



Autism Spectrum & Language Delays Parent Group Leader Workshop Manual

3-day group leader workshop

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Autism Parent Training

Agenda Day One

Welcome, introductions and ground rules, agenda

Overview of all IY programmes & ASD programmes objectives & how different or same as BASIC program

Buzz characteristics of children

Brainstorm what it is like to be a parent of a child with ASD & implications for IY group leader principles

Buddy up to complete communication checklist on one child; categorize types in large group; break up to begin development of 3-4 language and play levels of types of (see handout)

NOON BREAK

**Part 1: Child directed narrated play promotes positive relationships
(vig 1-4, 6,7, reflections)**

- leader modelling brainstorm, buzzes & mediating vignettes;
- large group practice; using visual prompts (activity choice board)
- process IY vignette, role play & buzz strategies
- model closing (handouts, self-monitoring checklist, home practice assignments)

Summary, Evaluation and Close





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Autism Parent Training

Agenda Day Two

Model beginning a new session & home activities review

Part 2: Pre- academic and persistence coaching promotes language skills

- model buzz/brainstorm academic and persistence coaching; role play practice & practice with video volume turned off (Vig 5)

Part 3: Social coaching promotes friendship skills

- practice in pairs thinking of questions to ask with vignettes

Part 4: Emotion coaching promotes friendship skills

- practice emotion coaching & using puppets

IF TIME

Part 5: Using pretend play to promote empathy and social

- benefits & barriers of pretend play

Summary, Evaluation and Close





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Agenda Day Three

Part 5: Using pretend play to promote empathy and social skills

- benefits and barriers of pretend play
- practice using puppets to promote empathy & friendship skills

Part 6: Promoting self regulation skills

- practice using the calm down thermometer and tiny turtle puppet

Part 7: Using praise and rewards to motivate children

- group leader practice small groups
- self-care buzz

Part 8: Limit setting and handling misbehavior

- ABC's; buzz behaviors to ignore

Advance programme for parents.. Partnership with teachers.. Example vignettes

Certification

Evaluation and close



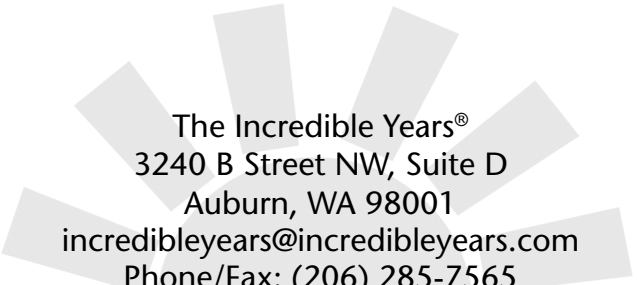
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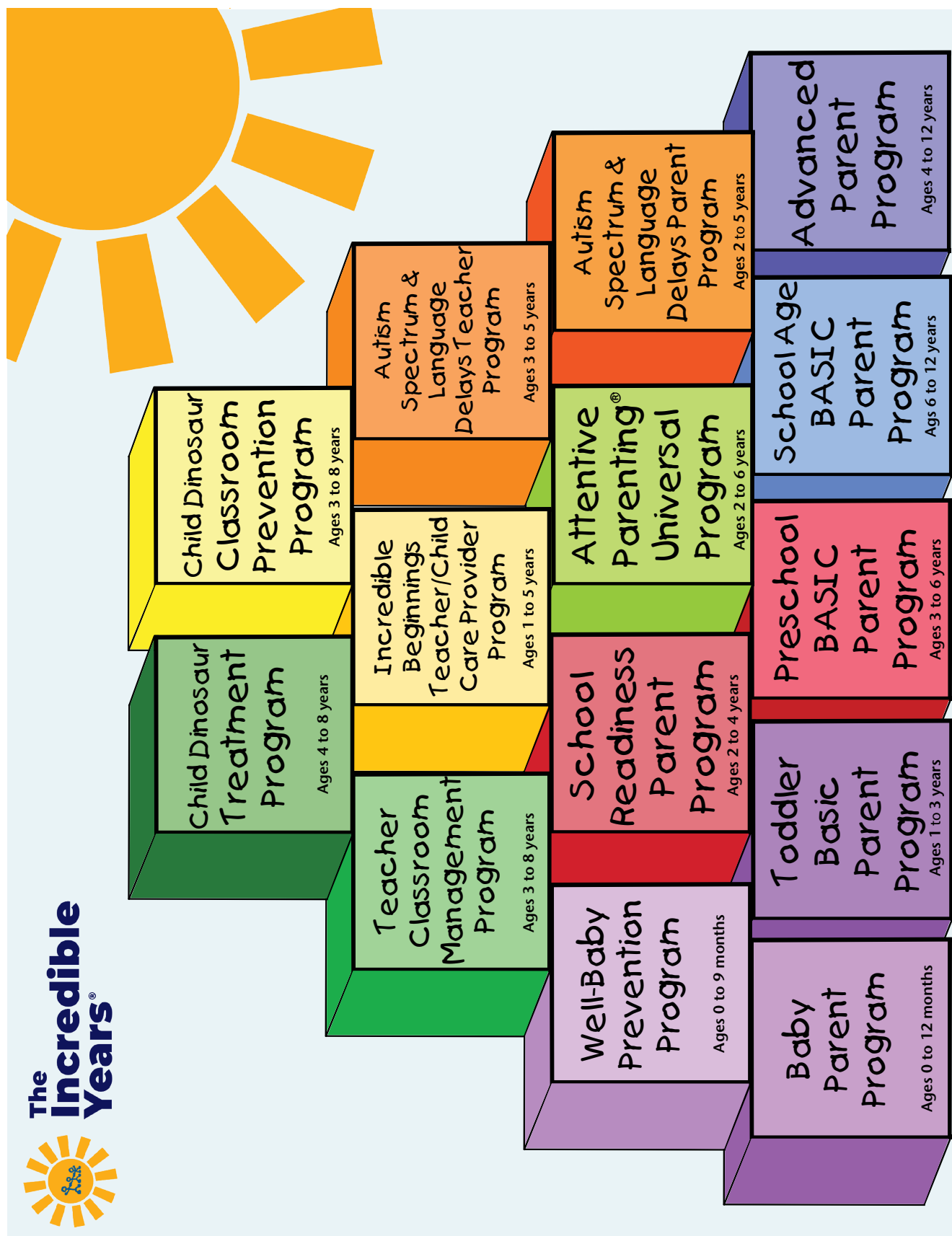
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Some General Guidelines:

- If your agency plans to implement an Incredible Years® Program, they must purchase the program set from The Incredible Years® office. A program set includes all the main components to run your groups. A leader’s manual, DVD set with vignettes to show, and other “extra” items are included.
- In the leader’s manual, you MAY photocopy the handouts and different evaluation forms for parents to use and fill out. You may keep the master copies in your leader’s manual so that you can reuse them for each group.
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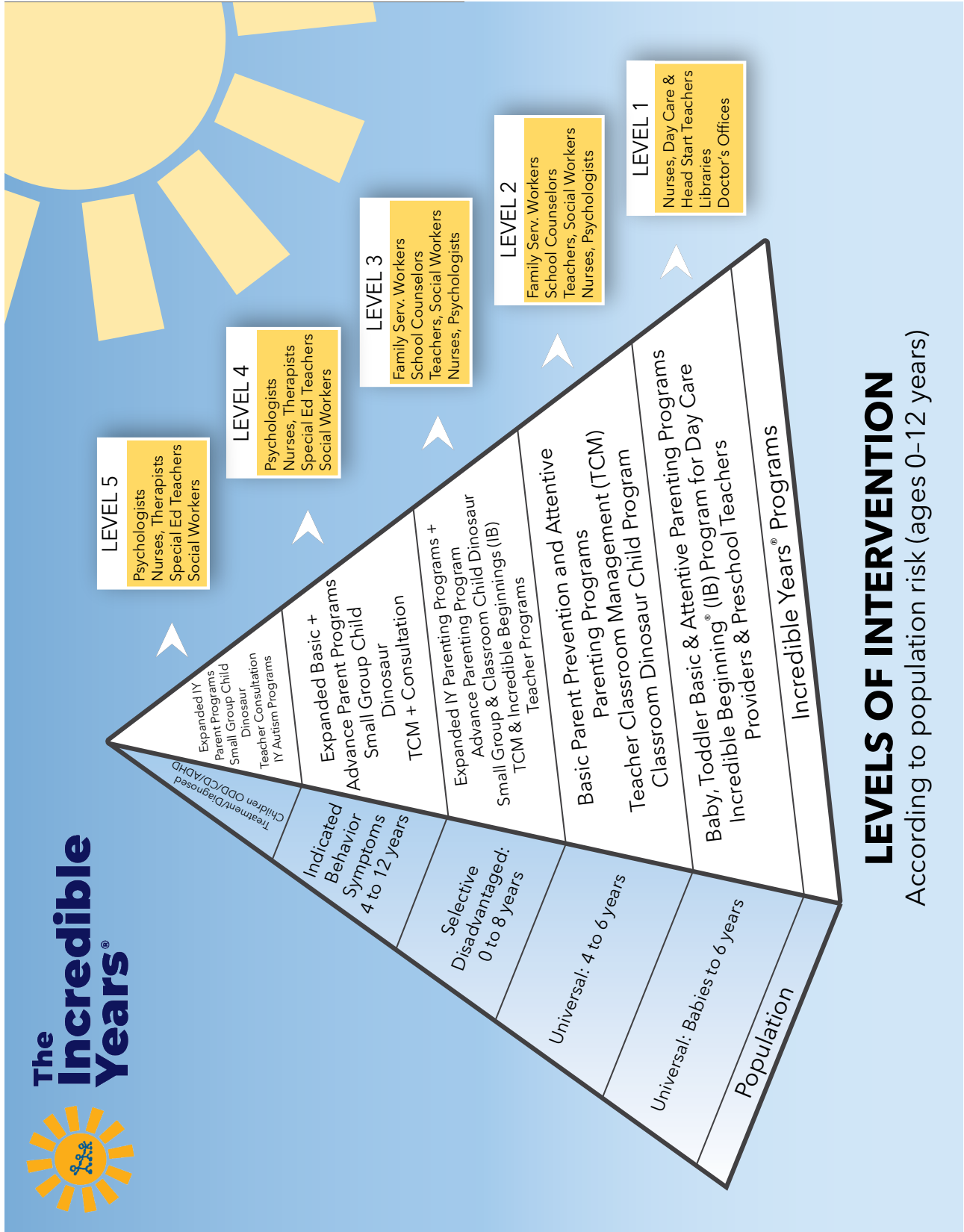


Table 1: Content and Objectives of the Autism Spectrum & Language Delays Program

Content	Objectives
Part One: Child-Directed Narrated Play Promotes Positive Relationships	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of parents giving focused child-directed attention during play as a way of promoting positive relationships. • Understanding how to get in a child's attention spotlight and not letting the child exclude you. • Understanding how to narrate child-directed play to build language development. • Learning how to transition to new play learning opportunities. • Appreciate the importance of parental gesturing, imitation, modeling, face to face interactions, and visual prompts. • Value of using picture choice cards. • Choose games that address your child's sensory needs but avoid overstimulating. • Understanding times <i>not</i> to follow your child's lead.
Part Two: Pre-Academic and Persistence Coaching Promotes Language Development and School Readiness	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining appropriate developmental goals for children on the autism spectrum. • Tailor pace, amount, and complexity of language modeled according to child's communication stage. • Understanding the value of persistence coaching for promoting children's attention span and managing their frustration. • The modeling principle—and importance of positive affect and exaggerated facial responses. • Staying in child's attention spotlight by being responsive. • Understanding the value of prompting and pre-academic coaching for building children's language skills and school readiness. • Learning to coach pre-reading readiness. • Adjusting verbal and non verbal language and visual prompts according to children's communication stage. • Responding to child's language as meaningful even if not understandable or conventional. • Using visual supports such as gestures, pictures, and concrete objects to help child understand what others are saying.
Part Three: Social Coaching Promotes Friendship Skills	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social coaching and one-on-one child-directed play promotes a child's social skills. • Understanding how to model, prompt, and coach a child's social skills. • Respond enthusiastically and with praise whenever child shares or helps you (exaggerate responses). • Understanding how to: Use songs, physical games, and sensory routines to optimize a child's social learning opportunities and draw attention to parent's face. • Encourage back and forth communication by pausing to wait for child's response or signal before giving child what he/she wants. • Use puppets and pretend play to encourage social communication. • Use social coaching at dinner, bed time, and dressing time.

Table 1 Continued

Content	Objectives
Part Four: Emotion Coaching Promotes Emotional Literacy	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Understanding how to respond effectively to negative or uncomfortable emotions. • Learning how to combine emotion coaching with social and persistence coaching. • Using feeling picture cards to promote children's understanding of feelings words and beginning empathy.
Part Five: Pretend Play Promotes Empathy and Social Skills	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the value of pretend play with puppets to promote children's social skills and empathy. • Understanding the most effective ways to use puppets with children. • Developing scenarios and practicing using them to promote children's social skills, empathy, and emotion language. • Understanding how to use puppets and action figures along with books.
Part Six: Promoting Children's Self-Regulation Skills	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 how to use pretend and puppet play to do self-regulation teaching and practice. • Learning how to explain the calm down thermometer to children and practicing strategies. • Importance of using the ignore technique when child is too dysregulated. • Understanding concept of "selective attention." • Parents modeling self-control and calm-down strategies.
Part Seven: Using Praise and Rewards to Motivate Children	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning how to spotlight labeled praise for children. • Identifying child's "positive opposite" target behavior to praise and reward. • Understanding how to set up a developmentally appropriate plan of child social behaviors. • Recognizing the value of sensory activities and rewards for children. • Learning how to praise and reward oneself and others for parenting efforts. • Importance of developing a parent support network.

Table 1 Continued

Content	Objectives
Part Eight: Effective Limit Setting and Behavior Management	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding how to give clear, brief, positive instructions.• Using parent visual command cards as needed to make command understandable.• Reduce number of commands to only necessary commands/instructions.• Learning about the importance of giving children transition time and reminders.• Understanding when to use redirections and physical prompts (guiding hands).• Establishing clear and consistent household rules.• Learning how to re-engage children in new learning opportunity when misbehavior subsides.• Identify behaviors that can be ignored.

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

Content	Objectives
Part One: Promoting Language Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 spot light and not letting the child exclude parent or teacher • Appreciating the importance of gesturing, imitation, modeling, and face to face interactions • 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 • Understand how to set up practices to prompt social communication
Part Two: Promoting Social Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Continued

Content	Objectives
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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
- Importance of modeling self-control and calm-down strategies

How IY-ASD Differs from Basic IY Parenting Program

<i>IY Basic Preschool Program (3-5 years)</i>	<i>Autism Spectrum and Language Delays Program (2-5 years)</i>
Topics: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthening Children's Social Skills, Emotional Regulation and School Readiness 2. Using Praise and Incentives to Encourage Cooperative Behavior 3. Positive Discipline: Rules, Routines & Effective Limit Setting 4. Handling Misbehavior (ignoring, Time Out, consequences and problem-solving) 	Topics: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased focus on coaching language development, imitation and sensory routines, social communication, use of pretend play to promote empathy and social skills, and promoting self-regulation skills. 2. Enhanced focus on self-care and building support group. 3. Older (4 to 5 year old) verbal children with conduct problems families can continue with Program 4 of Basic IY program to discuss time out and problem solving (not included in IY-ASD program).
Basic IY Vignettes	New IY-ASD vignettes depict children with ASD. Additional vignettes from Basic IY may be added if parents in the group need more help with behavior management and problem solving.
Program Dosage (18-20 sessions)	(13-14 plus sessions) Increased dosage often needed to adequately cover the material since there are more practices and discussions to tailor the strategies to each unique child.
Group Size: 10-12 parents	Smaller group size: 6-8 parents plus partners or other family members
Group Leader: Knowledgeable in child Development	Group Leader: Knowledgeable and experienced in ASD practice, local ASD-specific supports, and functional behavioral approaches to behavior change.
Key Group Teaching/Learning Methods (behavioral practice, principle building, values exercises, tailoring to meet cultural and developmental issues, home activities)	Increased teaching about ASD and ways to use visual support including picture schedules, choice cards, command and feeling cards; tailoring group practices according to children's communication stage; imitation as a means to gain attention, learning alternative incentives to motivate children with ASD (e.g., sensory activities); more explicit teaching about prompting, use of nonverbal signals, and the functions of behavior and ABCs of behavior change; more practice with use of pretend play and puppet use as well as self-regulation strategies.

Alliance building techniques (collaborative learning, buddy calls, weekly leader support calls, praise to parents, incentives for parents)	All standard alliance building techniques apply to this population, but increased efforts to help build families support systems and reduce their stress by working on self-care and promoting weekly buddy calls and peer dates with other parents. Regular emails, texts and calls from group leaders are essential.
Food, transportation, daycare	No adaptations needed, but essential to offer these for this population in order to reduce barriers to participation.
Core model does not offer home visits	Providing home visits to coach parent-child interactions using coach home visit manuals and additional DVD vignettes as needed; use these to make up missed sessions or show additional vignettes
Core model does not address collaboration with educators and other professionals for coordination of care	Coordinate with educators and therapists for developing behavior plans with agreed upon goals for child's target behaviors. Consult with medical providers to understand effects of medical issues on child behavior and parent stress.
Core model suggests use of IY Advance, Child and Teacher Programs for children with diagnoses or very high risk families	Consider additional IY Programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advance Program to teach anger and depression management and problem solving steps• Child Social, Emotional and Problem Solving Skills Program ("Dinosaur School") offered alongside parent program• Offer follow-up training in the Helping Preschool Children with Autism: Teachers and Parents as Partners to help parents learn how to promote positive peer interactions and social communication with 2-3 children.

Autism Parent Program Collaborative Process Checklist

(Supplemental form)

This checklist is designed as a supplement/addendum to the full Parent Process Checklist.

Leader Self-Evaluation (name): _____

Co-leader Evaluation: _____

Certified Trainer/Mentor Evaluation: _____

Date: _____

Session Topic: _____

ASSESS CHILD'S DEVELOPMENTAL LEVEL

Did the leader(s):

YES NO N/A

- | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Ask parents in first session to complete assessment checklists on their children's communication stage (doesn't understand or is uninterested in verbal language, uses physical gestures to communicate, uses visual prompts, makes sounds, uses one word, echolalic, complete sentences etc.)? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Understand each individual child's unique play developmental level (no play, repetitive play, unconventional play, functional play, pretend play, rules based play)? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Explore with parents each child's sensory motor needs (likes and dislikes inventory)? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Help parents have a realistic understanding of their child's developmental abilities and short term goals? | _____ | _____ | _____ |

EXPAND PARENTS' ABILITY TO ENGAGE THEIR CHILD IN VERBAL AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Did the leader(s):

- | | | | | | |
|--|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Help parents understand how to use gestures, visual helpers and pictures and concrete objects to enhance interpersonal communication? | 1
Never | 2
Rarely | 3
Sometimes | 4
Frequently | 5
Very Frequently |
| 2. Work with parents to know when to physically guide their children's hands and movements to respond to their suggestions and requests? | 1
Never | 2
Rarely | 3
Sometimes | 4
Frequently | 5
Very Frequently |

1. Help parents learn to communicate with their children by simplifying language according to each child's language level, slowing down their rate of talking, stressing & exaggerating key words with enthusiasm and gestures, and using repetition and modeling?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

2. Help parents make activity choice boards and picture schedules of daily activities?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

HELP PARENTS UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLES OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Did the leader(s):

1. Help parents understand the ABC'S to bring about teaching learning opportunities for children to learn new skills and behaviors?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

2. Help parents to gently persist with interactions with their children using motivating antecedents and prompting children to replace unwanted negative behaviors (which are ignored) with positive social behaviors to get what they want?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

3. Help parents understand the importance of modeling, prompting and imitating their children's targeted behavior goals during child-directed play and other social interaction times?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

4. Help parents understand how to use "prompt fading" to develop more independent behavior?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

5. Help parents understand how to get in their children's attention spotlight in order to engage child in learning opportunities?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

1. Help parents identify key rewards which will motivate or cue their children's positive communicative behavior?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

2. Help parents ignore unwanted behaviors while holding back on what child wants and only rewarding his/her behavior after behaving in desired way?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

EXPAND PARENTS' ABILITY TO TEACH THEIR CHILDREN SOCIAL SKILLS AS WELL AS BUILD THEIR EMOTION LITERACY, SELF-REGULATION, AND CALM DOWN STRATEGIES

Did the leader(s):

1. Increase parent understanding how to use social and emotional coaching with their children during play interactions; individualize according to child's developmental and communication level?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

2. Increase parent understanding how to teach their children self-regulation and calm down strategies; and making use of visual cue self-regulation cards for this teaching?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

3. Teach parents how to prompt and partially prompt children's verbal and nonverbal social interactions and communication during play times and games?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

4. Help parents use dolls and doll clothing, stuffed animals, fake food, tea sets, wash clothes, hair brushes, toothbrushes, etc. to practice conventional self-care and actions such as getting ready for bed, washing, dressing, and eating?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

5. Help parents be aware of how the environment can be used to increase or reduce their child's level of arousal (e.g., use of lights, tactile and sensory activities)?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

INDIVIDUALIZE ROLE PLAY PRACTICE FOR PARENTS

Did the leader(s):

1. Engage in role plays which are individually tailored according to individual children's developmental abilities and language skills. These should include use of visual prompts, gestures, imitation, simple language, songs and interactive reading with books?

