Speech and Language Therapy programme or report which recommends Bucket Time type interventions, refer to the report for further guidance.

Suggested toys along with sounds and words you might wish to use

If your child enjoys light up toys:



Spinner

'Spin', 'Stop', 'Spin', 'Flash'
'Ready steady go.....'

Light up Spinner

'Spin', 'Stop', 'Spin', 'Flash'
'Round and round'
'Ready steady go.....'

Light wand:

*As it Lights up in three stages you can use the language:
'1,2,3', 'Wave',
Ready steady go.....'*



		
<p>Fairy wand: <i>'On', 'Off', 'Flash,' 'Woosh,' 'Up and down' 'Round and round' 'Ready steady go...'</i></p>	<p>Spinner: <i>'Push', 'Spin, Spin', 'Flashing', 'Butterfly' 'Yellow and pink and blue' 'Ready steady go...'</i></p>	<p>Shaker: <i>'Shake, shake,sShake' 'Flashing', 'wobble wobble wobble' 'Shhhhh..... then shake'</i></p>
		
<p>Spikey ball, <i>'Bounce, bounce, catch' 'Flashing ball' 'Red ball / yellow ball' 'Roll and stop' 'Scratch'</i></p>	<p>Stacking Star <i>'On, on, on, on' star on top and listen to the song.</i></p>	<p>Sunglasses <i>'On and off', 'Flashing'</i></p>
<p>If your child likes to watch things that move:</p>		
		
<p>Bubbles <i>'Pop', 'Catch', 'Blow', 'Ready steady go...'</i></p>	<p>Fusion Ball <i>'On', 'Off', 'Shake', 'Flash', 'Stop'</i></p>	<p>Balloon <i>'Blow', 'Ready steady go...', count as you fill the balloon say '1,2,3..'</i></p>

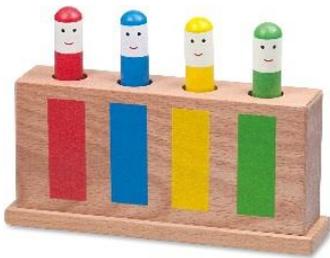


		
<p>Slinky 'Bounce', 'Up', 'Down', 'Pull', 'Squeeze'</p>	<p>Pull Ball 'Pull', 'Open', 'Shut', 'Close', 'Peek a boo', 'Ball'</p>	<p>Squeeze Ball 'Squeeze', 'Pop', 'Push'</p>
		
<p>Worm 'Pull, pull, pull', 'Stretch, stretch, stretch' Shake, shake, shake' 'Jump, jump, jump'</p>	<p>Bell 'Ring, ring, ring' 'Ready steady go...'</p>	<p>Water wheel 'Drip, drip, drip' 'Spin, spin, spin' 'Up and down'</p>
<p>If your child likes sound and music:</p>		
		
<p>Blower 'Blow', cover your ears say 'Noisy', 'Long', 'Short'</p>	<p>Rainmaker 'Up and down', 'Drip, drip'</p>	<p>Bird whistle 'Blow, blow, blow' 'Ready steady go...'</p>

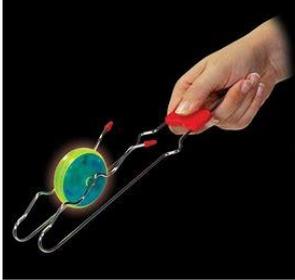


		
<p>Duck whistle 'Blow', 'Quack. quack', 'Pink duck, blue duck'</p>	<p>Squeezy toy 'Squeeze' 'Ready steady go...' Or use sounds associated with the toy</p>	<p>Drum 'Tap,' 'Fast', 'Slow,' 'Bang'</p>
		
<p>Hammer 'Bang, bang, bang', 'Tap', 'Loud', 'Quiet', 'Bang hand, bang floor'</p>	<p>Sound Shape sorter 'In...' 'Triangle goes weee' 'Square goes weee' 'Circle goes weee'</p>	<p>Fire engine Fire engine sounds ('Nee naw'), 'Beep, beep', 'Stop', 'Up and down'</p>
<p>If your child enjoys cause and effect toys:</p>		
		
<p>Wind-up toy Wind the toy up and when it is ready to go say 'Watch', 'Wind', 'Twist', 'Turn' or 'Weee'</p>	<p>Dancing character 'Twist,' 'Turn', 'Dance', 'Ready, steady go...'</p>	<p>Dancing animal 'Twist', 'Turn', 'Dance', 'Ready, steady go...'</p>



		
<p>Pop up toys <i>'Pop, ready steady...go', 'Boing', 'Weee', 'Up' or 'Whoosh'</i></p>	<p>Pop up people <i>'Pop', 'Red, ready steady... go', 'Blue, ready steady go' or 'Boing'</i></p>	<p>Pop up button toy <i>'Ready, steady... go' 'Boo', 'Circle, triangle square, heart'</i></p>
		
<p>Puppet <i>'Ready steady ...go...', 'Pop', 'Surprise', 'Boo'</i></p>	<p>Rocket <i>'Ready, steady ...go', '3,2,1', 'Whoosh', 'Up', 'Zoom'</i></p>	<p>Jack in the box <i>'Wind', 'Ready, steady... go', 'Boo', 'Up and down'</i></p>
<p>If your child enjoys spinning toys:</p>		
		
<p>Helicopter toys <i>'Twist', 'Ready, steady...g'o, 'Spin, spin, spin', 'Down'</i></p>	<p>Light up spinner <i>'Twist, twist, twist' 'Stop, go' 'Ready steady... go'</i></p>	<p>Spinner <i>'Push Push Push', 'Spin spin, spin', 'Ready steady... go', 'Weee, round and round'</i></p>



		
<p>Ball spinner <i>'Push, push, push', 'Spin, spin, spin', 'Ready steady... go', 'Weee, round and round'</i></p>	<p>Helicopter <i>'Up', 'Ready steady... go', 'High in the sky'</i></p>	<p>Light up moving spinner <i>'Up and down', 'Flashing'</i></p>
		
<p>Spinning top <i>'Ready steady... go', 'Red spinner go', 'Spin, spin, spin', 'Lots of spinners'</i></p>	<p>Windmill <i>'Huff and puff', 'Blow', 'Whoosh', 'Spin', 'Round and round', Ready steady... blow'</i></p>	<p>Light up spinner <i>'Spin, spin', 'Blue', 'Green', 'Red', 'Round and round', 'On and off', 'Ready steady ...go'</i></p>
<p>Remember as you play with the toys to use clear sounds, words and facial expressions to help your child not only enjoy the toys but also, to share the enjoyment with you.</p>		