

BLINK DANCE THEATRE

BLINK are a 'original, inspiring and fresh' neurodiverse group of five artists who perform and facilitate together.

What we do

We lead creative dance, drama and sensory storytelling projects in schools, youth and community groups and specialise in working with children and adults with SEND and ASC.

We offer employment and training opportunities that support the needs of individual artists to reach their potential.



Parent/Carer Activities Ideas

These ideas can be used to support communication, body awareness and sensory processing. Please choose your favorites and tailor them to your own child's likes and needs.

Getting Child's Attention

- Use rhythmic tapping and/or a specific song that means you're going to do some dancing together. In our sessions we start with a very slow tap which gets faster and ends in a countdown
- Find creative ways to use the child's name. We then copy each person's movement and say their name at the same time to create a 'name dance'. Even if the movement is small or does not 'look' like a dance move you can build on the movement by extending it, doing it in a different rhythm or bigger, faster or slower but it is always best that the movement comes from the child.

Get moving

- Use fast or slow music to try different ways of moving. If you are on Spotify you can search Vicki Hawkins and find my 'Dance workshops at home' playlist which has all the songs we use in class for some ideas. Select either secondary or primary to ensure you have age appropriate songs.
- Dance around and freeze when the music stops (if appropriate the child can have a go at stopping and starting the music so they can get you to freeze).
- Try naming the body parts you are touching, head, shoulders, knees, toes, elbows, nose and find different rhythms and patterns (for older children do this with some music they enjoy)

Taking turns

- Copy the child's movements, if appropriate encourage them to copy you sometimes too.

Use props

- Props can help you move together in different ways, try material (Lycra is great), hoops, toys, be inventive and try household objects like a feather duster or chop sticks.

- I am going to try and upload some low budget (free) tutorials on how to make simple sensory props for dance, and also some of our exercises for you to do at home over the next few weeks. Please check out our



Youtube channel here: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgeBvexdu4pmK_t67ftk4ag/videos or search BLINK Dance Theatre on Youtube as well as updates on our social media channels and website (details below).

Be creative

-Experiment with cause and effect. For example, can you make a magic wand and when the child touches it you make a sound effect and do funny movement.
-Can you become different characters, think about how the character moves and speaks. For example a witch might have heavy footsteps, her movement might lead from her nose and she might have a catch phrase such as 'bubble bubble'. Once you have built the character the child can switch the character on and off by tapping you on the shoulder.



Use the body

- Touch is great for communication and body awareness. Rocking from side to side while holding a child or rocking forwards and back hold hands face to face, moving back to back.
- Think about different sensations you can bring to different body parts. For example, make a rain storm with your fingers on different parts of the body then brush the rain off. Can you wear a crown on your head like a King / Queen. Play with different pressures as well such as gentle squeezes and using the palms of your hands to create footsteps.
- If your child does not enjoy physical contact, try touching just the tips of fingers, holding a prop between you or doing the movements in the air instead.

Sequencing

- Try doing the same activities in the same order over a period of time, the same music can also help. This will help your child predict what's coming next.
- Where possible use visuals to communicate what part of the session is coming next, you may also find it helpful to let them know when each activity is coming to an end with a countdown and signing finished for example 'the slow dance has finished'.

Have fun and enjoy

- The main thing is you are both enjoying being with each other. Facial expressions are key, make sure your face is open and friendly and that you are communicating you are having fun. This is often infectious for the child, but also helps them to understand what the aim of the activity is.
- Get the whole family involved.
- Turn the lights down and have a disco.



We hope to be able to offer even more for you over the coming months, do keep in touch.

There's loads more information about BLINK on our website: www.blinkdancetheatre.org

We love Social Media too: Tweet us [@BLINK_Dance](https://twitter.com/BLINK_Dance) Like us on FaceBook: [BLINK Dance Theatre](https://www.facebook.com/BLINKDanceTheatre)



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