1
Never

2
Rarely

3
Sometimes

4
Frequently

5
Very Frequently

2. Increase focus on role play practice involving pretend play such as the use of puppets, character objects and imaginary worlds?

1
Never

2
Rarely

3
Sometimes

4
Frequently

5
Very Frequently

3. Support parents understanding of the importance of predicable routines and what behaviors can be ignored?

1
Never

2
Rarely

3
Sometimes

4
Frequently

5
Very Frequently

4. Set up some individual coaching times (at clinic, school or home) between parents and their children in order to give parents feedback on their coaching methods during play times?

1
Never

2
Rarely

3
Sometimes

4
Frequently

5
Very Frequently

BUILD PARENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR CHILD'S WORLD VIEW

Did the leader(s):

1. Help parents know how to get in their children's attention spotlight?

1
Never

2
Rarely

3
Sometimes

4
Frequently

5
Very Frequently

2. Help parents be aware of their child's sensory likes and dislikes (auditory, visual, tactile, smell taste/oral, proprioception [body space/balance/need for movement or stillness]).

1
Never

2
Rarely

3
Sometimes

4
Frequently

5
Very Frequently

3. Help parents develop empathy for their children's unique world view?

1
Never

2
Rarely

3
Sometimes

4
Frequently

5
Very Frequently

BUILD PARENTS' SUPPORT NETWORKS

Did the leader(s):

1. Allow time during group sessions for parents to support each other and to share personal experiences and difficulties in order to build social support in group and reduce parental stress?

1
Never

2
Rarely

3
Sometimes

4
Frequently

5
Very Frequently

2. Emphasize the value of weekly buddy calls and encourage play date times between children?

1
Never

2
Rarely

3
Sometimes

4
Frequently

5
Very Frequently

3. Help parents understand the importance of partnering with teachers to provide consistent approaches at home and school and collaborative behavior plans?

1
Never

2
Rarely

3
Sometimes

4
Frequently

5
Very Frequently

Parent Group Leader Collaborative Process Checklist

This checklist is designed for group leaders to complete together following a session, or for a group leader to complete for him/herself when reviewing a video of a session. By watching the video of a session and looking for the following points, a leader can identify specific goals for progress. This checklist is designed to complement the checklist for the specific session, which lists the key content that should be covered.

Leader Self-Evaluation (name): _____

Co-leader Evaluation: _____

Certified Trainer/Mentor Evaluation: _____

Date: _____

Session Topic: _____

SET UP

Did the Leaders(s):

YES NO N/A

1. Set up chairs in a semicircle that allowed everyone to see the TV?
(Avoid tables.) _____
2. Sit at separate places in the circle, rather than both at the front? _____
3. Write the agenda on the board? _____
4. Have last week's home activities ready for the parents to pick up,
complete with praise and encouragement written on them? _____
5. Plan and prepare for daycare in advance? _____
6. Prepare and lay out the food, in an attractive manner? _____
7. Make calls to parents during the week? _____
8. Keep home activity check in limited to 20-30 minutes? _____

REVIEW PARENT'S HOME ACTIVITIES

Did the Leader(s):

9. Praise and reward parents' efforts to do home practice activities and readings?

1
Never

2
Rarely

3
Sometimes

4
Frequently

5
Very Frequently

10. Give every parent the chance to talk about his/her week?

1
Never

2
Rarely

3
Sometimes

4
Frequently

5
Very Frequently

11. Praise and encourage parents for what they did well and recognize their beginning steps at change, rather than correct their process?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

12. Highlight key “principles” that parents’ examples illustrate? (e.g., write them on flip chart or paraphrase idea.)

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

13. Explore with individuals who didn’t complete the home activities what made it difficult (barriers) and discuss how they might adapt home activities to fit their needs and goals?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

14. Ask about and encourage “buddy calls” and explore barriers to calls and solutions?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

15. If a parent’s description of how they applied the skills makes it clear that s/he misunderstood, did the leaders accept responsibility for the misunderstanding rather than leaving the parent feeling responsible for the failure? (e.g., “I’m really glad you shared that, because I see I completely forgot to tell you a really important point last week. You couldn’t possibly have known, but when you do that, it’s important to...” vs “You misunderstood the assignment. Remember, when you do that, it’s important to...”)

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

16. Make sure that the discussion is brought back to the specific topic at hand after a reasonable time without letting free flowing discussion of other issues dominate?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

17. Use home practice experiences as an opportunity to set up role play demonstrations?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

WHEN BEGINNING THE TOPIC FOR THE DAY

Did the Leader(s):

18. Begin the discussion of the topic with open-ended questions to get parents to think about the importance of the topic?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

19. Do the benefits and/or barriers exercise regarding the new topic or to explore difficulties with previously taught strategies?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

20. Paraphrase and highlight the points made by parents - write key points on the board with their name?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

WHEN SHOWING THE VIGNETTES

Did the Leader(s):

Number of vignettes shown in session: _____

21. Focus parents on what they are about to see on the vignettes and what to look for?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

22. Begin by asking an open-ended question about what parents thought was effective/ ineffective in the vignette?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

23. Acknowledge responses one or more parents have to a vignette?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

24. Paraphrase and highlight the points made by parents - writing key points on the board?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

25. Move on to the next vignettes after key points have been discussed, rather than let the discussion go on at length?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

26. Use vignettes to trigger appropriate discussions and/or practices?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

27. Redirect group to the relevance of principles learned from the interaction on the vignette for their own situations with their children?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

28. Refer to parents' goals for themselves and their children when discussing vignettes and learning principles?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

29. Get parents to switch from talking about strategies in general to using the actual words they could actually use? (e.g., from "She should be more specific" to "You [Participant] could say, John, you need to put the puzzle pieces in the box.")

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

PRACTICE AND ROLE PLAYS

Did the Leader(s):

30. Ensure that the skill to be practiced has been covered in the vignettes or discussion prior to asking someone to role play it. (This ensures the likelihood of success.)

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

31. Uses both spontaneous and planned role play practice over the course of the session?
Number of role plays: _____

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

32. Do role plays in pairs or small groups that allow multiple people to practice simultaneously?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

33. Use all of the following skills when directing role plays:

a. Skillfully get parents engaged and motivated to do role play practices?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

b. Strategically select parents and clearly describe their parent role?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

c. Provide “child” in role with a description of his/her age, developmental stage, and level of misbehavior?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

d. Provide enough “scaffolding” so that parents are successful in their role as “parent” (e.g., get other parents to generate ideas for how to handle the situation before practice begins)?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

e. Invite other workshop members to be “coaches” (call out idea if the actor is stuck)?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

f. Pause/freeze role play periodically to redirect, give clarification, or reinforce participants?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

g. Take responsibility for having given poor instructions if role play is not successful and allow actor to rewind and replay?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

34. Process role playing afterwards by asking how “parent” felt and asking group to give feedback?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

35. Process role play by asking how “child” felt in role?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

36. Solicit feedback from group about strengths of parent in role?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

37. Offer detailed descriptive praise of the role play and what was learned?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

38. Re-run role play, changing roles or involving different parents (not always needed, but helpful to do for a parent who needs modeling by someone else first)?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

LEADER GROUP PROCESS SKILLS

Did the Leader(s):

39. Build rapport with each member of group?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

40. Encourage everyone to participate?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

41. Use open-ended questions to facilitate discussion?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

42. Reinforce parents' ideas and foster parents' self-learning?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

43. Encourage parents to problem-solve when possible?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

44. Foster idea that parents will learn from each others' experiences?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

45. Help parents learn how to support and reinforce each other (celebrate each other's successes)?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

46. View every member of group as equally important and valued?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

47. Identify each family's strengths?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

48. Create a feeling of safety among group members?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

49. Create an atmosphere where parents feel they are decision-makers and discussion and debate are paramount?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

ENDING GROUP - REVIEW & HOME ACTIVITIES

Did the Leader(s):

50. Begin the ending process with about 15 minutes remaining?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

51. Summarize this session's learning? (One way to do this is to review or have the parents review each point on refrigerator notes out loud.)

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

52. Review or have parents review the home activity sheet, including why it is important, and how they will try to do it?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

53. Talk about any adaptations to the home activity for particular families?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

54. Show support and acceptance if parents can't commit to all the home activities? (Support realistic plans.)

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

55. Have parents complete the Self-Monitoring Checklist and commit to goals for the week?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

56. Check in on buddy calls?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

57. Have parents complete the evaluation form?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

58. End the session on time?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

The goal in the group sessions should be to draw from the parents the information and ideas to teach each other. They should be the ones who generate the principles, describe the significance, highlight what was effective and ineffective on the video, and demonstrate how to implement the skills in different situations. Remember, people are far more likely to put into practice what they talk about than what they hear about. (Webster-Stratton)

Summary Comments:

Assessing Children's Play and Language Levels

Level One



Name of Child: _____

Age of Child: _____

Family Context

(e.g., partnered or single; level of support; siblings; depressed mom)

Language Level

(e.g., screams, grunts, no signing, no babbling)

Play Level

(e.g., grabs toys, not interested in other children)

Sensory Likes

(auditory, visual, tactile, smell, taste/oral, proprioception)

Sensory Dislikes

(e.g., upset with loud noise, loves running and being thrown)

Behavior Problems

Positive Opposite Behaviors

Goals for Parents

Goals for Child

Assessing Children's Play and Language Levels

Level Two



Name of Child: _____

Age of Child: _____

Family Context	
Language Level	
<i>(e.g., no spoken language, can point, leads parent by hand, vocalizes)</i>	
Play Level	
<i>(e.g., plays alone, anxious and withdrawn)</i>	
Sensory Interests	
Behavior Problems	Positive Opposite Behaviors
Goals for Parents	Goals for Child

Assessing Children's Play and Language Levels

Level Three



Name of Child: _____

Age of Child: _____

Family Context	
Language Level	
<i>(e.g., short phrases, 3-4 words, lots of sounds, delayed echoes, gestures)</i>	
Play Level	
<i>(e.g., simple pretend play, aggressive with peers)</i>	
Sensory Interests	
<i>(e.g., upset with loud noise, loves running and being thrown)</i>	
Behavior Problems	Positive Opposite Behaviors
<i>(e.g., escapes to avoid demands, easily overstimulated)</i>	
Goals for Parents	Goals for Child



Child Communication Checklist (With Parent)

	Doesn't understand/ ignores/blank stare	Looks at parent	Protests/ Refuses/ Tantrums	Pulls parent arm/ gestures	Points/ Reacts/ Nods	Uses visual pictures	Shares/ Offers things	Makes sounds	Immediate Echoes/ copies	Delayed echoes*	Uses 1-3 words/ signs	Whole sentence/ signs
Wants something from parents (food, toy, help, play etc.)												
Wants to continue playing/reading/singing with parent												
Not getting what s/he wants												
Wants to stop activity												
Response to parent one-step direction												
Response to parent multi-step direction												
Response to parent offering choices												
Response to parent greeting (hello, bye-bye)												
Feelings expression												

Reason Child Communicates

*"Delayed Echoes" defined as copies from TV shows, common expressions

Child's Name: _____

Date: _____



Child Communication Checklist (With Peer/Sibling)

	Doesn't understand/ ignores/blank stare	Looks at child	Protests/ Refuses/ Tantrums	Pulls child's arm/ gestures	Points/ Reacts/ Nods	Uses visual pictures	Shares/ Offers things	Makes sounds	Imme- diate Echoes/ copies	Delayed echoes*	Uses 1-3 words/ signs	Whole sentence/ signs
Wants something from peers (food, toy, help, play etc.)												
Wants to continue playing/reading/singing with peer												
Not getting what s/he wants												
Wants to stop activity												
Response to peer request												
Response to peer initiation												
Response to peer greeting												
Feelings expression												

Reason Child Communicates

*"Delayed Echoes" defined as copies from TV shows, common expressions

Child's Name: _____
Date: _____

Incredible Years®

Parent Strategies Questionnaire for Children with Autism (2-5 years)

Parent (name): _____

Promoting Social, Emotional, Language and Academic Development in Children with Autism

In this section we would like to get your idea of how confident you are in using the following strategies.

	Very Unconfident	Somewhat Unconfident	Neutral	Confident	Very Confident
1. Simplifying and tailoring your language according to your child's individual language development?					
2. Identifying the specific ABCs: antecedents (A) that will motivate and prompt your child's target behaviors or words (B) and rewarding its occurrence with positive consequences (C).					
3. Being able to get in your child's attention spotlight to engage him or her in social and emotional learning opportunities?					
4. Being able to ignore and redirect your child's unwanted behaviors, giving your attention back when she or he behaves in the targeted way?					
5. Helping your child regulate his or her emotions?					
6. Using puppets and pretend play to teach your child social and emotional skills and to enhance communication?					
7. Using your child's sensory likes and dislikes such as auditory, tactile, visual, smell, taste/oral, proprioception (body space/balance/need for movement or stillness) to enhance his or her learning opportunities?					
8. Adapting teaching and materials to use your child's most effective learning mode (visual, auditory, motoric, sensory/tactile)?					
9. Managing your child's challenging behavior and following through with behavior plans and goals?					
10. Working with your child's classroom/early childhood teachers?					
11. Setting up structured play dates to help your child practice specific social skills?					
12. Developing and using visual supports (e.g., choice boards, command cards) to enhance your child's social, emotional and language learning?					



**The
Incredible
Years®**

Three-day Training for Parent Autism Workshop

A. Specific Teaching Techniques to Enhance Language Development

In this section we'd like to get your idea of how often you use the following strategies to promote your child's language learning.

	Rarely/Never	Sometimes	Half the Time	Often	Very Often
1. Participate in child-directed, narrated play to increase interactive involvement and joint attention from my child.					
2. Use enthusiastic voice tone, songs, imitation, modeling, simple language, repetition and commenting using the "one up rule" to increase my child's verbal communications.					
3. Use descriptive academic coaching language to promote language skills (e.g., colors, shapes, positions, names of objects).					
4. Use visual prompts, gestures, preferred objects, books, and sensory likes, to strengthen language communication and joint interaction.					
5. Use verbal prompts, partial prompts, and pauses to wait for my child to look, gesture, or respond verbally before continuing.					
6. Use puppets to model and engage children in social communication.					

B. Specific Teaching Techniques to Enhance Social Development

In this section we'd like to get your idea of how often you use the following strategies to promote your child's social learning.

	Rarely/Never	Sometimes	Half the Time	Often	Very Often
1. Use social coaching to model, prompt practice, label, and praise social behaviors such as sharing, waiting, eye contact, helping, listening, asking, turn taking, and initiating an interaction.					
2. Use puppets to model, prompt, label, and practice social behaviors.					
3. Praise and reward my child for using appropriate social friendship skills.					
4. Identify specific social behavior goals for my child according to his/her play stage.					
5. Use books, games, and visual pictures to prompt, signal, and practice targeted social behaviors with my child.					
6. Use sensory social routines to enhance my child's arousal for learning.					
7. Comment on and praise prosocial peer models to increase my child's focus on appropriate social behavior					
8. Use intentional communication to help my child be aware of other children and their needs, interactions and to promote their joint attention and empathy during play activities.					
9. Set up peer playdates to promote my child's interactions with others and provide social coaching during these interactions.					

C. Specific Teaching Techniques to Enhance Emotional Development and Self-regulation

In this section we'd like to get your idea of how often you use the following strategies to promote your child's emotional development.

	Rarely/Never	Sometimes	Half the Time	Often	Very Often
1. Use emotion coaching to model, prompt, and label emotion language in my child.					
2. Model emotion language through words and facial expressions for my child.					
3. Use persistence coaching language to encourage my child's continuous effort to do a task. (e.g., "that's hard, but you keep trying!")					
4. Use pictures cards and photographs that portray people in various feeling states to teach my child emotion vocabulary and prompt his or her to use these visuals to express emotions.					

continued on next page

C. Specific Teaching Techniques to Enhance Emotional Development and Self-regulation *(continued)*

In this section we'd like to get your idea of how often you use the following strategies to promote your child's emotional development.

	Rarely/Never	Sometimes	Half the Time	Often	Very Often
5. Help my child understand how others feel through modeling, acknowledgement, mirroring back, labeling feelings, voice tone, and intentional communication.					
6. Recognize early cues of emotional dysregulation in my child and prompt his or her use of calm down strategies.					
7. Focus more of my attention on positive emotions than on negative emotions.					
8. When coaching negative emotions, also coach appropriate coping strategies (e.g , you are feeling mad but you are taking three deep breaths to calm your body down).					
9. Use story books to teach my child emotion words and promote empathy and guided practice.					
10. Use puppets that share their feelings to prompt my child's emotional language, social responses and empathy for others.					
11. Use visual self-regulation cards such as calm down thermometer, breathing, or turtle picture with my child.					

D. Specific Teaching to Enhance Behavior Management Strategies

In this section we'd like to get your idea of how often you use the following strategies to promote your child's positive behaviors and decrease their inappropriate behaviors.

	Rarely/Never	Sometimes	Half the Time	Often	Very Often
1. Give my child choices when possible.					
2. Use visual prompts, verbal and nonverbal signals and/or command cards to remind my child of our household rules, schedule, and appropriate behavior.					
3. Prepare my child for transitions with a predictable and visual routine.					
4. Give face-to-face praise paired with smiles, eye contact, enthusiastic tone of voice, and sensory likes to reward desired behavior.					
5. Reward self-regulation, joint attention, and responses to instructions with child's sensory likes.					
6. Wait for my child's response when asking a question about his or her wants.					
7. Use visual cues, gestures, and simple words to distract and redirect when my child is angry or frustrated.					
8. Ignore misbehavior that is not dangerous to my child or another child.					
9. Help other siblings or peers to understand my child's misbehavior and to respond to it with understanding and without reinforcing its occurrence.					
10. Set up problem solving scenarios with puppets to practice appropriate social responses to situations that are difficult for my child. (e.g., ask a friend to play, going to a birthday party)					

E. Strategies for Working with Teachers and School

	Never	1-2 Times a Year	Once a Month	Once a Week	Daily
1. Use a system for regular school communication about my child (face-to-face communication, texts, notes, calls, meetings).					
2. Ask my child's teacher to tell me about how I can help support my child's school learning goals at home.					
3. Set up opportunities for to participate in classroom activities.					

continued on next page

E. Strategies for Working with Teachers and School <i>(continued)</i>	Never	1–2 Times a Year	Once a Month	Once a Week	Daily
4. Partner with teachers to provide ideas, materials, and support for classroom activities.					
5. Share with teachers my awareness of my child’s sensory likes and dislikes and how these can be used to help motivate my child’s learning.					
6. Share with teachers the ABC of behavior change in my child.					
7. Collaborate with teachers on a home-school behavior plan and share goals for my child.					
8. Becoming more aware of local opportunities to attend parent groups specifically for parents of children with autism.					

F. Planning and Support	Never	1–2 Times a Year	Once a Month	Once a Week	Daily
1. Review my progress in achieving the goals for my child and myself.					
2. Collaborate with other parents for solutions and support.					
3. Read the <i>Incredible Years Parent Book</i> .					
4. Manage my stress level utilizing positive cognitive strategies and gaining support from friends, family and teachers when needed.					



