

Special Time Box or Bag

What is a Special Time Box or Bag?

A Special Time box or bag is a selection of motivating toys and activities to help you engage with your child in play. This can include sensory toys such as beads/shakers/bubbles/play dough/sound puzzles/different materials etc.

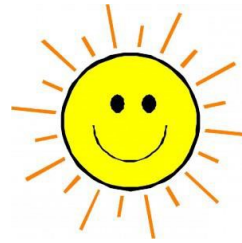
What are the benefits?

- ⇒ A Special Time box or bag may increase shared attention and interaction, and develop play skills. It may also encourage attention and listening skills to improve.
- ⇒ A Special Time box or bag will help support early language development by helping your child to understand what is about to happen next when they see the box or bag and from hearing words/sounds/gestures from you.
- ⇒ If you only use these toys during your Special Time it might maintain your child's interest and make them more motivated to interact with you.
- ⇒ It gives YOU the opportunity to share Special Time with your child in a fun way.



How do I set up a Special Time Box or Bag?

- ⇒ Start with a realistic length of time that your child can easily achieve. It may be just a minute or two at first.
- ⇒ Each day, try to extend the time you spend with your child during Special Time. You may want to extend it by as little as 30 seconds a day to begin with.
- ⇒ For example, you may wish to begin your Special Time with a cause and effect toy such as "star stacker". You may then want to try a puzzle, and finish off with bubbles. Use just one toy at a time so that your child is not distracted.
- ⇒ If you feel like your child is losing interest in an activity then change the toys in your box or bag.



When and how can I use it?

- ⇒ Place the Special Time box or bag in your child's sight but out of their reach, as this gives your child the opportunity to communicate by requesting it.
- ⇒ Present the box or bag to your child every day at a quiet time with minimal distractions, even if it is only for 5 minutes. Your child may need some time to explore the objects before you begin. This is a useful time for you to say the words for them to listen to.
- ⇒ Be face-to-face with your child. Take one toy out at a time and present it to your child. Remember to name things and model language use throughout your Special Time, but also give your child time to speak.
- ⇒ If the toy has 2 parts (e.g. puzzle), take turns playing with it. You could also hold onto pieces of the toy that they want/need (e.g. a shape for the shape sorter) so that your child has the opportunity to communicate by asking for it – remember they don't need to be able to use words to communicate as they can use gestures or sounds.
- ⇒ Have as much fun as possible by using exaggerated gestures, lots of praise and a varied tone of voice. Be patient and remember to have fun and enjoy your quality time together!



