

Here's how to... Do a 'What's in the Box' Intervention

What is it?	What's in the Box is a tool used to support the development of interactions for a child that may not yet have these skills embedded. This activity is usually undertaken 1:1 with the child and a key adult. Interactions can be verbal or non-verbal.
Who is it for?	In Early Years settings this activity can support all children both verbal and pre-verbal and particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children presenting or diagnosed with communication difficulties including Autistic children. - Children new to the setting - Children with EAL - Children who have not yet developed interactions with others
How do I use it?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make a box/bag/bucket- a clear container can offer immediate interest, or a eye catching box can capture their attention and add intrigue. Consider the child's interests when choosing the objects within the box. There is a list of resource ideas on the MIDAS Website to support with this. 2. Entice the child in the same way each time for familiarity, to come and explore the box with you. You may choose a signature song – 'what's in the box, what's in the box, come and see what I have got, what's In the box' - tune to 'The Farmers in his Den' 3. Adult to be interactive and exciting to engage the child. Use expression, sounds, and start to explore the object. 4. Once you have shown the child what the object does 'blown bubbles' STOP, pause, and wait for an indication the child wants 'more'. 5. Once you receive that interaction of more, repeat the process 6. Explore one object with the child for 1-2 turns. Put it back in the box and offer another object to explore in the same way
Why would I use this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What's in the box supports a child to continue an interaction with an adult e.g. indicating they want more by reaching or signing/saying 'more' - This strategy also encourages a child to come and engage with an adult led activity and is the start of supporting them to engage with other learning activities in the future.
Top tips	<p>DO make a box for each child that you are undertaking this intervention with.</p> <p>DO use cause and effect resources for the best outcome as these are immediately engaging- Examples have been attached for you to reference.</p> <p>DO consider the child's interests Eg. Flashing or spinning items</p> <p>DO change the resources in the box regularly to keep the child's interest</p> <p>DO end the activity on a successful note. Bring out 2-3 objects in the box rather than continuing with one object and losing the child's interest</p> <p>-DO accept any interactions from the child as an indication of wanting 'more'. Non-verbal such as a hand movement smile or eye glance can be a request for more.</p>

DO not allow the child to have or handle the object. These are 'special' objects the child can only interact with during the activity, or they will not be motivated to interact with the adult for 'more'. If a child does touch or handle the object, ensure it is brief.

DO identify if a child becomes distressed by not being able to have the object, always support their well-being first. Perhaps explore the object together or consider whether this is the right object to have in the box.

DO keep language to a minimum. Limit this to naming the object and verbalise 'more' and 'finished' alongside Makaton signs for these.

DO try this activity in a quiet area with minimal distractions. The same area each time would be ideal