Agendas and Checklists

Protocols for Autism Spectrum and Language Delays Program



The Incredible Years®

Autism Spectrum and Language Delays Program for Parents with Preschool Children

Program Protocol

This program is offered to parents of children on the autism spectrum or with language delays in order to promote children's emotional regulation, social competence, language skills, school readiness, and relationships with others. This program can be used independently for parents with children on the autism spectrum or with language delays.

Group leaders using this program may want to supplement vignettes from the IY Toddler or Preschool Program to provide additional information with regards to managing misbehaviors.

Group leaders offering the Incredible Years® evidence-based Basic program for high risk populations and children with conduct problems and/or ADHD may also want to incorporate some vignettes from this program to their treatment protocol in order to provide more examples of parents working with children who have developmental delays.

Number of Sessions

It will take a minimum of 14 sessions to complete this program. However, if combining this program with vignettes from the IY Toddler or Preschool programs, leaders should plan to offer it in 16 sessions.



NOTE: We have numbered each of the sessions on the checklist provided. If you choose to offer additional sessions, disregard this numbering (i.e., our "session 5" may actually be your session 6).

The Incredible Years®

Autism Spectrum and Language Delays Program for Parents with Preschool Children

Agendas, Checklists and Handouts for Each Program

The content covered in each program needs to be paced according to each parent group's particular needs for discussion and content, level of participation, and prior familiarity with the parenting concepts. In general, we suggest that you try to cover 5–7 vignettes per two-hour program.

Part One

Child-Directed Narrated Play Promotes Positive Relationships

Vignettes 1-8 (Sessions 1 & 2)

Part Two

Pre-Academic and Persistence Coaching Promotes Language Development
and School Readiness

Vignettes 1-5 (Session 3 & 4)

Part Three

Social Coaching Promotes Friendship Skills

Vignettes 1-19 (Sessions 5, 6, & 7)

Part Four

Emotion Coaching Promotes Emotional Literacy

Vignettes 1-6 (Session 8)

Part Five

Pretend Play Promotes Empathy and Social Skills

Vignettes 1-6 (Session 9)

Part Six

Promoting Children's Self-Regulation Skills

Vignettes 1-3 (Session 10)

Part Seven

Using Praise and Rewards to Motivate Children

Vignettes 1-4 (Session 11)

Part Eight

Limit Setting and Behavior Management

Vignettes 1-10 (Sessions 12 & 13)

Review & Celebration

(Session 14)



USE VIDEOS IN A COLLABORATIVE WAY
TO ENHANCE TEACHING



Outline—Part One

Child-Directed Narrated Play Promotes Positive Relationships

Session #1

I. Welcome

Leaders introduce themselves.

Review agenda for program.

II. Introductions

Parents introduce themselves and give names and ages of their children.

Talk about their children's developmental level and stage of communication as well as their goals. (See Communication Checklist Handout.)

III. Ground Rules

Ask for parent ideas on group rules and why they think they are important.

(Confidentiality, respect for others, being positive, right to pass, equal time to talk.)

Adopt rules for group.

IV. Program Goals and Topics

Give an overview of the program, its general goals, topics and format.

(Show introductory narration.)

V. Topic of Day: Child-Directed Narrated Play—Building Positive Relationships

- A. Show introductory narration and pause to highlight issues for children on the spectrum.
- B. Vignette: 1
- C. Brainstorm: Benefits of child time with adults.
- D. Vignette: 2
- E. Buzz: share social sensory routines and games.
- F. Vignettes: 3-4
- G. Buzz: Child's likes and dislikes (talk about picture choice boards).
- H. Buzz: Use of visual prompts.
- I. Role Plays/Practice: Choose two parents for large group demonstration. One parent shows how to be child directed, imitate child's actions and gestures, and get in child's attention spotlight.
Next, divide group into sets of 3. Within each small group, give each parent a 2- to 3-minute time to be the child, parent and the observer.
- J. Summarize Key Points (Spotlighting Getting in Your Child's Attention Spotlight).

Key Concepts:

- Value of parents giving focused child-directed attention during play as a way of promoting positive relationships.
- Understanding how to get in a child's attention spotlight and not letting the child exclude you.
- Understanding how to narrate child-directed play to build language development.
- Learning how to transition to new play learning opportunities.
- Appreciate the importance of parental gesturing, imitation, modeling, face to face interactions, and visual prompts.
- Value of using picture choice cards.
- Choose games that address your child's sensory needs but avoid overstimulating.
- Understanding times *not* to follow your child's lead.

VI. Review Home Activities, Handouts and Set Personal Goals

Summarize key points.

Refer to Spotlighting Parenting Tips handouts.

Review suggested home activities.

Ask parents to set personal goals for week using self-monitoring checklist.

VII. Parent Evaluation

Remind parents of the importance of their feedback for the group leader and the entire program.

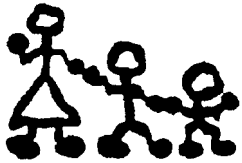
Collect evaluation forms before parents leave.

VIII. Closing

Take this time to formally close the group.

Thank parents for coming; praise their willingness to explore and try new ways of parenting.

Remind them of any details they need to know for the next program.



LEADER CHECKLIST

Part One

Session #1

Topic: Child-Directed Narrated Play Promotes Positive Relationships

Vignettes: 1–4, Parent Reflections

SITE: _____ **DATE:** _____

LEADER NAMES: _____ **TIME:** _____

VIGNETTES COVERED: Child-directed Narrated Play:

Intro 1 2 3 4 (5 6 7 8) Parent Reflections

Circle vignettes shown. Vignettes in parentheses are for next session.

DID I

	YES	NO
1. Write the agenda on the board	_____	_____
2. Welcome and make introductions	_____	_____
3. Brainstorm: group ground rules	_____	_____
4. Buzz parent goals and child characteristics	_____	_____
5. Explain format for meetings and program goals	_____	_____
6. Brainstorm: benefits of parent/child play	_____	_____
7. Buzz: social sensory routines and games	_____	_____
8. Buzz: child's likes and dislikes/use of picture choice boards	_____	_____
9. Buzz: Visual prompts	_____	_____
10. Role play/practice: child-directed play & imitation in large group	_____	_____
11. Break out for "practice" in dyads or triads	_____	_____
12. Explain importance of home practice activities	_____	_____
13. Highlight key principles from parents' discussion	_____	_____
14. Review this week's home activity and parents set personal goals (play record sheet)	_____	_____
15. Evaluations	_____	_____

Xerox:

Home Activities for the Week

Record Sheet: Child-Directed Narrated Play

Spotlighting Handouts: Getting your child's attention during play

Self-Evaluation

"Gems" of Program—Reminder of things to pursue next session





Outline—Part One

Child-Directed Narrated Play Promotes Positive Relationships, Cont'd. **Session #2**

I. Welcome

Greet families.

II. Review Rules and Goals

III. Report on Home Activities

Buzz experiences with child-directed narrated play (positive aspects, difficulties, and/or successes).

IV. Topic of Day: Child-Directed Narrated Play—Building Positive Relationships (Cont'd)

- A. Vignettes: 5-7
- B. Role Play/Practice: Large group demonstration first with blocks, then divide group into sets of 3 to continue practicing being child-directed (modeling, prompting, imitating, using gestures and visual prompts). Start practice with children with no language and then with more understanding and simple words and finally sentences.
- C. Role Play/Practice: Model and Wait, Bubble Play.
- D. Vignette: 8
- E. Review Parent Reflection Vignette.
- F. Summarize Key Points (Spotlighting Child-Directed Narrated Play handout).

Key Concepts:

- Value of parents giving focused child-directed attention during play as a way of promoting positive relationships.
- Understanding how to get in a child's attention spotlight and not letting the child exclude you.
- Understanding how to narrate child-directed play to build and prompt verbal and nonverbal interactions, and communication development.
- Learning how to transition to new play learning opportunities.
- Appreciate the importance of parental gesturing, imitation, modeling, and face to face interactions.
- Value of using picture choice cards.
- Choose games that address your child's sensory needs but avoid overstimulating.
- Understanding times *not* to follow your child's lead.

V. Review Home Activities, Handouts and Set Personal Goals

Summarize key points.

Spotlighting Parenting Tips.

Review suggested home activities and use of Play Record Sheet.

Ask parents to set personal goals for week using self-monitoring checklist.

VI. Parent Evaluation

Remind parents of the importance of their feedback for the group leader and the entire program.

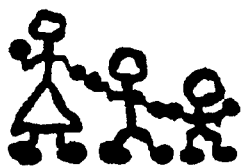
Collect evaluation forms before parents leave.

VII. Closing

Take this time to formally close the group.

Thank parents for coming; praise their willingness to explore and try new ways of parenting.

Remind them of any details they need to know for the next program.



LEADER CHECKLIST

Part One

Session #2

Topic: Child-Directed Narrated Play Promotes Positive Relationships
Vignettes: 5–8, Parent Reflections

SITE: _____ DATE: _____

LEADER NAMES: _____ TIME: _____

VIGNETTES COVERED: Child-directed Play:

(Intro 1 2 3 4) 5 6 7 8 Parent Reflections

Circle vignettes shown. Vignettes in parentheses were for previous session (but could also be shown in this session).

DID I

YES

NO

- | | | |
|--|-------|-------|
| 1. Write the agenda on the board | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Welcome and review group rules and goals | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Review parents' home activities, elicit reactions/experiences | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Role Play/Practice: child-directed play, modeling, imitating, gesturing, and prompting interactions in dyads/triads | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Role Play/Practice: Model and Wait (Bubble Play) | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Role Play/Practice: Coaching Methods with child with no language as well as child with beginning communication skills | _____ | _____ |
| 7. Explain importance of home practice activities | _____ | _____ |
| 8. Highlight key principles from parents' discussion | _____ | _____ |
| 9. Review this week's home activity and parents set personal goals (play record sheet) | _____ | _____ |
| 10. Evaluations | _____ | _____ |

Xerox:

Home Activities for the Week

Record Sheet: Child Directed Play

Spotlighting Handouts: Child-Directed Narrated Play

Self-Evaluation

"Gems" of Program—Reminder of things to pursue next session





Autism Spectrum & Language Delays Program

Self-Monitoring Checklist

Children 2-5 Years

Please fill out this checklist each week indicating your personal goals for what you would like to achieve. The following week check if you have achieved your personal goals and make your new goals for the week.

Name: _____

Session 1: Introduction, Goals & Child-Directed Narrated Play Promotes Positive Relationships

My goal for the coming week:

	Goals I met
___ Read Chapter 1 & Chapter 2 in <i>Helping Preschool Children with Autism</i>	___
___ Review my goals for myself and my child	___
___ Play using child-directed approach	___

Session 2: Child-Directed Narrated Play Promotes Positive Relationships

My goal for the coming week:

	Goals I met
___ Read Chapter 2 in <i>Helping Preschool Children with Autism</i>	___
___ Review my goals for myself and my child	___
___ Play using child-directed approach	___

**Session 3: Pre-Academic and Persistence Coaching Promotes
Language Development and School Readiness**

My goal for the coming week:

	Goals I met
____ Read Chapter 3 in <i>Helping Preschool Children with Autism</i>	____
____ Play this week with my child will include:	____

**Session 4: Pre-Academic and Persistence Coaching Promotes
Language Development and School Readiness**

My goal for the coming week:

	Goals I met
____ Read Chapter 3 in <i>Helping Preschool Children with Autism</i>	____
____ Play this week with my child will include:	____

Session 5: Social Coaching Promotes Friendship Skills

My goal for the coming week:

	Goals I met
____ Read Chapter 4 in <i>Helping Preschool Children with Autism</i>	____
____ Play this week with my child will include:	____

Session 6: Social Coaching Promotes Friendship Skills

My goal for the coming week:

	Goals I met
____ Read Chapters 4 and 10 in <i>Helping Preschool Children with Autism</i>	____
____ Play this week with my child will include:	____

Session 7: Social Coaching Promotes Friendship Skills

My goal for the coming week:

	Goals I met
____ Read Chapter 10 in <i>Helping Preschool Children with Autism</i>	____
____ Play this week with my child will include:	____

Session 8: Emotion Coaching Promotes Emotional Literacy

My goal for the coming week:

	Goals I met
____ Read Chapter 5 in <i>Helping Preschool Children with Autism</i>	____
____ Play this week with my child will include:	____

Session 9: Pretend Play Promotes Empathy and Social Skills

My goal for the coming week:

	Goals I met
___ Practice: _____	___
___ Read Chapter 6 in <i>Helping Preschool Children with Autism</i>	___
___ Play this week will include:	___

Session 10: Promoting Children's Self-Regulation Skills

My goal for the coming week:

	Goals I met
___ Read Chapter 7 in <i>Helping Preschool Children with Autism</i>	___
___ Practice problem solving with my child using Wally book and puppet	___
___ Play times this week will include:	___

Session 11: Using Praise and Rewards to Motivate Children

My goal for the coming week:

	Goals I met
___ Read Chapter 8 in <i>Helping Preschool Children with Autism</i>	___
___ Practice problem solving with my child using Wally book and puppet	___
___ Play times this week will include:	___

Session 12: Effective Limit Setting and Behavior Management

My goal for the coming week:

	Goals I met
___ Read Chapter 9 in <i>Helping Preschool Children with Autism</i>	___
___ Practice problem solving with my child using Wally book and puppet	___
___ Play times this week will include:	___

Session 13: Effective Limit Setting and Behavior Management

My goal for the coming week:

	Goals I met
___ Read Chapter 9 in <i>Helping Preschool Children with Autism</i>	___
___ Practice problem solving with my child using Wally book and puppet	___
___ Play times this week will include:	___

Session 14: Review and Celebration

My goal for the coming week:

	Goals I met
___ Reward myself for my parenting efforts	___
___ Continue to get support from other parents	___

The Incredible Years® Parenting Program for Children on the Autism Spectrum or with Language Delays

Part One: Child-Directed Narrated Play Promotes Positive Relationships

Introductory Overview

Children with language delays and those on the autism spectrum are unique, with different sets of developmental delays, challenges, and special gifts. However, all of these children have trouble connecting, communicating and paying attention to people around them. For many, developing and understanding speech and responding to other people's speech or gestures is difficult, even though they may learn to repeat others' words. Moreover, while they experience the full range of feelings, they find it hard to share their feelings with others either through their language, facial expressions or gestures. They often express themselves in ways that are hard for others to understand.

Unlike most preschool children, children on the autism spectrum may be less interested in playing with other children or may want to interact, but don't know how. They have particular difficulty with turn taking, sharing, imitating, gesturing, and even noticing what others are doing in play. They may prefer to play alone and may be more focused on exploring nonsocial objects than people. They can engage in repetitive play with objects for long periods of time. Children with language delays may want very much to engage socially, but may be frustrated by their inability to communicate in ways that can be understood by others.

Like typical preschool children, these children on the Autism Spectrum and with language delays have difficulty regulating their emotional responses. They exhibit challenging behaviors such as oppositionality, tantrums or hitting others when frustrated either because they aren't understood or don't understand others.

This program is about parents learning to be their children's first playmates so that they can encourage, model, prompt and support their children's language, social and emotional development.

NOTE: Pause the Introductory Narration several times to allow for discussion, clarification, and time to synthesize information.

Brainstorm/Buzz: Characteristics of Children in Group

Pair up parents and ask them to describe characteristics of their children such as whether they have any language, if they try to interact with their parents with non verbal gestures or verbal requests, if they understand names of familiar objects with or without visual cues, or if they can make up sentences or understand meanings of different words. Share communication difficulties. Determine individual goals.



Narration

Children on the autism spectrum are often more interested in interacting with objects and less interested in watching and interacting with people than typical children. Since very young children's key language and social learning comes from watching, imitating and interacting with people, parents of these children need to increase their children's attentional focus by making their play interactions more rewarding. Parents can do this by following their children's lead and interests and by describing their actions and what they are paying attention to. By linking your child's favorite activity to social interactions with you, your child will be more motivated to interact with you, thus you will be creating more opportunities for him to learn from you.

In the next vignette, watch the way this father follows his child's lead and attention and think about what this boy is learning from his father's verbal narration.



Child-Directed Narrated Play Vignette 1

- Ben:** Can you say I'm excited? Say I'm excited (tickles neck).
- Hudson:** (looks at dad)
- Ben:** Well you are really interested in these coasters... aren't you? Hexagons, you have two hexagons, two hexagons now they're stacked up, they're moving together, it's like they are hexagon friends, oh hexagon is rolling, rolling like a ball and fall down crash.
- Hudson:** (rolls them off the table and they crash on floor)
- Ben:** Oh hexagons fell off the table, down onto the floor, one of them came back up again, is he balancing? Looks like he is balancing.
- Hudson:** (says some sounds which are not understandable)
- Ben:** Hexagon is balancing.
- Hudson:** (drops it again on floor)
- Ben:** Oh it fell down...



Questions to Facilitate Discussion

1. How does this father follow his son's attention and interests and get into his attention spotlight?
2. What is value of the father's verbal description of his son's actions with the objects for enhancing his son's language learning?
3. How is the father encouraging their joint social interaction?
4. What is effective about the way the father responds to his son's sounds?
5. How does your child play with toys? How does your child communicate during play?



Brainstorm/Buzz

Discuss the benefits of adults spending time playing with their children and getting in their attention spotlight – especially for children on the autism spectrum or with language delays. Share with your buddy the way your child plays with toys. Some children may not play with toys at all, rather chew them or rub them against their face.



Considerations

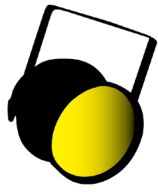
Help parents notice how the father persists in tracking and describing exactly what his son is doing and feeling using rich language words such as “hexagon,” “balancing,” and “excited.” Despite the lack of eye contact response from his son, the father continues to use engaging, joyful language. Describing the objects the child is playing with as well as the actions of his movements increases the boy's attention to his father and provides more opportunities for language and social learning.

For children such as Hudson, who make very few sounds and sometimes words which are not understandable, parents can begin by encouraging expression of different sounds. One of the most effective strategies a parent can do is to respond to these vowel and consonant sounds as if they are words, by answering with something that sounds like what the child said. This is what this father did so effectively. Another approach is to imitate the child's sounds and see if the child responds in a back-and-forth sound game of verbal exchange.

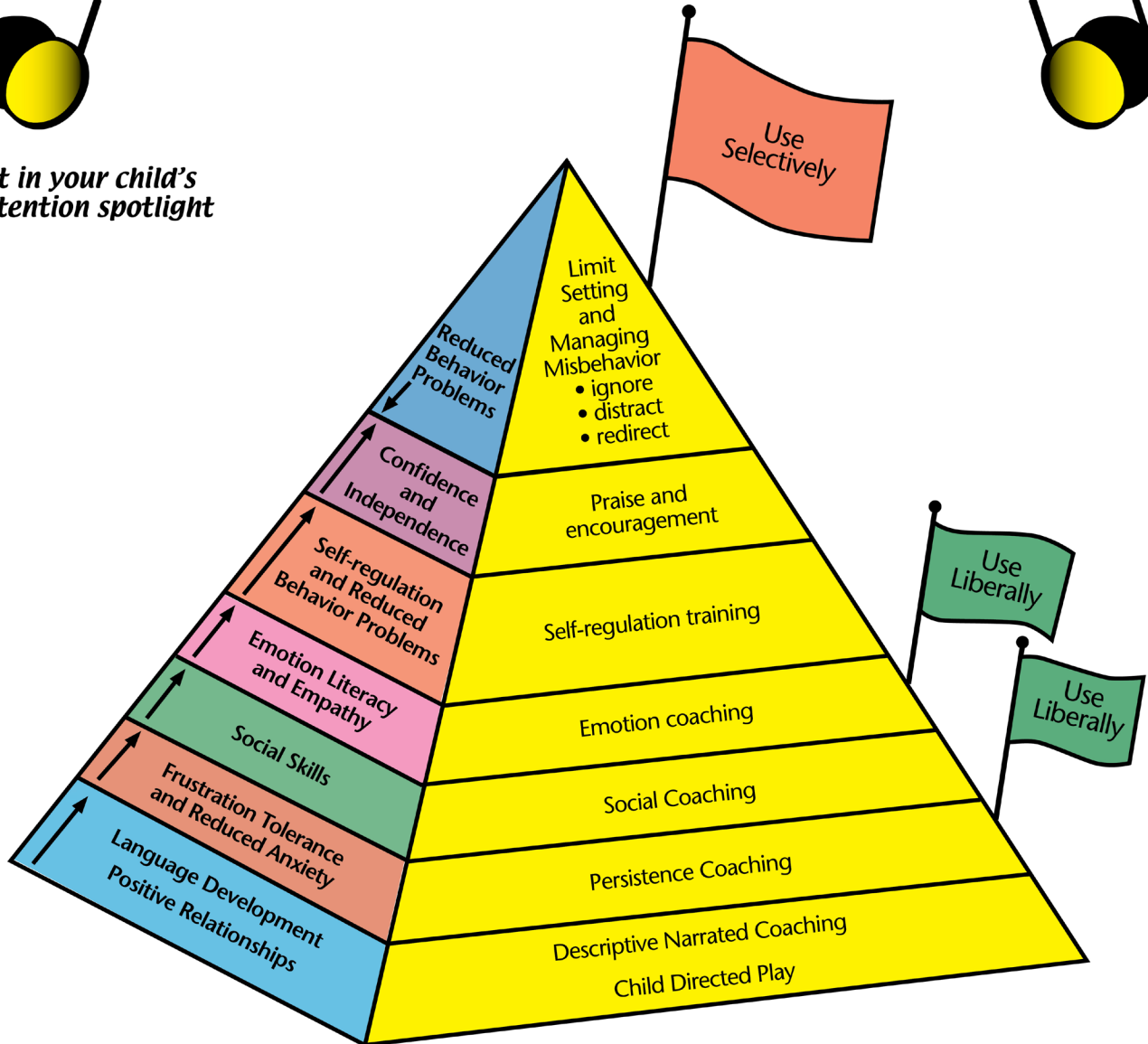
NOTE: It doesn't matter that the words don't make sense, because the child is beginning to learn how to have a reciprocal conversation.



