



Content and Objectives of the Helping Preschool Children with Autism: Teachers and Parents as Partners Program

Part One: Promoting Language Development

- Value of teachers and parents giving focused child-directed narrated play as a way of promoting joint play and social communication.
- Understanding how to get in child's attention spotlight and not letting the child exclude parent or teacher.
- Appreciating the importance of gesturing, imitation, modeling, and face to face interactions.
- Assessing child's sensory likes (and dislikes) and developing sensory routines, songs and games to motivate the child's communication.
- Using communication checklist with adults and peers to determine child's communication goals.
- Determining appropriate developmental goals and adjusting verbal and nonverbal language according to the children's communication stage.
- Using visual prompts and supports such as snack talk cards, signals, and concrete objects to promote social communication and language understanding.
- Tailoring pace, amount, and complexity of language modeled according to child's communication stage.
- The modeling principle and importance of positive affect and exaggerated facial responses.
- Understanding how to set up practices to prompt social communication.

Part Two: Promoting Social Interactions

- Understanding how to model, prompt, and coach children's social skills.
- Understanding the ABCs of behavior change.
- Importance of responding enthusiastically with praise and gestures when child shares, helps or tries to interact with another child.
- Encourage back and forth communication by pausing to wait for child's response or signal before giving child what he/she wants.
- Understanding how to use intentional coaching communication.
- Understanding how to set up drama pretend play and cooperative play activities with 3 children to teach them to cooperate in joint play and work together.
- Setting up behavior plans for individual children for target social coaching.
- Understanding how to model, prompt, and coach children's social behaviors (waiting, helping, sharing) and social communication.
- Importance of responding enthusiastically with praise and gestures when child shares, helps or tries to interact with another child.
- Understanding how to use picture play scripts to promote joint play.
- Understanding how to set up more structured play scenarios with picture cue cards and rewards to help two children practice social skills.

Part Three: Promoting Emotion Literacy and Self-Regulation Skills

- Emotion coaching promotes children's emotion language skills and empathy.
- Emotion language is a precursor to self-regulation.
- The "attention rule" – the principle of paying attention to more positive than negative emotions and modeling positive expression of emotions.
- Learning how to combine emotion coaching with social coaching.
- Using feeling picture cards to promote children's understanding of feelings words and beginning empathy.
- Understanding how to use pretend play and puppets to practice self-regulation skills.
- Practicing using the calm down thermometer to teach calm down skills.
- Determining when children are receptive to learning about calm down teaching or self-regulation prompts (e.g., positive self-talk, deep breathing, happy images).
- Understanding when the ignore strategy is a better response than giving the behavior attention.
- Importance of modeling self-control and calm-down strategies for children.