“Play Stage” - Playing with toys can be difficult for children with ASD. Some children may not play with toys but explore them by chewing or smelling them. Other children may play in unconventional ways, such as the child may not move toy cars along the floor, but instead line them up because he enjoys the pattern. Or, maybe this is easier and simpler than using the toy in a more complex way. Also, a child's sensory needs may influence the way he plays. The child probably finds it hard to concentrate on both you and the toy at the same time. Your child needs to learn how to play with you first, then the toy, and finally with both you and the toy.



*Get in your child's
attention spotlight*



Autism Program Pyramid



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Incredible Years Buzz!



Leader's Name:

E-mail:

Date:

Check what we've accomplished!

Child Directed Play

Preacademic Coaching

Persistence Coaching

Social Coaching

Emotion Coaching

Pretend & Puppet Play

Interactive Reading

Self-Praise

Praise & Rewards

Songs & Gestures

Self-Care

Using Visual Cue Cards

Social, Sensory Likes

Limit Setting

Ignore, Redirect & Distract

Staying Calm

Getting Support

Teach Children to Calm Down & Self-Regulate

Practice Exercises

Reminders

Get in your child's attention spotlight



Principles

Personal Goals and Planned Practices

Home Activities for the Week

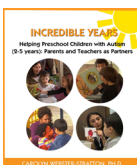
Child-Directed Narrated Play Promotes Positive Relationships



To Do:

- **PLAY** for 10 minutes twice each day with your child. Get in your child's attention spotlight and be child directed; express your joy to your child when playing.
- **RECORD** your experiences on the "Parent Child-Directed Play" record sheet and bring to the next session.
- **USE** visual prompts and choice activity board for children with limited language.

To Read:



Chapter 1, "Getting to Know Your Child" in book *Helping Preschool Children with Autism*

AND

Chapter 2, "Getting in Your Child's Spotlight with Child-Directed Narrated Play" in book *Helping Preschool Children with Autism*



Get in your child's attention spotlight while playing together!






Handout

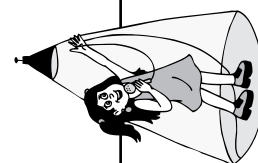
RECORD SHEET

Parent Child-Directed Narrated Play

Date: _____

Instructions: Record two times you played with your child, what you did, and any reaction or response you noticed in your child.

 Parent Play Behaviors I want to do more of:	 Parent-Child Activities Sample Script:	 Child's Response:
<p>Example: <i>Spend more time doing what my child wants, imitating his sounds, and following his lead.</i></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>	<p>Example: <i>We played with farm animals. "I will do the same as you. The cow is going 'moo, moo!'"</i></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>	<p>Example: <i>Robbie imitated my animal sounds and we went back and forth imitating each other.</i></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>



Spotlight your child's successes

SPOTLIGHTING



Getting in Your Child's Attention Spotlight During Play

- Position your play carefully so you can have face-to-face contact with your child without too much distance.
- Reduce distractions by turning off the TV, computer, phones and limit other people present.
- Be child-directed and play with your child's favorite activity.
- Follow your child's focus of attention or theme during play.
- Observe and respond to your child's nonverbal initiations; avoid instructions, corrections, and questions—curb your desire to give too much help.
- Describe and narrate what your child is doing with simple words or short phrases and joy (like a sportscaster).
- Model and imitate your child's actions, words and sounds with enthusiasm and entertainment; offer to help.
- When your child stops interacting with you, seems disinterested, or is engaged in repetitive and obsessive actions, offer another favorite joint activity or change the action slightly with a new idea, song, funny gesture or sound effects and sensory routine.
- Encourage your child to look at you by putting a desired object next to your face and wait for a response. E.g., "What do you want me to do now?"
- Reinforce your child for looking at you with smiles, praise, laughter and by giving him or her the desired object. Be an "enthusiastic audience."

**Remember: Your child is not deliberately trying to exclude you.
She/he just doesn't know how to interact yet.**



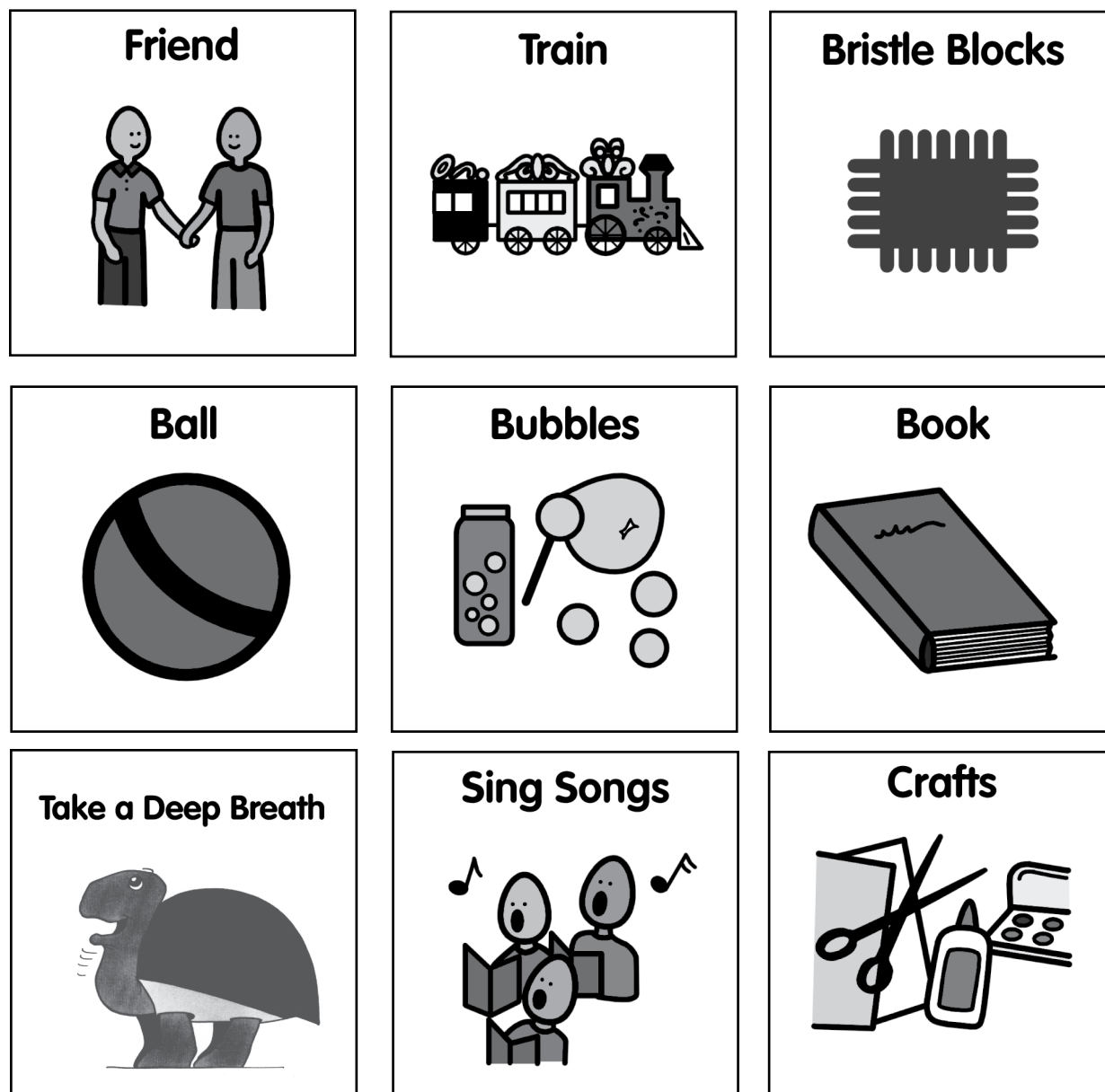
"Shine a light" on your child during play time!

Spotlighting Sample Choice Activity Cue Cards



If parents have access to the program BoardMaker™ or a similar symbol generating program, they can use this to create their own activity boards customized to their child's particular interests.

Example choice activity cards:



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How I am Incredible!



My support people:

My Language Level (e.g., no spoken language, visual language, 1-2 words, echolalic, good language):

My Play Level (e.g., play alone, anxious or withdrawn, want to initiate play with others but don't know how, initiate but inappropriate):

My Sensory Likes (e.g., trucks, swinging, music, water play, bananas):

My Sensory Dislikes (e.g., loud noises, certain smells):

My Parent's Goals for Me: (e.g., make a friend, more words, follow directions):

How I am Incredible!

The “*How I am incredible!*” handout is used to help parents share information about their child’s developmental level including language and play level, and sensory likes and dislikes. In addition, parents share their goals for their children. This form is completed in the first IY parent group meeting and helps the group leader and other parents learn about the children in the group. During the first session parents jot down what they know about their child at that time and share it with other parents. At subsequent sessions, parents add details about their child’s specific developmental needs and make notes of any new discoveries they are making as they engage in child-directed play and coaching, and develop strategies that they find helpful in supporting their goals. This form is also referred to by IY group leaders when tailoring role play practices geared towards each child’s unique developmental level and language level. It is recommended that the template for this form be copied onto a large flip chart page, one for each child, and then placed on the wall so that it can be easily added to each week. It is also fun to put a picture of each child at the top of the roof so everyone can get to know each other’s incredible child.

Sample "How I am Incredible!" form for Hudson

My support people:

Hudson.. 3 years old 9 months

Family.. father primary caregiver; mother works full time; no other siblings

My Language Level (*e.g., no spoken language, visual language, 1-2 words, echolalic, good language*):

Limited eye contact
Points to visual
Sometimes echo's what is said
Nods agreement –responds to verbal partial prompts for food & preferred toys
Does not talk to peers and withdraws from their verbal overtures

My Play Level (*e.g., play alone, anxious or withdrawn, want to initiate play with others but don't know how, initiate but inappropriate*):

Some functional solo play – cars
Play repetitive with no variation
Doesn't seem interested and/or is anxious with peers
Supported with play scripts reluctantly
Reciprocal play with one child can be encouraged with social coaching, prompts & imitation (2 peers is too much stimulation and he withdraws)

My Sensory Likes (*e.g., trucks, swinging, music, water play, bananas*):

Enjoys spinning, being swung in a blanket
Loves small skittles and will work for them
Avoids social interaction
Flaps when excited
Withdraws in certain social situations - pulls clothing over head and is anxious

My Sensory Dislikes (*e.g., loud noises, certain smells*):

Doesn't like loud noises
Upset when routine changes or his asked to stop spinning

My Parent's Goals for Me: (*e.g., make a friend, more words, follow directions*):

Sample "How I am Incredible!" form for Amelia

My support people:

AMELIA'S FAMILY

~ 2 parents, younger toddler sibling,
supportive parents

My Language Level (*e.g., no spoken language, visual language, 1-2 words, echolalic, good language*):

Responds to greetings from parents
Speaks in 3-4 word sentences when prompted at centre. Does not initiate verbal exchanges with other children and does not respond to their overtures
No emotion language

My Play Level (*e.g., play alone, anxious or withdrawn, want to initiate play with others but don't know how, initiate but inappropriate*):

Some parallel play
Needs adult support to model and prompt co-operative play with 1-2 peers or sibling
Limited self directed social interaction with peers
Interested in peers

My Sensory Likes (*e.g., trucks, swinging, music, water play, bananas*):

Likes play dough, reading books, games, puppets, running and jumping
Likes long, thin plant leaf which is with her constantly and she spins it
Joins mat times, sits with others in classroom
Does not like fine motor activities (some delays)

My Sensory Dislikes (*e.g., loud noises, certain smells*):

does not like fine motor activities

My Parent's Goals for Me: (*e.g., make a friend, more words, follow directions*):

SPOTLIGHTING



Coaching Children's Reading Readiness

- Read at a quiet time when you are relaxed and comfortable—with TV and music turned off (this prevents over stimulation).
- Read for a few minutes each day when your child seems calm and alert.
- Place your child in front of you during reading so you have face-to-face contact when possible.
- Adapt reading to your child's stage of communication.
- Use physical hand signals, pointing gestures, sign language, and animal sounds when looking at pictures.
- Respond immediately to your child's verbalization or gestures.
- Prompt and imitate your child's word use.
- Re-read books your child likes many times. Read slowly. Be animated.
- Praise and give positive feedback (that's right!).
- Slide your finger under the words or letters on the page and show left to right movement. Draw attention by guiding child's finger under words you read.
- Encourage your child to turn the pages and choose a book he/she is interested in. Let child fill in blanks.
- Choose interactive books with flaps, buttons to push and textures - simple plots and daily routines.
- Create books for your child with photos and magazine pictures.
- End reading with repetitive "all done" signal.



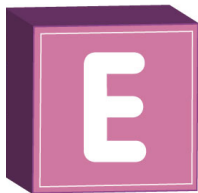
Getting in your child's attention spotlight!



SPOTLIGHTING

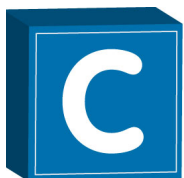


Building Blocks for Reading With Extra CARE for Young Children with Autism and Language Delays



Extra care reading involves providing children with autism and language delays with added opportunities for language development, joint attention and social interaction. To start with take extra care to choose a book with your child that is on a topic s/he is emotionally interested in, perhaps something from your child's "like list".

For example, if your child likes planes, trains, cooking, or a particular animal, pick a book on this topic. This will help you to enter your child's interest spotlight. Choose books with pictures, very few words and sensory activities, if possible, with flaps and hidden objects that allow the child to open and close flaps, to touch different textures and provide different smells.



Comment strategically according to your child's language level.

The amount of commenting you do will depend on the extra-care you take in first understanding your child's receptive and expression language ability.

For a child with no language, start by making the appropriate sound effects that match the book pictures of the animals, trains, or birds and imitate your child's attempts to copy these sounds or gestures s/he makes. Name the object when you make the sounds and, when possible, also include the actual object that matches the picture in the book. For example, have a toy train, animal, or bird puppet while you are reading the related book. Pace slowly and repeat 1-2 words with hand signals, pointing gestures, funny noises, and enthusiastic tone. Read the book so that your child can see your face and emotions.

For a child with a few more words, you can increase your word content using the "one-up rule", that is, if your child uses two to three word sentences, you can add another word. For example, if your child says: "polar bear growls," describe the animal by saying, "a huge, polar bear who growls like..." accompanied by the gesture for huge. Start with naming words of objects, feelings and actions before progressing to pre-academic words of colors, shapes, numbers and letters. Continue using gestures, sound effects, and songs or rhymes to stay in your child's attention spotlight.

Children will lose interest if your verbal language is too advanced or hurried. Remember this is all about encouraging joint attention and showing you are attentive to your child's interests and are keeping the communication interaction going. Try using partial prompts by giving your child part of a sentence or word you have modeled often to see if s/he can fill in the missing word. For example, *"it is a huge, polar...."* and see if your child can complete the word bear.

For a child with more language and sentences and who understands word objects and actions, add descriptions of colors, shapes, positions, numbers, letters and run your finger under the lines of the words as you read them. Start with modeling a full sentence and then after your child copies, try partial prompts by giving 2-3 words, and let your child complete the sentence. Bring in a puppet or special sensory character your child likes, and have the puppet describe the picture using modeling and prompts to enhance the child's responses.



Avoid open-ended questions, pace your commenting, and repeat often.

For children with receptive and expressive language delays, asking questions when reading can be intimidating and cause withdrawal, anxiety and confusion because the child doesn't understand and may think you don't understand him. Instead strategically decide what words you want to encourage, allow time for your child's response (verbally or nonverbally) and then imitate their response. This will show your child you are interested in him. If your child repeats your sound effects, or gesture, or word, imitate that again so your child sees how his response is affecting your response. Be sure to smile and have eye contact when you do this.



Respond and listen with interest. Wait and pause before talking again so your child has time to respond. When your child responds with a smile, or gesture, or sound effect, or words, enthusiastically respond to these responses verbally and nonverbally whether or not your child seems to be making sense. Always act as if you understand what your child is saying! Imitate your child's gestures, sounds and words. The goal here is to not only encourage your child's interest in books and to get into his or her spotlight, but also to engage in joint attention and positive interactions.



Expand on what your child says. For a child with no language you can use hand signals to model the action, or use the actual object as you name it, or use one of your child's likes (song, touch or favorite object) to add more excitement to the joint reading interaction. For children with some words use the "one-up rule" and add an additional word. To combine social interactions with reading, read to two children at the same time and prompt language in both children. Occasionally surprise children by doing something unexpected or a variation on the story such as a different and humorous word, or naming the object or feeling incorrectly, and then correct yourself. *"Ooops my mistake!"* Make games out of a book by covering up a picture with sticky notes and guessing what is under there, or what comes on the next page. Sing a song using the word you are encouraging. End the reading with the routine of an *"all done"* and hand signal.

REMEMBER EXTRA-CARE READING WITH YOUR CHILD MEANS:

- **Keeping the reading fun and simple using the “one up” principle** to decide how much language to use when reading.
- **Showing kindness and avoiding commands and criticism** when reading with your child.
- **Allowing your child to reread stories as often as s/he wishes.** This is a pre-reading skill and leads to mastery and confidence. Once your child has learned the story you can add partial prompts to see if s/he will fill in the blank.
- **Slowing down** and building repetition with an enthusiastic tone.
- **Reading** so your child can see your face and expressions.
- **Singing** at times during reading.
- **Using hand signals, gestures, sound effects, and objects** to enhance reading understanding.
- **Making sure there is a back and forth quality** to the reading and you are not simply reading without requiring some response or connection with your child before continuing to read.

SPOTLIGHTING



Pre-Academic Coaching Promotes Children's Language Skills

- Notice what your child is giving attention to and talk about it.
- Describe the objects, shapes, numbers, letters and colors of things your child plays with; avoid questions.
- Listen to your child and imitate or mirror, your child's sounds and/or words.
- Talk about positions of objects (e.g., inside, under, beside, next to, behind).
- Describe your child's actions, body parts, and clothing.
- Prompt your child to communicate by modeling words for him/her to copy.
- Use new and more complex words to expand your child's vocabulary even if you know (s)he won't understand at first.
- Chant, sing rhymes and teach your child body movements that go with the words.
- Describe your own actions to your child (e.g., "I'm folding three shirts and two pairs of red socks now).
- Describe your child's actions during everyday activities such as dressing, eating, or getting ready for bed.
- Match real objects with words and pictures.



"The blue block is next to the yellow square, and the purple triangle is on top of the long red rectangle."

"You are putting on your blue sweater on top of your white t-shirt. It will keep your body warm."



Getting in your child's attention spotlight!

SPOTLIGHTING



Narrated Child-Directed Play

The key aspects for promoting language expression in children who have little sound or language production is the following:

- Try to get face-to-face contact and gain your child's attention before talking.
- Use simple, short sentences to describe and narrate what your child is doing, seeing and experiencing; label their actions and objects. Limit instructions and questions. Follow your child's lead.
- Wait and pause for your child's turn to respond with a gesture, or look, or word before speaking and narrating again.
- Imitate and repeat your child's sounds, gestures, behaviors, and words (sound effects such as animal or engine noises help promote sound production).
- Try to sustain back-in-forth verbal interchange as long as your child is interested by reinforcing verbal and nonverbal responses.
- If your child is just speaking with one word, start by adding a second word. Keep it simple, slow down, and build repetition.
- Combine your words with gestures and songs and imitate your child's words and actions.
- Narrate your child's activities during play times as well as daily routines such as mealtimes, bedtime, dressing, teeth brushing, diapering and while in the car or bus.

Note: You don't need to focus on describing numbers, letters and colors for children who are just beginning to talk. These can be described once your child can name some basic objects and actions.



Getting in your child's attention spotlight!

SPOTLIGHTING



Using Fun Sensory Physical Routines to Motivate Social Interactions

Face-to-face sensory physical routines can motivate your children to interact and laugh and have fun interacting with you for longer periods of time. This means you will have optimized your child's energy level and increased learning opportunities for more durable social learning. Here are some tips for increasing your fun factor with your child.

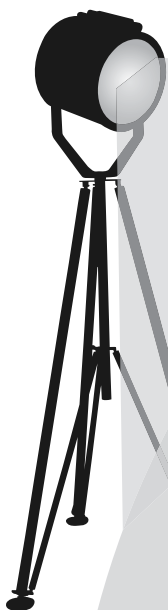
When your child seems withdrawn, uninterested, unresponsive or bored increase his energy and motivation as follows:

- Exaggerate your fun responses and gestures with big smiles, laughter, silly faces, tickles, funny noises and bigger voices with more emotion: draw attention to your face.
- Play games such as peek-a-boo and name the hidden object, or patty cake, finger play, or build a fort in your living room.
- Determine your child's favorite rhythmic song or physical game such as Ring around the Rosy, When You're Happy and You Know It, the Chase Me Game or rough housing. Use song choice cards to help child make choice of song.
- Surprise your child occasionally with a variation of routine such as new sound effects, new verse, or new steps.
- Pause or freeze sensory routine often to prompt your child to signal you for what he or she wants next.
- Once you get the signal (verbal or nonverbal), continue the game and then pause again, waiting for another signal.
- Make sure there is back and forth communication throughout movements and you are not simply entertaining your child without requiring your child to stay connected with you by responding.



Getting in your child's attention spotlight!

SPOTLIGHTING



Using Fun Sensory Physical Routines to Motivate Social Interactions

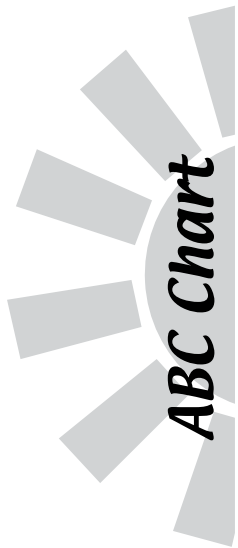
Avoid getting your child overaroused as follows:

- Pay attention to your child's arousal level.
- Make the play softer, gentler, quieter as soon as you notice your child getting overly aroused.
- Sing calmer songs that calm your child down.
- Freeze the play for taking deep breaths or positive imagery.
- Redirect the play before your child shuts down or dysregulates.
- Once your child has calmed down, don't be afraid to increase your enthusiasm and optimize your child's energy level again.



Getting in your child's attention spotlight!

Child's Name: _____
Date: _____



Write two examples of setting up an ABC learning opportunity for your child to practice a target behavior.

Setting/Activity	Antecedent (A) What happened first?	Behavior (B) Child's behavior	Consequence (C) How did you respond?
Example: Play time before dinner	Father: Shows son the balloon and holds next to his face for eye contact. Prompts: You can say, "Please balloon."	Child: "Please balloon." (teaching verbal asking behavior)	Father: That's friendly to say "please can I have the balloon" and gives boy the balloon.

Home Activities for the Week

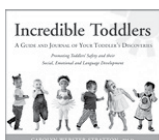
Pretend Play Promotes Empathy and Social Skills



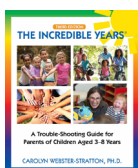
To Do:

- **CONTINUE** to play with your child using coaching methods.
- **MODEL** being empathic and showing social skills in play interactions.
- **SET UP** pretend play practices using puppets, dolls, or action figures with your child to model feelings and social skills and promote empathy (i.e., feelings of characters).
- **RECORD** your experiences on the Record Sheet and bring to next session.

To Read:



Chapter 4, *Positive Attention, Encouragement, and Praise* in *Incredible Toddlers* book



OR

Chapter 12, *Helping Children to Regulate their Emotions* in *Incredible Years* book



Get in your child's attention spotlight using pretend play!



Handout

RECORD SHEET *Using Puppets and Pretend Play*

Date: _____



Record how your scenario went and your child's response:

Use the scenarios listed, or make up your own, to promote social skills/empathy with your child:

1. Puppet: "Hi, I'm Oscar Ostrich. Would you play with me? Do you like airplanes?"

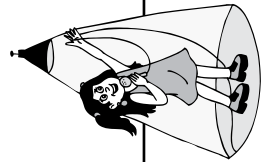
2. Puppet: "Hi! I'm Tiny Turtle. Would you help me put this together? I'm frustrated it is not working."

3.

1.

2.

3.



Spotlight your child's successes

SPOTLIGHTING

Tips for Using Puppets with Children



Preschool children are working to accomplish the important developmental milestones of learning friendship skills including beginning to share, help others, initiate social conversations, listen, and cooperate with others.

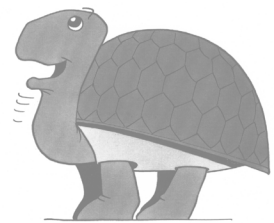
One of the ways to promote your child's language, social and emotional skills is through the use of puppet play. Puppet play is effective because it encourages imaginary pretend play and helps children experience the feelings of other characters (early empathy development) as well as practice important conversation skills.

With puppets, dolls, or action figures you can act out stories, make up fantasies, and explore solutions to pretend problems. You may be nervous at first using puppets, but try it out and before long you will experience the joy of entering into your child's thoughts and imagination, one of the most intimate places you can be with your child at this age.

Here are a few things to have your puppet do when playing with your child:

Puppet Scenarios

- **Puppet models greeting your child.** For example, "Hi I am Tiny Turtle. What is your name?" When your child tells your puppet his name, puppet thanks him for being so friendly. (Modeling friendly social greetings.)
- **Puppet models interest in your child.** For example, "What do you like to do?" When your child tells your puppet his interests, puppet shares his interests (learning how to get to know someone). You can also prompt your child to ask the puppet what s/he likes to do? (Learning how to show interest in someone else.)
- **Puppet asks for help.** For example, "I can't get this block to go together, can you help me?" When your child helps your puppet, your puppet compliments his helping behavior. (Learning to ask for help as well as how to help a friend.)
- **Puppet shares his emotion.** For example, "I am embarrassed because I can't ride my bike. Do you know how to ride a bike?" Ask your child what the puppet is feeling. Encourage your child to say something to make the puppet feel better. (Learning to express emotions and think about another person's emotions.)
- **Puppet shares something with your child.** For example, "I see you looking for green blocks, would you like my green block." (Modeling sharing.) If child takes your puppet's block, say "I'm happy to help you." (Connecting sharing action with emotion.)
- **Puppet waits for his turn.** For example, "I am going to wait until you finish that game, then can I have a turn?" If child gives your puppet a turn, puppet thanks him and tells him it makes him feel happy to have such a friend.



continues on back

SPOTLIGHTING

Tips for Using Puppets with Children, Cont'd

Note: If your child does not have the language skills to respond verbally to the puppet, it is still good for the puppet to model the words involved in the social interaction. You can also structure interactions that involve nonverbal responses from your child. *"Would you share that with me?" "Would you like to shake the puppet's hand?" "Can you help me build this tower?"* This way, the focus is on your child's friendly behavioral response to the puppet. You and the puppet can provide the verbal structure. This will support your child's eventual language development in these social situations.

Parent Praise: Parents can use a silly/different voice for the puppet character and then go out of role as parent to praise the child for his or her social skills. Look for opportunities to comment and praise your child when she waits, takes turns, helps, offers a friendly suggestion or gesture, asks for help, shows interest or empathy, gives you eye contact, responds to your puppet, or listens well to your puppet.



Parent Prompts: In these puppet plays parents can prompt their children's appropriate social responses by whispering in their ear some ideas for what to say to the puppet.

For example, *"You can tell the turtle puppet you like to play with trucks."* Or, *"You can say please can I have that book?"* Don't worry if your child doesn't use your suggestion, just move on to something else as this is not a command. Sometimes your child will copy your suggestion or words and then you can praise him or her for such nice asking or sharing.

Remember: Keep it simple, have fun, and do not have your puppet model negative behaviors.

Home Activities for the Week

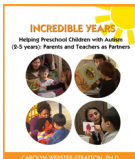
Promoting Children's Self-Regulation



To Do:

- **CONTINUE** to play with your child using coaching methods.
- **MODEL** positive self-regulation and calm down strategies.
- **SET UP** calm down practices for your child using Calm Down Thermometer and/or tiny turtle.
- **USE** visual prompts to cue child to take deep breaths or take a break before the child is too dysregulated.
- **RECORD** your experiences on the "Emotional Self Regulation" Record Sheet and bring to the next session.

To Read:



Chapter 7, "Spotlighting Your Children's Emotion Self-Regulation Skills" in book *Helping Preschool Children with Autism*



Get in your child's attention spotlight to promote their self-regulation!



Handout

RECORD SHEET

Teaching Emotional Self-Regulation

Date: _____



Use the scenarios in handout or make up your own to teach your child calm down skills:

1. Turtle puppet: "I am sometimes afraid, so I think of my happy place, which is watching my fish. What is your happy place?"

2.

3.

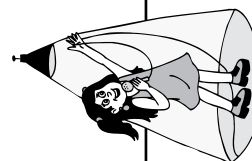


Record your teaching scenario and how your child responded:

1.

2.

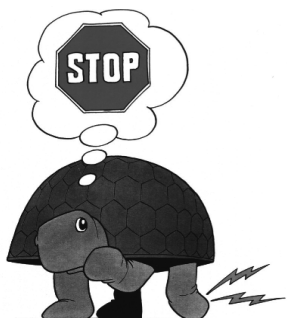
3.



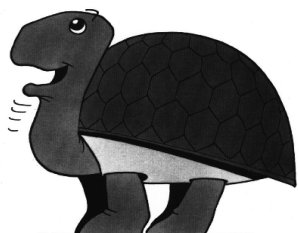
Spotlight your child's successes

Calm Down Thermometer

I can do it. I can calm down.



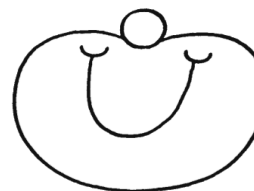
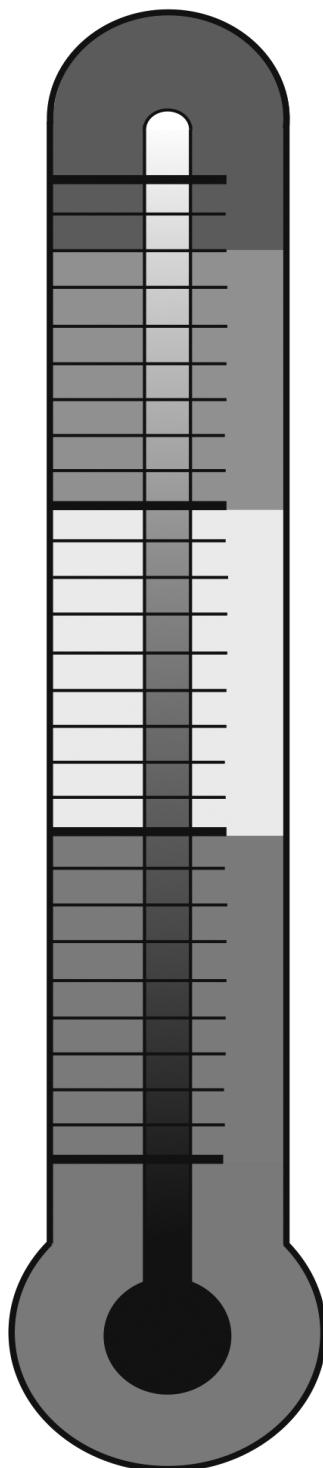
Think "Stop"



**Take 3 deep
breaths**



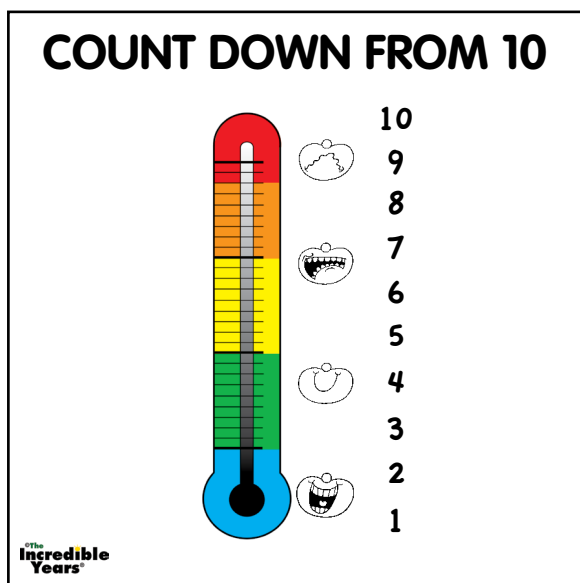
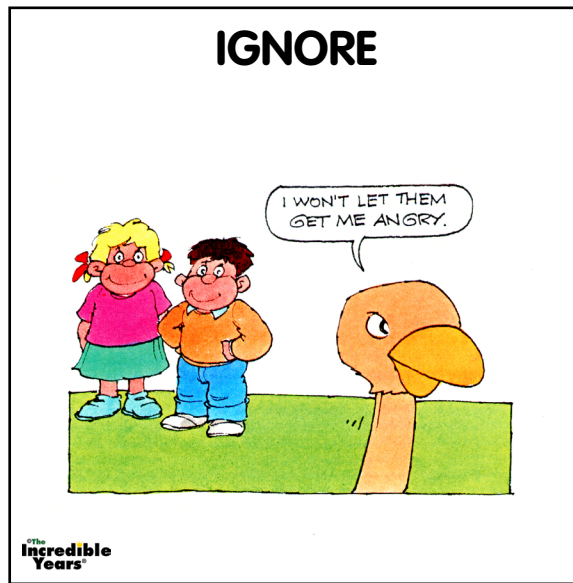
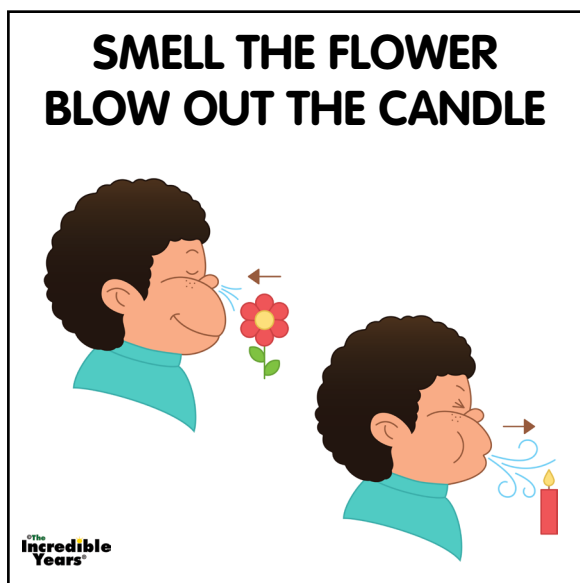
Stay cool



Spotlighting Sample Self-Regulation Cue Cards

If parents have access to the program BoardMaker™ or a similar symbol generating program, they can use this to create their own self-regulation cards.

Example self-regulation cards:



SPOTLIGHTING

Scenarios for Teaching Children Emotional Self-Regulation Skills

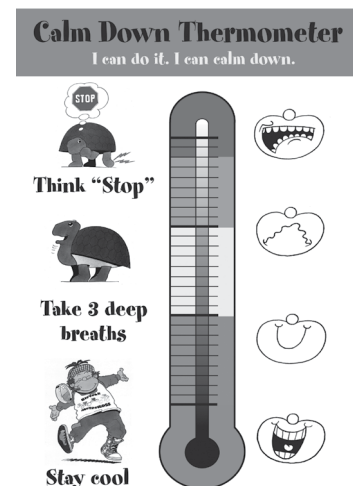
Emotion coaching helps build children's emotional literacy so they can begin to articulate their feelings to others. This is a foundational step to being able to eventually regulate their own emotions. Once children are starting to recognize and express their feelings, parents can begin to teach them some self-calming strategies. Because children are visual thinkers and love imaginary play, it is effective to use stories, puppets, pictures and practice role plays to help them practice calming thoughts, positive visual images, deep breathing, coping self-talk and using words or gestures to express their feelings and needs.

Here are a few things you can do with your child using the Calm Down Thermometer hand-out and Tiny Turtle puppet. Each of these scenarios would be done in one 5-minute setting and at different times when your child seems relaxed and interested in some puppet play. Try to keep these scenarios simple, fun and imaginative and follow your child's lead.

Puppet Scenarios

Tiny Turtle Explains the Calm Down Thermometer

- Tiny Turtle puppet introduces the Calm Down Thermometer and explains how it works. For example, *"Hi I am Tiny Turtle. I want to tell you about this amazing feeling thermometer which can measure your feelings."* Your turtle puppet can tell your child he is feeling sad, mad, worried or frustrated. Or on the other hand, happy, calm, relaxed, or proud. While Tiny is telling his feelings, point to the place on the thermometer that shows Tiny's feeling. (Red or hot for angry versus green for cool or calm.) You can also ask your child to point to the color on the thermometer or move the arrow to the place that represents Tiny's particular feeling. When your child points to the place on the thermometer you can add to the fun by asking him or her to show you that feeling face.



Tiny Turtle explains How the Thermometer Works

- Tiny Turtle tells your child a story about a time he was stepped on or made fun of and felt hurt or mad. He explains how he took three deep breaths to get back into green. For example, *"One time someone made fun of me because I am so slow and I was up here in red feeling mad. I took three deep breaths and practiced smelling a flower and blowing out a candle. Then I came down into blue."*
- Ask your child to practice taking deep breaths with Tiny Turtle and let him or her move the thermometer arrow down from red to green.
- Tiny Turtle asks your child to tell a time he or she felt angry or sad or excited or safe. (Use a variety of comfortable and uncomfortable feeling words.) For example, Tiny asks, *"Have you ever had someone make fun of you? How did that feel?"* When your child shares a situation, help him/her move the arrow to how he/she was feeling and then move the arrow down as deep breathing is practiced.

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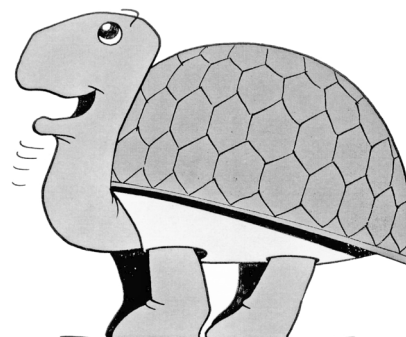
SPOTLIGHTING

Scenarios for Teaching Children Emotional Self-Regulation Skills (continued)

- Using the Calm Down Thermometer, Tiny Turtle asks your child what feelings the faces on the thermometer represent. For example, *"See these feeling faces on this thermometer, what feelings do you think they are?"* When your child names a feeling praise their understanding and ask them to show you that feeling face.

- "I took three deep breaths and practiced smelling a flower and blowing out a candle. Then I came down into blue."*

- Ask your child to practice taking deep breaths with Tiny Turtle and let him or her move the thermometer arrow down from red to green.



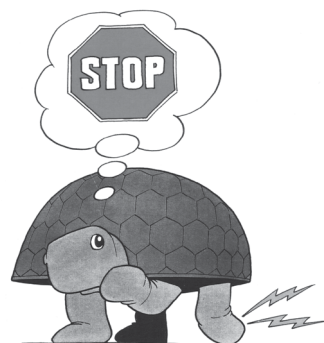
Take a slow breath

- Tiny Turtle asks your child to tell a time he or she felt angry or sad or excited or safe. (Use a variety of comfortable and uncomfortable feeling words.) For example, Tiny asks, *"Have you ever had someone make fun of you? How did that feel?"* When your child shares a situation, help him/her move the arrow to how he/she was feeling and then move the arrow down as deep breathing is practiced.
- Using the Calm Down Thermometer, Tiny Turtle asks your child what feelings the faces on the thermometer represent. For example, *"See these feeling faces on this thermometer, what feelings do you think they are?"* When your child names a feeling praise their understanding and ask then to show you that feeling face.

Tiny Turtle Explains How to Calm Down

- Tiny Turtle explains how he recognizes an uncomfortable feeling and says "stop" and goes into his turtle shell to take deep breaths. For example, *"One time someone stepped on my foot, and I was mad, but I said "stop" and went in my turtle shell and took deep breaths like this. Then I felt better."* Ask your child to practice this with Tiny Turtle and either imagine he has a magic turtle shell or put her head under her shirt.

- Tiny Turtle explains how he uses his happy place visualizations when he is in his shell to help him calm down. For example, *"When I am nervous I think about a time I learned to ride my bike and felt really proud. Or, when I am afraid or sad I think of my teddy bear and that helps me feel safe."* After Tiny has explained his happy or safe places then he can ask your child where his/her happy place is and how your child can use this when in his/her turtle shell. This exercise can help your child develop some positive imagery of things to think about when in his/her shell.



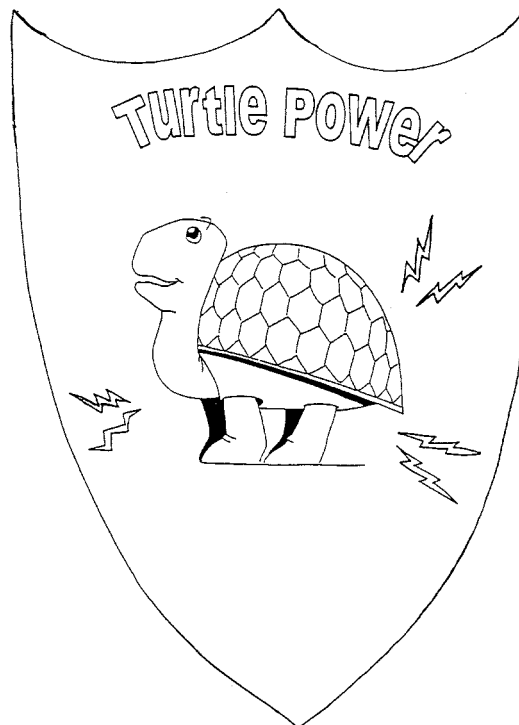
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SPOTLIGHTING

Scenarios for Teaching Children Emotional Self-Regulation Skills (continued)

- Tiny Turtle explains what he says to himself when he is in his shell. For example, *"When I am in my shell I say to myself, I can do it, I can calm down and try again."* Ask your child to repeat these words with Tiny and do it together.
- Tiny Turtle asks your child when she/he could use their Turtle Power. Then Tiny asks your child to show you how he/she uses Turtle Power. For example, *"What makes you angry? So you are up here in red on the thermometer, how can you get yourself down here in green?"* Praise your child for showing you or Tiny how to take deep breaths, think of their happy place, or use positive self-talk.

NOTE: Remember when using Tiny Turtle to follow your child's lead and ideas and praise his or her willingness to practice taking deep breaths, using happy place memories and positive self-talk. Make these play scenarios fun, imaginative and interactive.

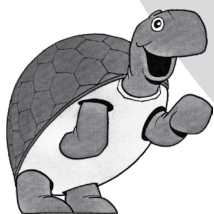


SPOTLIGHTING



Building Children's Self-Regulation Skills

- Coach and praise your child's self-regulation skills such as staying calm, being patient, trying again when frustrated, waiting a turn, and using words or gestures when frustrated.
- Support your child when (s)he is frustrated, but recognize when (s)he is too upset to listen and just needs space and time to calm down.
- Encourage your child's practice of calm down steps with puppets, books, and games.
- Model and prompt your child to use words, feeling pictures, or puppets to express his/her needs and feelings (e.g., "Show me the card with the face of how you are feeling.").
- Help your child learn ways to self-regulate such as using a special stuffed animal or blanket, taking deep breaths, telling himself/herself (s)he can calm down, waiting, solving a problem.
- Use picture prompts to cue child to wait, take deep breaths or take a break.
- Model self-regulation skills yourself, such as taking deep breaths, positive self-talk, or taking a break.



"You can think of your happy place."

"Can you pretend to use Tiny's secret shell to take deep breaths & calm down?"

"You did a good job using your words to talk about your problem. That's what friends do."

"That is so strong to use your waiting muscles."

"Let's check the Calm Down Thermometer and get into the blue zone."



Getting in your child's attention spotlight!

How Do You Self-Regulate?

Created by: Angie Voss, OTR
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Understanding how you as an adult self-regulate will help you to better understand and support your child's sensory needs for self-regulation. These are just some common strategies we use as humans...the possibilities are endless! There is no right or wrong answer and this is not a test or assessment, it is a self-awareness tool. The more items you check in a certain section will help you determine which sensory systems you use most often to self-regulate.

This list may be reprinted for educational purposes with reference and credit to the author and website listed above. Thank you!

Do you use movement to self-regulate? (Vestibular input)

Check all that apply

- ☐ Get up and down often while working or shift position and squirm around a lot
- ☐ Tilt back on 2 legs of the chair
- ☐ Prefer a swivel and leaning back type chair or ball chair
- ☐ Enjoy running, jogging, biking, and other movement based sports
- ☐ Roll neck and head around all of the time
- ☐ Prefer to stand to work or read something
- ☐ Prefer rocking chairs and gliders
- ☐ Love to swing any chance you get
- ☐ Always moving, prefer to move vs. sit
- ☐ Very fidgety while seated
- ☐ Pace back and forth

Do you use proprioception and /or deep pressure touch to self-regulate?

Check all that apply

- ☐ Enjoy housework and vacuuming
- ☐ Enjoy gardening
- ☐ Enjoy yoga
- ☐ Tap toe, heel, foot
- ☐ Like lifting weights and other hard work activities
- ☐ Cross your legs when seated
- ☐ Tap your pen or pencil

- ☐ ☐ Often twisting, stretching your body
- ☐ ☐ Love cozy heavy blankets
- ☐ ☐ Love massages
- ☐ ☐ Enjoy hanging on bars or tree limbs any chance you get
- ☐ ☐ Enjoy wrestling and rough housing
- ☐ ☐ Love tight and cozy spaces
- ☐ ☐ Love to cuddle
- ☐ ☐ Love big squeezes and hugs
- ☐ ☐ Cracks knuckles and joints
- ☐ ☐ Clenching jaw
- ☐ ☐ Need heavy blankets or being tightly tucked in to sleep well
- ☐ ☐ Loves to be wrapped in blankets
- ☐ ☐ Take deep breaths often

Do you use tactile input to self-regulate?

Check all that apply

- ☐ ☐ Love having your back rubbed with light touch
- ☐ ☐ Enjoy it when someone plays with your hair
- ☐ ☐ Twist and twirl your own hair
- ☐ ☐ Scratch, rub, and pick at your own skin
- ☐ ☐ Pick your nose (yuck, I know!)
- ☐ ☐ Love to pet animals
- ☐ ☐ Always exploring textures of clothing, fabric on furniture, or pillows
- ☐ ☐ Click pens, play with paper clips
- ☐ ☐ Always like something in your hand to fidget with such as knitting or other craft

Do you use auditory input to self-regulate?

Check all that apply

- ☐ ☐ Enjoy listening to music
- ☐ ☐ Whistle or hum while you work
- ☐ ☐ Prefers a quiet and calm space to attend to a task
- ☐ ☐ Needs background noise to work
- ☐ ☐ Tap objects or fingers, hands, toes to a certain beat
- ☐ ☐ Like white noise

Do you use visual input to self-regulate?

Check all that apply

- ☐ Enjoy watching water features and fountains
- ☐ Find fish tanks soothing
- ☐ Love lava lamps and other visual stimulating toys and objects
- ☐ Prefer a very tidy space in order to work
- ☐ Very organized, dislike clutter
- ☐ Find certain colors very soothing and calming
- ☐ Prefer things to match just right in color
- ☐ Like to line things up (or even tidy up the shelves at the grocery store!)
- ☐ Something out of place or out of sort bothers you

Do you use oral sensory and gustatory input to self-regulate?

Check all that apply

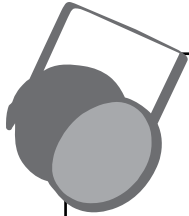
- ☐ Bite fingernails
- ☐ Love to chew gum
- ☐ Make clicking sounds or other mouth sounds
- ☐ Chew on own hair or pen or something else while working
- ☐ Love crunchy or chewy snacks
- ☐ Crave salty or spicy foods
- ☐ Enjoy drinking through a straw or other resistive type straw such as a Camelbak water bottle
- ☐ Bite inside of cheeks or chew on tongue
- ☐ Always moving your jaw around
- ☐ Smoke cigarettes
- ☐ Clear throat often
- ☐ Lick lips often
- ☐ Emotional eating

Do you use olfactory input (smell) to self-regulate?

Check all that apply

- ☐ Enjoy essential oils
- ☐ Love scented candles
- ☐ Love perfume
- ☐ Smell clothing and other fabric type objects
- ☐ Enjoy air fresheners
- ☐ Love scented markers and erasers
- ☐ Love smelling flowers and things in nature
- ☐ Love smelling different foods

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1nJSPSv2GtfRUPyBDoWtx64emBuL8zQSV5JqSIoUqbmY/viewform?fbzx=-2592178624285174462>



BRAINSTORM/BUZZ

Sensory Likes

Write down your child's sensory likes in each of the sensory categories listed below.



Auditory

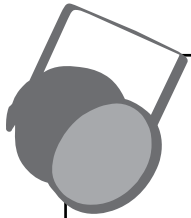
Visual

Tactile

Smell

Taste/oral (chewing/sucking)

**Proprioception (body space/balance/
need for movement/stillness)**



BRAINSTORM/BUZZ

Sensory Dislikes

Write down your child's sensory dislikes in each of the sensory categories listed below.



Auditory

Visual

Tactile

Smell

Taste/oral (chewing/sucking)

**Proprioception (body space/balance/
need for movement/stillness)**

Child's Name: _____
Date: _____



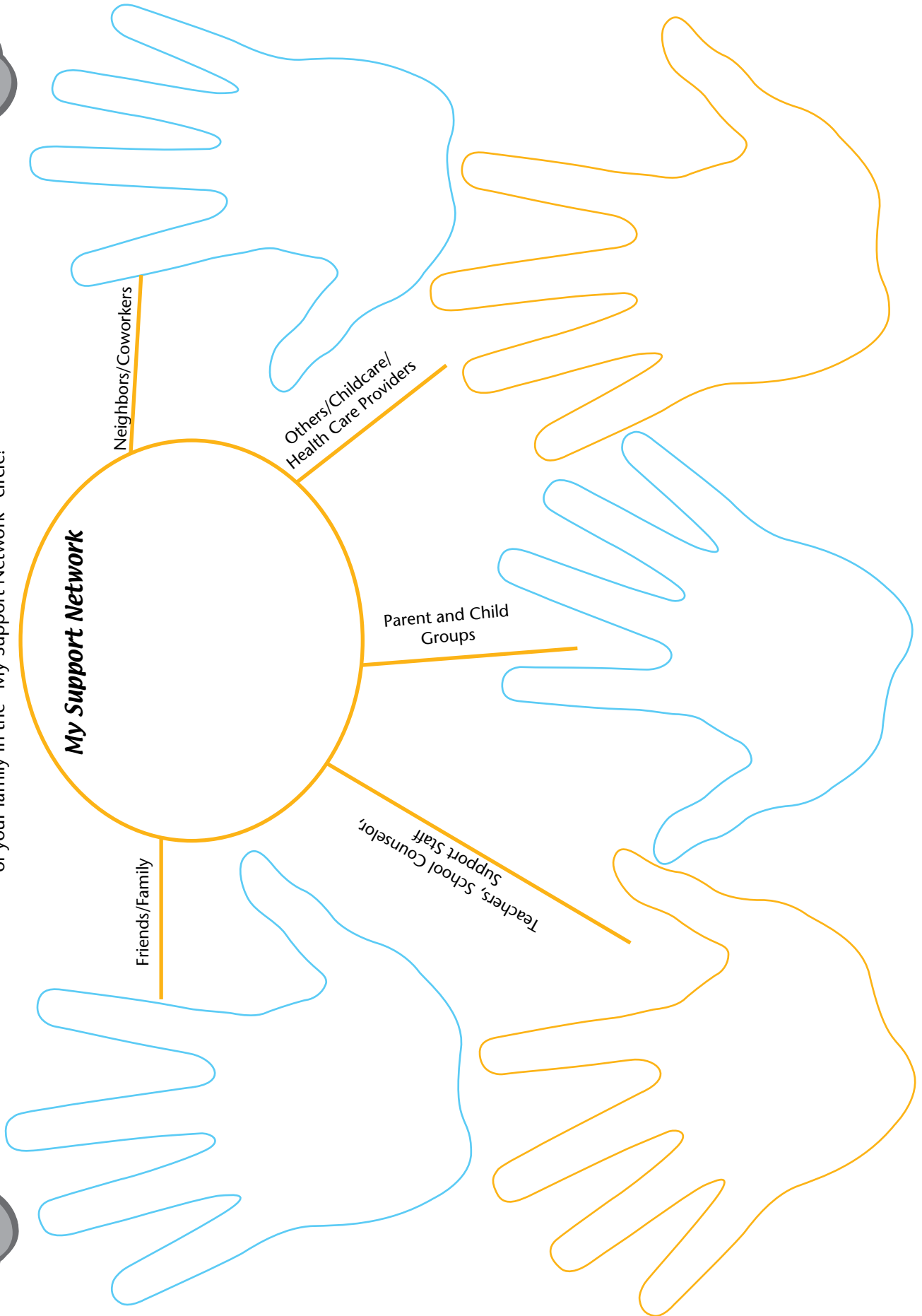
Identifying Antecedents to Socially Desireable Behaviors

	Offering Likes	Removing Dislikes
Foods		
Drinks		
Objects		
Activities		
Places: Events		
Sensory/ Movement		
Sounds/Songs		

Spotlighting Parent Support Network

Who can lend a helping hand?

Think about people in your support network. Each hand represents a different group of people. Write in each hand specific people from that network who can help provide support to you and your child! You can draw or paste of picture of your family in the "My Support Network" circle!

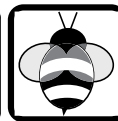




BRAINSTORM/BUZZ

Reward Yourself!

Think about rewarding yourself. Have you ever used an incentive system to reward yourself for accomplishing difficult tasks or goals, like completing a difficult project, or working hard as a parent? Think about ways you could reward yourself for your hard work as a parent, and list below.



Good Incentives for Me:

Examples:

A walk in the park

Tea or coffee with a friend

Warm bubble bath

Do yoga

Goal:

I will commit to doing something positive for myself this week. This will include:

BRAINSTORM/BUZZ

Positive Self-Praise

Brainstorm possible self-praise you can use to encourage yourself as a parent.
Write these statements on your notepad.



I can do it
I am working hard as a parent
I can stay calm



Goal:

I will commit to thinking about what I am doing well as a parent each day and using two of the above examples.

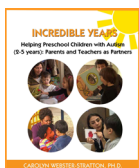
Home Activities for the Week

Limit Setting & Redirecting

To Do:

- **CONTINUE** to play with your child using coaching methods, praise, and pretend play scenarios.
- **PRACTICE** using warnings, reminders, and redirections when possible, and keep instructions simple and clear.
- **USE** visual command cards for children who are nonverbal.
- **IGNORE** one negative behavior you would like to decrease.
- **PRAISE** the “positive opposite” behavior to replace the negative behavior you wish to decrease.
- **RECORD** your experiences on the Record Sheet and bring to next session.

To Read:



Chapter 9, “Spotlighting Your Limit Setting and Managing Misbehavior” in book *Helping Preschool Children with Autism*



Get in your child’s attention spotlight!

SPOTLIGHTING



Teaching Children to Understand and Follow Instructions

The key strategies for promoting children's understanding of words when giving them instructions:

- Before speaking, get your child's attention with eye contact.
- When possible give a transition warning about an upcoming behavior change.
- Give simple instruction (e.g., all done with the timer, give me the phone please) and wait briefly for expected response.
- If no response, quickly follow through and help scaffold the child's response with a gesture (point to phone) or prompt child's compliance by whispering a response (say, okay, while taking the phone away).
- When your child complies to instruction, give a powerful reward and redirect to another activity ("Thank you, let's go find your favorite book to read").
- Continue child-directed narrated commenting.



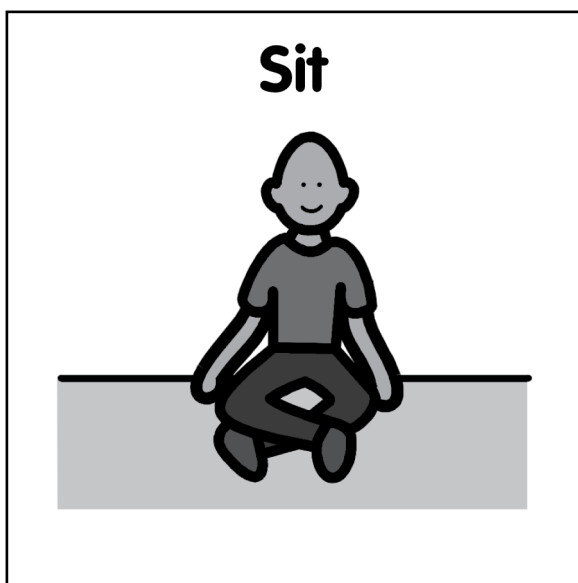
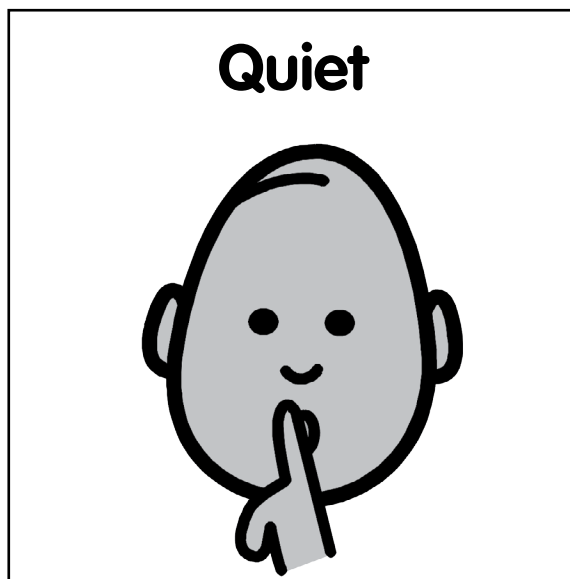
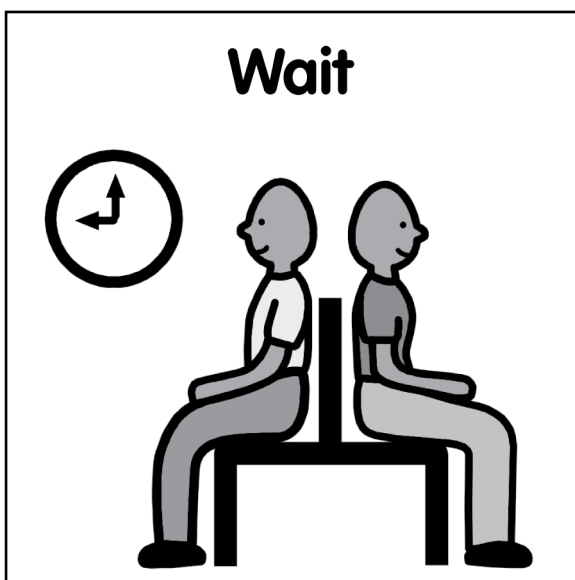
Getting in your child's attention spotlight!

Spotlighting Sample Command Cue Cards

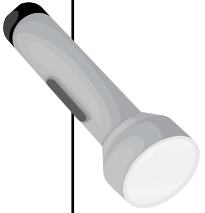


If parents have access to the program BoardMaker™ or a similar symbol generating program, they can use this to create their own command cards.

Example command cards:



The Picture Communication Symbols ©1981–2010 by Mayer-Johnson LLC. All Rights Reserved Worldwide. Used with permission. Boardmaker™ is a trademark of Mayer-Johnson LLC






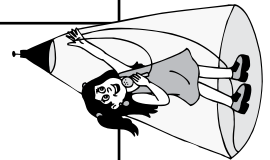
Handout RECORD SHEET

Ignore, Redirect, Praise & Coach

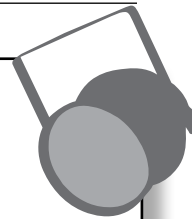
Date: _____

Instructions: Record behaviors you have ignored or redirected & how you coached, praised, & rewarded your child, as well as your child's response.

Behaviors ignored and/or redirected: 	Behaviors coached, praised and rewarded: 	Child's response: 
<p><i>Example: yelling</i></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>	<p><i>Example: Talking nicely</i></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>



Spotlight your child's successes

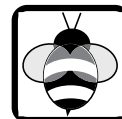


BRAINSTORM/BUZZ

Differential Attention



Using Differential Attention: Sometimes, children will show positive and negative behaviors during the same activity. For example, a child might follow directions (positive behavior) while whining or fussing (negative behavior). *Differential attention* is the technique where a parent praises the positive behavior while ignoring the negative behavior. For example, a parent might praise the child for following directions, and pay no attention to the whining or fussing behavior. This way, the child learns that she will receive positive attention for some behaviors, but will not receive attention for other behavior (e.g., whining).



When Would Differential Attention be Effective?

Think about some situations where this kind of differential attention could be effective.

For example: When my child is following directions but not looking at me, I will praise his/her cooperation and ignore the lack of verbal response.

Goal: I will commit to praising _____
behavior while ignoring _____
behavior.

BRAINSTORM/BUZZ

Benefits & Barriers to Limit Setting

1. What are the possible benefits for your children having clear limits in your home?
2. What gets in the way of setting limits?

Write down the benefits of having clear limits and your difficulties in doing it. See if you can find any solutions to your barriers to setting clear limits.



Benefits of Setting Limits	Difficulties in Doing This

Goal:

I will commit to reducing the number of commands or requests to those that are most important. Instead, I will focus on giving choices when possible, using distractions and when-then commands.

Handout




RECORD SHEET

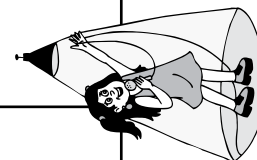
Limit Setting



Date: _____

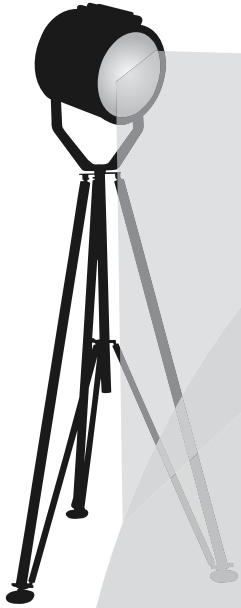
Instructions: Record commands or limits set and any reaction/response you noticed in your child, as well as your response.

 Example of Command given or limits set:	# of commands	 Child's Response:	 Parent's response:
Example: "Put the toys away."	III	Child puts toys away.	Example: "Wow - you are a big helper, thank you for putting the toys away."
1.		1.	1.
2.		2.	2.



Spotlight your child's successes

SPOTLIGHTING



Limit Setting

- Keep limit setting simple and avoid unnecessary commands or complex instructions.
- Set one limit at a time.
- Be realistic in your expectations and be developmentally appropriate.
- Use “do” commands or positive and polite instructions.
- Limit use of “stop” or “no” commands.
- Use visual command cards for children who are nonverbal (e.g., wait, stop sign, sit, toilet, brush teeth, etc.).
- Give children ample time to respond.
- Give warnings and transition time when possible.
- Give children choices whenever possible.
- Strive for simple, predictable routines and use visual prompts as needed.
- Praise and reward compliance to instructions.
- Use distractions and redirection when possible.
- Strike a balance between parent and child control.
- Ignore child’s oppositional behavior.




Getting in your child’s attention spotlight!

BRAINSTORM/BUZZ Rewriting Commands

Rewrite the following ineffective commands into positive, simple, respectful words using gestures and visual prompts for nonverbal children



Ineffective Commands	Rewrite & Indicate gestures/command card
e.g., Shut up.	e.g., quiet mouth 
Quit shouting.	
Stop running.	
Watch it.	
Why don't we go to bed?	
Let's clean up the living room.	
Cut it out.	
What is your coat doing there?	
Why are your shoes in the living room?	
Don't shove salad in your mouth like a pig.	
Why is your bike still in the driveway?	

BRAINSTORM/BUZZ

Rewriting Commands, Continued

Rewrite the following ineffective commands into positive, simple, respectful words using gestures and visual prompts for nonverbal children.



Ineffective Commands	Rewrite & Indicate gestures/command card
You look like a mess.	
Stop bugging your sister.	
You are never ready.	
Your clothes are filthy.	
This room is a mess.	
Don't whine.	
You are impossible.	
Stop dawdling.	
Hurry up.	
Be quiet.	
Why are you riding on the road when you have been told not to?	
I'll hit you if you do that again.	

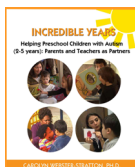
Home Activities for the Week

Managing Misbehavior & Staying Calm

To Do:

- **CONTINUE** to play with your child using modeling, coaching methods, praise, pretend play scenarios and sensory preferences.
- **PRACTICE** using warnings, visual prompts, gestures, and physical redirects when possible, and keeping instructions simple and clear.
- **IGNORE** targeted negative behavior and praise positive opposite behavior.
- **PRACTICE** a calm down strategy and reward yourself for successful parenting.
- **RECORD** your experiences on the Record Sheet and bring to the next session.

To Read:

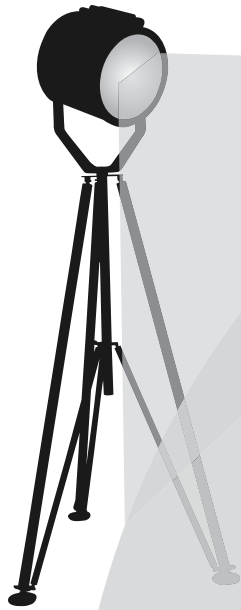


Chapter 9, "Spotlighting Your Limit Setting and Managing Misbehavior" in book *Helping Preschool Children with Autism*



Get in your child's attention spotlight!

SPOTLIGHTING



Positive Discipline Helps My Child Feel Loved and Secure (Summary)

- Schedule times daily to engage in interactive child-directed play using prompts and modeling to get your child's attention and spotlight the social behaviors and language you want to encourage; remember you can maximize your child's learning by using these strategies during meals, bedtime routines and your other caregiving routines.
- Use descriptive commenting narrations, pre-academic, persistence, social and emotion coaching strategies during child-directed play times.
- Use physical sensory routines, praise and salient rewards to motivate your child's interest in using targeted social skills.
- Teach your child self-regulation skills using puppets, books, and imaginary play.
- Teach your child how to follow instructions and use reminders, redirections, distractions and choices to pre-empt misbehavior.
- Withdraw your attention and ignore misbehaviors that are not hurtful to others or to themselves; return your attention just as soon as a positive behavior is used.
- Pace yourself one step at a time.

Remember every time a negative behavior is not reinforced but instead the positive opposite behavior is rewarded with your attention and coaching, a productive learning opportunity has occurred. In fact, every interaction with your child is a potential learning opportunity.



Getting in your child's attention spotlight with positive discipline to help them feel loved, safe and secure!

SPOTLIGHTING



Ignoring

- Avoid eye contact and discussion while ignoring.
- Physically move away from your child but stay in the room.
- Be prepared for testing.
- Be consistent.
- Return your attention as soon as misbehavior stops.
- Combine distractions and redirections with ignoring.
- Choose specific child behaviors to ignore and make sure they are ones you can ignore.
- Limit the number of behaviors to systematically ignore.
- Give more attention to the positive opposite behaviors you want to encourage.



Getting in your child's attention spotlight with positive discipline to help them feel loved, safe and secure!



BRAINSTORM/BUZZ

Stay Calm While Ignoring

When you first start ignoring misbehavior, the behavior will get worse before it gets better. It is important to be prepared to wait out this screaming period. If you give in to the tantrum, this behavior will be reinforced and your child will learn that by crying and screaming loudly, he or she can get his/her own way.

It is important to stay calm while ignoring. Try to think ahead and brainstorm ways to remain calm when ignoring misbehavior.



Ways to stay calm while ignoring:

- Take deep breaths
- Practice relaxation techniques
- Think positive thoughts
- Walk away
- Turn on some music



Remember, it is normal for young children to cry, bite and hit to get what they want. This is not personal but a reflection of their lack of verbal skills and inability to use social skills to get what they want.

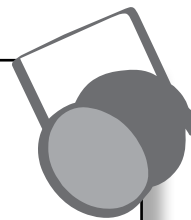
Goal: I will commit to tell myself the following _____

when my child misbehaves.

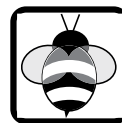


BRAINSTORM/BUZZ

Differential Attention



Using Differential Attention: Sometimes, children will show positive and negative behaviors during the same activity. For example, a child might follow directions (positive behavior) while whining or fussing (negative behavior). *Differential attention* is the technique where a parent praises the positive behavior while ignoring the negative behavior. For example, a parent might praise the child for following directions, and pay no attention to the whining or fussing behavior. This way, the child learns that she will receive positive attention for some behaviors, but will not receive attention for other behavior (e.g., whining).



When Would Differential Attention be Effective?

Think about some situations where this kind of differential attention could be effective.

For example: When my child is following directions but not looking at me, I will praise his/her cooperation and ignore the lack of verbal response.

Goal: I will commit to praising _____
behavior while ignoring _____
behavior.

BRAINSTORM/BUZZ

Behaviors to Ignore

Behaviors such as throwing tantrums, whining, pouting, ignoring you, and screaming are good candidates for ignoring. These behaviors are annoying, but they never really seem to hurt anyone, and the behaviors will disappear if they are systematically ignored. The ignoring technique should not be used, however, with behaviors that could lead to physical injury or property damage, or intolerable disruption of an ongoing activity.

Parents often have trouble controlling their anger when dealing with misbehavior or a child who ignores their requests. This emotional reaction can make it difficult to ignore misbehavior or to praise compliance when it finally does occur. However, ignoring is one of the most effective strategies you can use, as long as it is used in combination with your attention and praise for the child's positive opposite behaviors.



Child Behaviors I will Ignore

Example: whining

Goal: I will commit to ignoring _____
 behavior whenever it occurs. I will praise _____
 behavior, the positive opposite of the behavior I am ignoring.



SPOTLIGHTING *Learning Self-Control*



Many family members find that in stressful situations they cannot maintain their self-control. Others report they suffer from chronic anger, anxiety, or depression, and they are easily set off by the slightest event. However, when parents allow themselves to become so overwhelmed that they overreact, the consequences can be unfortunate. Parents may say or do something they will regret. After they calm down, they may feel guilty and avoid dealing with the child for fear of repeating another episode. It is frightening and anxiety-provoking for a child to see a parent lose control. Also, the child learns to imitate these aggressive behaviors in other situations. These cycles of parental overreaction and avoidance make it difficult to deal with the child in a consistent manner. The best approach is to achieve a middle ground—for parents to not be so overwhelmed that they can't respond or so upset that they overreact.

Upsetting Thoughts

"My child is tuning me out.
This is getting ridiculous. He'll
never listen."

"I can't handle it when she
tantrums."

Calming Thoughts

"My child is more engaged with
the object than with my words.
My job is to stay calm and get in
his attention spotlight. I can
provide a learning opportunity."

"I need to help organize his toys and
only bring out 1 or 2 toys at a time. I
can help him learn to pick up."

"I can handle this. I am in control.
She has just learned some
powerful ways to get control. I will
teach her more
appropriate
ways to behave."

Thought Control

Researchers have demonstrated that there is a relationship between how we think and how we behave. For example, if you view the child in hostile terms ("She is misbehaving because she hates me." or "He likes to get me upset."), you are more likely to become very angry. On the other hand, if your thoughts emphasize your ability to cope ("I'm going to have to help her learn to control herself."), this will help to bring about rational and effective responses. One of the first steps for improving the way you think about your child is to replace upsetting thoughts and negative self-statements with calming thoughts.

Getting in Your Child's Attention Spotlight to Promote Social, Emotional, & Language Development

Limit Setting
Ignore,
Redirect,
& Distract

Prompting &
Imitating Social
Interactions

Verbal
Communication &
Sign Language

Praise &
Celebrations

Social
& Emotion
& Coaching

Engage in
Sensory &
Physical
Activities

Joint Activity
& Focused
Attention

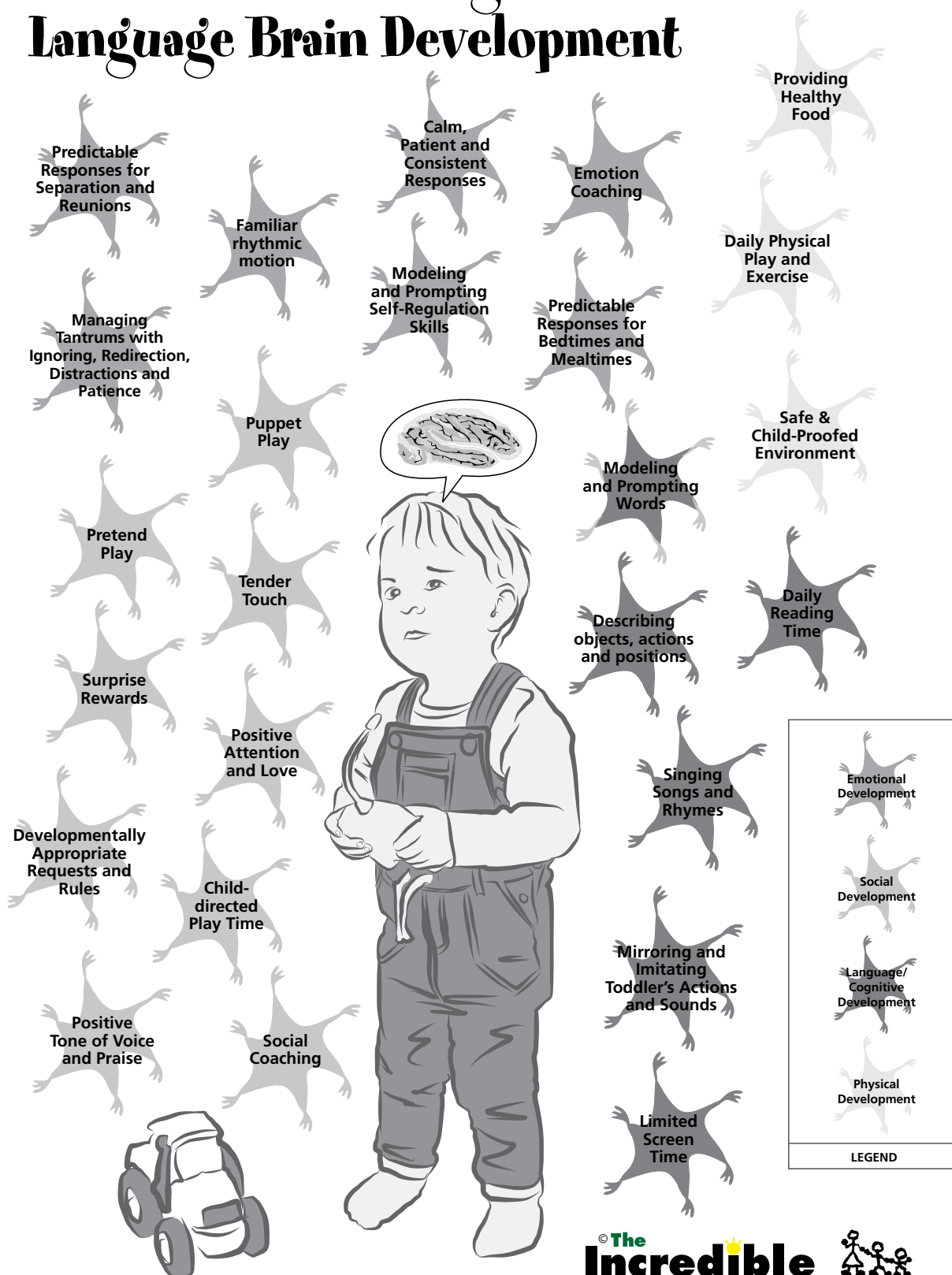
Pre-Academic
&
Persistence
Coaching

Pretend &
Puppet Play

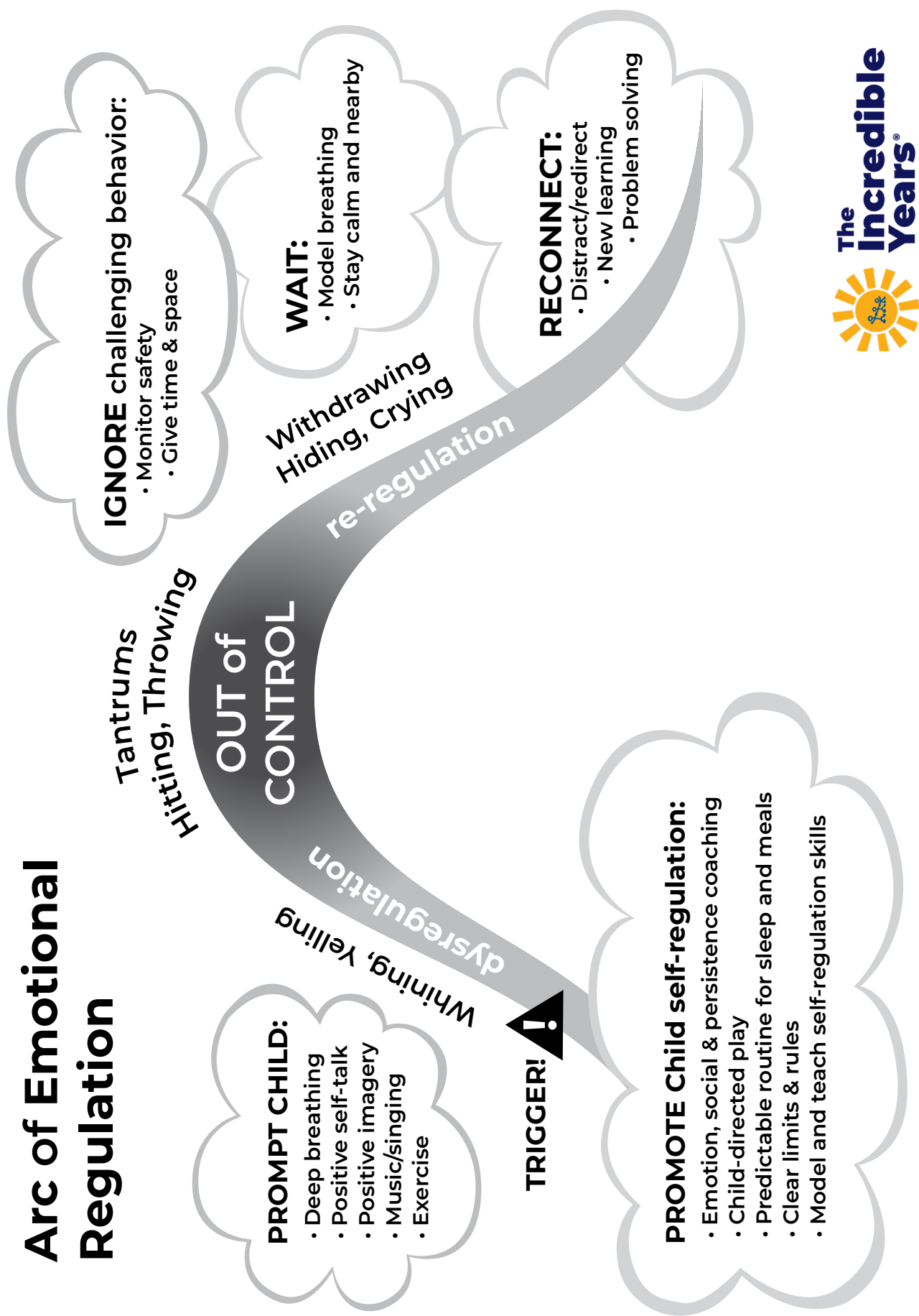
Nonverbal
Gestures



Promoting Your Toddler's Optimal Emotion, Social, Cognitive and Language Brain Development



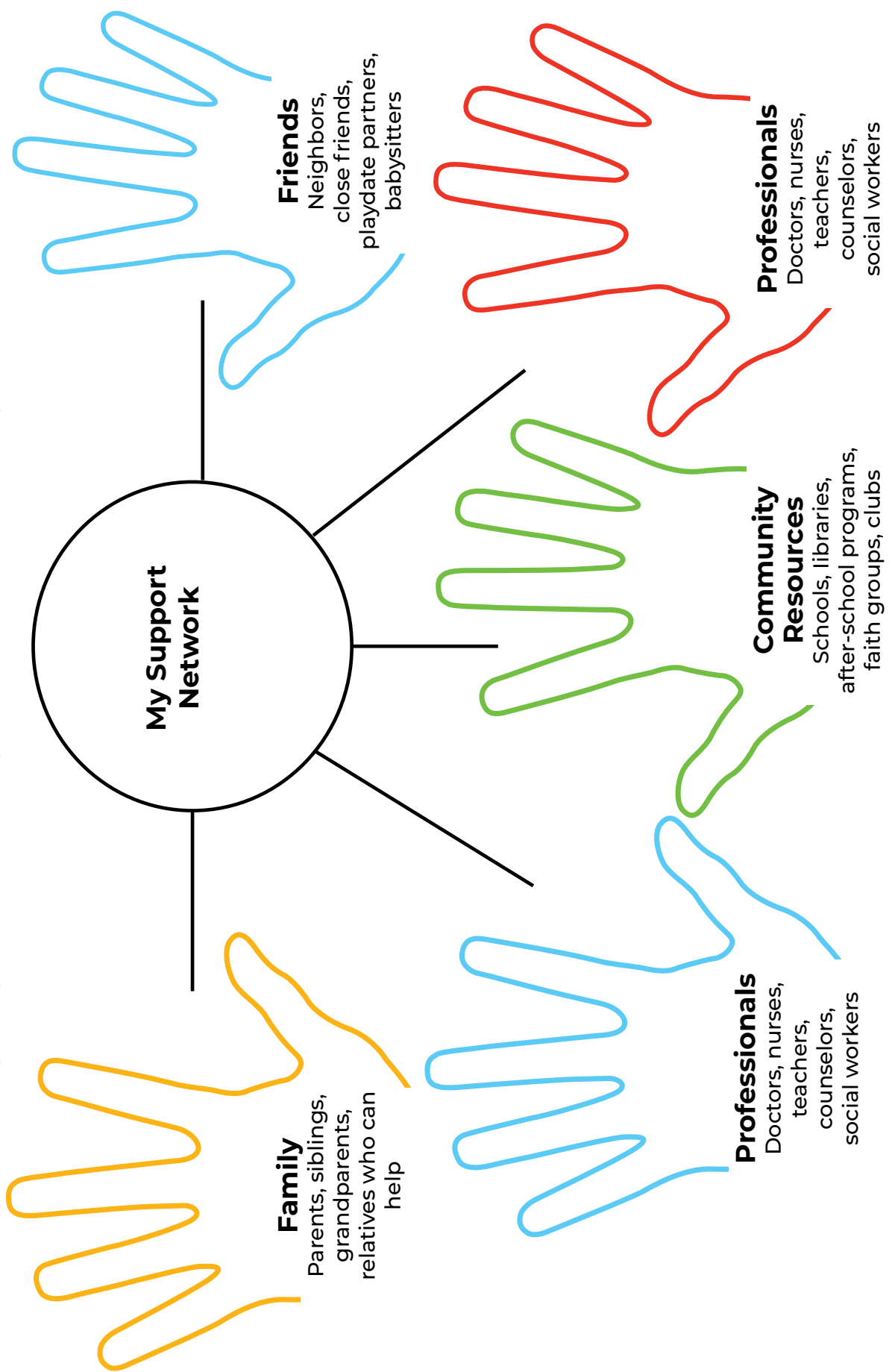
Arc of Emotional Regulation





Visualize Your Support Network - Helping Hands

Write the names of your support people in the hands below. Each hand can represent a different group (e.g. family, friends, community resources, professionals, safety contacts).



Building Your Support Network

A Guide to Identifying the People and Resources Who Help Keep Your Family Safe and Supported

Carolyn Webster-Stratton, MS, MPH, PhD

Visualize Your Support Network - Helping Hands

Write the names of your support people in the hands below. Each hand can represent a different group (e.g. family, friends, community resources, professionals, safety contacts).



Children do best when parents feel supported. Having a strong network of people you can rely on makes parenting less stressful and safer for your child. Use this handout to think about who is in your support circle and where you might want to add new connections. Write in the names here or on the IY *Helping Hands* graphic.

1. Family and Friends I Can Call On

- Who can help in an emergency?
- Who could watch my child if I needed a break?

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Community Resources I Can Use

- Parenting groups, libraries, faith communities
- After-school programs, sports, or clubs
- Local crisis or support hotlines

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. Professionals I Can Rely On

- Doctor, nurse, or counselor
- Teacher or childcare provider
- Social worker or community health worker

- _____
- _____
- _____

4. Safety Contacts

- Emergency numbers (police, fire, ambulance)
- Crisis hotline / domestic violence hotline
- Trusted neighbor

- _____
- _____
- _____

Reflection Questions

- Who do I feel most comfortable asking for help?
- Where might I need more support?
- What steps can I take this month to strengthen my network?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Tip: It's okay to ask for help—building a network is a strength, not a weakness. The more support you have, the safer and happier your child will be.



Coping Cycle:

Connect Positive Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviors

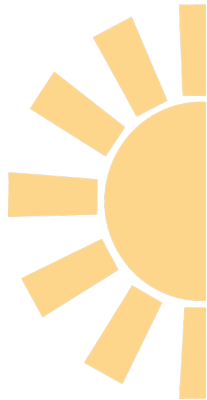


Child yelling,
whining, refusing,
defiant, tantruming



Substitute Coping Thoughts for Upsetting Thoughts

*"I can manage this! He is just testing limits."
"I can help by staying patient and in control."
"I can help her learn better behavior."
"She is still learning."*



Child Impact

Child feels secure,
resilient, can self-regulate

Parent

Coping Behavior

- ignore, give child time to regulate
- model taking deep breaths
- make a positive request
- stay consistent & calm
- distract & re-direct
- emotion coaching

Calmer Feelings & Physiological Changes

- reduced blood pressure
- calmness • empathy
- confidence

The Incredible Years® Group-Based Parenting Program for Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

17

Carolyn Webster-Stratton, Sarah Dababnah,
and Erin Olson

Abstract

A new *Incredible Years*® (*IY*) Parent Program for preschool children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and language delays (ages 2–5) was recently developed and piloted. It is designed to either complement the 18–20-week *IY* Preschool Basic Program for parent groups where children have a mix of behavioral and developmental challenges or to be used independently in a combination of 14–18-week group-based course plus individ-

ual home coaching for parents with children with ASD. This chapter includes a summary of the rationale for *IY* parent program content that promotes social communication and language development, positive relationships and social skills, emotion- and self-regulation, and positive behavior management. The *IY* collaborative approaches for training and supporting parents are also presented. These approaches include mediating vignettes of children with ASD to trigger parent self-reflection; problem-solving and experiential practices with child-directed play and imitation; communicating with children with and without language skills; practicing parenting skills such as persistence, social and emotion coaching, gesturing, modeling, and prompting; incorporating social sensory routines; engaging in pretend play and using puppets to enhance joint play, social communication, and empathy; and learning the ABCs for managing behavior, including the concepts of antecedent accommodations and environmental modification to promote appropriate behavior, teaching replacement behaviors, and reinforcing target behaviors by providing praise, incentives, and sensory activities as rewarding consequences. Parents learn to identify behaviors that can be ignored and how to use differential attention

Carolyn Webster-Stratton has disclosed a potential conflict of interest due to the fact she provides training and instructional materials for these treatment programs and therefore stands to gain financially from a positive review. This interest has been disclosed to the University of Washington and has been managed consistent with federal and university policy.

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and get into their child's attention spotlight. The importance of parent goal setting, self-monitoring, home activities, stress management, self-care, and building parent support networks is emphasized.

Introduction

Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have exceptionally diverse service needs. Compared to typically developing children and those with other developmental disabilities, children with ASD can have higher rates of disruptive behaviors (Hartley, Sikora, & McCoy, 2008), atypical sleep patterns (Limoges, Mottron, Bolduc, Berthiaume, & Godbout, 2005), gastrointestinal problems (Nikolov et al., 2009), anxiety and other psychiatric comorbidities (Simonoff et al., 2008), unique reactions to sensory stimuli (Baranek, David, Poe, Stone, & Watson, 2006), and self-regulatory difficulties from an early age (Gomez & Baird, 2005). As many as 50% of children with ASD exhibit behavioral problems, including tantrums, noncompliance, aggression, and self-injury (Mazurek, Kanne, & Wodka, 2013). These challenging behaviors interfere with children's ability to benefit from parents' socialization efforts. Moreover, parent uncertainty on how to manage these challenging behavior problems adds to their high levels of stress (Estes et al., 2013; Koegel, 1992; Schieve, Blumberg, Rice, Visser, & Boyle, 2007), which in turn contribute to other troubling outcomes such as poor family quality of life (Lee et al., 2009), depression (Phetrasuwan & Shandor Miles, 2009), family isolation, and lack of support (Osborne, McHugh, Saunders, & Reed, 2008).

Intervention programs for young children with ASD are increasingly available (Boyd, Odom, Humphreys, & Sam, 2010; Wong et al., 2013). Clinician-implemented intervention studies have resulted in significant positive effects with regard to children's developmental level and adaptive functioning (Dawson, Rogers, & Munson, 2010; Landa, Holman, O'Neill, &

Stuart, 2011; Landa & Kalb, 2012). Interventions that target joint attention, social play, parental responsiveness, imitation skills, and parent-mediated social communication therapy have been shown to develop communication abilities in children with ASD (Kasari, Paparella, Freeman, & Jahromi, 2008; Pickles et al., 2016; Poon, Watson, Baranek, & Poe, 2012; Siller & Sigman, 2008). Parent involvement has been recognized as a potentially effective method to deliver treatment to children with ASD and to improve sustainability of results (Matson, Mahan, & Matson, 2009). For example, an evaluation of a community-/home-based parent-implemented early intervention reported significant gains in child social communication and receptive language skills, compared to a clinic sample (Wetherby et al., 2014). Randomized controlled trials of a parent-implemented early intervention reported an improvement in parent-child communication (Green, Charman, & McConachie, 2010; Rogers et al., 2012), which was sustained in long-term follow-up (Pickles et al., 2016). Overall, interventions which target parent-child interactions within their natural environments have produced encouraging improvements in children's social communication skills and other core ASD symptoms (See Chaps. 12 and 13; Stahmer & Pellecchia, 2015; Wetherby et al., 2014). However, some studies with parent-implemented early interventions have reported less effective child outcomes compared with those implemented by clinicians (Oono, Honey, & McConachie, 2013; Rogers, Estes, et al., 2012; Stahmer & Pellecchia, 2015).

There are several possible reasons for differences in child outcomes in parent- versus clinician-implemented early interventions in existing research. These include the primary intervention approach focusing on the clinician-child curriculum more than the parent-child implementation or being a brief, didactic parent education approach rather than a therapeutic, collaborative, comprehensive approach (Stahmer & Pellecchia, 2015). Furthermore, parent interventions aimed at very young children with ASD have not necessarily focused on teaching parents

specific evidence-based active strategies for managing their children's self-regulation problems. In general, early intervention research has failed to attend to parent stress, depression, and lack of support or to report on the inclusion of fathers or other caregivers in the intervention (Dababnah & Parish, 2016a). Such approaches are needed for stressed parents of children with ASD to adhere to complex and time-intensive intervention methods (Stahmer & Pellecchia, 2015). In fact, parent outcomes, such as stress, depression, and parenting competence, are rarely measured in ASD early intervention research (Dababnah, 2016; Dababnah & Parish, 2016a, 2016b; Karst & Van Hecke, 2012; Stahmer & Pellecchia, 2015). A recent Cochrane Collaboration review reported inconclusive results with regard to reduction of parent stress in early ASD interventions (Oono et al., 2013). Clearly, there is an urgent need to develop and test more cost-effective interventions that address child behavior and parent well-being in families raising young children with ASD.

Evidence-based parenting programs designed to reduce challenging behavior in children with conduct problems and ADHD, as well as to improve parent stress, have been developed over several decades. In particular, group-based parent programs have been shown to improve parent psychosocial well-being, reduce stress, and build parent confidence and support networks, as well as improve children's social competence and reduce conduct problems. For example, a meta-analysis of group-based parent training programs reported significant improvements in parent depression and confidence, which were maintained at a 6-month follow-up (Barlow, Smailagic, Huband, Roloff, & Bennett, 2012). Evidence-based parent training programs also hold promise to improve the outcomes of children with ASD and their families (Brookman-Frazee, Stahmer, Baker-Ericzen, & Tsai, 2006). In one recent study (Bearss et al., 2016), a 24-week randomized trial compared parent training with parent education. Results indicated parent training was superior to parent education in reducing disruptive behavior in children with ASD, although the clinical significance of the improvement was unclear.

In this chapter, we will discuss how *The Incredible Years® (IY) Preschool Basic Parent Program (IY-BASIC)*, an evidence-based parent training program, originally developed to prevent and treat children with conduct problems, hyperactivity, anxiety, and other social issues (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2010; Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Hammond, 2004), was tailored and revised for parents of children with ASD and language delays. In the following sections, we outline basic content components of a newly-revised and adapted version of *IY-ASD* specifically targeting young children with ASD and the group-based collaborative process and principles of delivering the program. Content and research related to the *IY-BASIC* and *IY-ASD* programs are briefly summarized.

The Incredible Years® (IY-BASIC) Program

The Incredible Years (IY-BASIC) Toddler and Preschool Programs targets children ages 2–5 years and their families (Webster-Stratton, 2011). Depending on whether the program is using the prevention or treatment protocols, parents meet with trained leaders in groups for weekly 2-h sessions over a 14–20-week period. *IY-BASIC* is based on attachment theories (Ainsworth, 1974; Bowlby, 1988), social learning theory (Patterson, 1995), social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), and developmental stage theories (Piaget, 1962). With a foundation of building parent-child attachment through child-directed play, parents learn strategies to model appropriate social communication interactions; coach their children's persistence, social, emotional, and academic skills; manage parent stress; stay calm while managing children's misbehavior; and broaden their support networks. Additionally, through the use of role plays, video vignettes, coaching methods, group support, and collaborative group discussion sessions, parents gain skills to challenge their negative cognitions, increase problem-solving abilities, and enhance positive communication with their partners and children. Three decades of evidence by the

developer and others (Webster-Stratton, 2012a) utilizing randomized controlled trials of *IY* Parent Programs have pointed to improved levels of parent stress, depression, and coping skills, as well as decreased negative child outcomes such as aggressive behavior in a broad array of ethnically and socioeconomically diverse populations (Jones, Daley, Hutchings, Bywater, & Eames, 2007; Linares, Montalto, Min, & Oza, 2006; Reid, Webster-Stratton, & Beauchaine, 2001). A recent meta-analysis of 50 studies indicated positive parent and child outcomes for both the treatment and prevention protocols (Menting, Orobio de Castro, & Matthys, 2013). Cost-effectiveness analyses have also been performed with positive results (Edwards, O'Ceilleachair, Bywater, Hughes, & Hutchings, 2007; O'Neill, McGilloway, Donnelly, Bywater, & Kelly, 2013).

Several studies have been conducted to pilot *IY-BASIC* with parents of children with ASD and other developmental disorders (Garcia & Turk, 2007; McIntyre, 2008; Roberts & Pickering, 2010). These results indicated a reduction in child behavior problems and improved parent mental health. In a recent pilot trial of *IY-BASIC* with parents of preschoolers with ASD, participant acceptability and confidence was high, and parent stress was significantly reduced after completion of the program (Dababnah & Parish, 2016c). Furthermore, parents reported that the *IY-BASIC* program helped them address the needs of their families as a whole (including the child with ASD, other children without ASD, parents, and extended family members) and that the naturalistic, child-directed play-based nature of *IY-BASIC* allowed some of the participants a temporary respite from other highly structured ASD therapies. The program was flexible enough to allow group leaders to individualize content to participants' specific family and child needs, particularly addressing child emotion regulation, anxiety challenges, and sensory-seeking behaviors. Nonetheless, some aspects of the *IY-BASIC* program, such as program videos, time-out strategies for child noncompliance, and parent self-care, were insufficient for some participants in the pilot trial. The parents in this research overwhelmingly requested a longer program in order

to practice skills gained in the program, particularly related to parent stress and family burden. In total, these preliminary studies suggest the *IY-BASIC* program has promising implications for future use with parents of young children with ASD.

***IY* Autism Spectrum and Language Delays Program for Parents with Preschool Children (*IY-ASD*)**

In order to address the specific needs of parents raising children with ASD, a new *IY* program was adapted, *IY* for Preschool Children on the Autism Spectrum or with Language Delays (*IY-ASD*). It was designed to complement the *IY-BASIC* for groups where children (2–5 years) have a mix of behavior and developmental problems. Alternatively, *IY-ASD* can be used independently in a 14–18, 2-h weekly course for a group of 8–10 parents with children who have ASD. In order to deliver *IY-ASD*, group leaders must first be trained in *IY-BASIC* and have experience with this program. They then participate in 23 additional days of training and practice with *IY-ASD*. It is recommended that group leaders have graduate degrees in psychology, social work, or education. Effective *IY-ASD* group leaders must also possess a broad understanding of ASD, including its symptoms and intervention approaches, as well as experience working with children with ASD and their families. Finally, it is critical that group leaders have knowledge of local resources in order to connect families to community supports.

One pilot study evaluating *IY-ASD* was recently published (Hutchings, Pearson-Blunt, Pasteur, Healy, & Williams, 2016), and while the sample size was small ($N = 9$), parent report, observational assessments, and semi-structured interviews indicated positive results. High satisfaction scores by participants supported the findings of Dababnah and Parish (2016c) with the original *IY-BASIC* program. In the revised program, parents found the video vignettes of children with ASD particularly helpful, in contrast to the earlier study with the *IY-BASIC* program,

where vignettes were rated lower. Parents also reported that the group discussion and support were very useful and provided an opportunity to share problems and solutions with parents in similar situations. Results also showed significant pre-post reductions in behavior and peer problems and an increase in pro-social behavior.

IY-ASD is currently being evaluated in two sites. Preliminary pre-post analyses have found child-related parenting stress; and child irritability, agitation, lethargy, and social withdrawal significantly decreased at posttest (Dababnah & Olsen, [in preparation](#)). Acceptability was high among graduates of the program, particularly regarding the program's play-based approach, the specific skills in improving parent and child emotion regulation, and the opportunities for social support and peer learning. Participants' most common recommendation was to extend the program's duration.

Differences and Similarities with the *Incredible Years* Preschool Basic Parent Program

The *IY-ASD* program follows the *IY-BASIC* approach by focusing on developing positive parent-child relationships, building responsive parenting skills, and promoting appropriate child behavior. In addition, *IY-ASD* similarly focuses on reducing parent stress and barriers to participation by offering support to families such as childcare, meals, and transportation. Support can include assisting parents to access the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) in order to maintain employment while participating in the program. *IY-ASD* differs from *IY-BASIC* in that its content has been modified to address ASD-specific areas of emphasis (Table 17.1 compares *IY-BASIC* with the *IY-ASD* program). Based on research and direct parent feedback, video vignettes depicting parents working with their children with ASD are now available. The content has an increased focus on imitation of child behavior and use of sensory routines as a means of establishing joint attention; methods for promoting pretend play to build language, empathy, and social skills; and

development of self-regulation. Due to the communication difficulties of children with ASD, parents also learn to assess and coach their child's language and social communication. Use of visual supports is demonstrated by group leaders and encouraged for all children on the spectrum.

IY-ASD emphasizes a functional approach to behavior change, and parents learn the "ABCs" of behavior change. More attention is given to the antecedents of behavior change than in the *IY-BASIC* program. Methods are introduced for identifying reasons for, or the function of, behaviors, such as obtaining preferences or escaping nonpreferences, by recognizing the antecedents (A) that set up a behavior (B) and the consequences (C) that maintain it. Then, antecedent accommodations and reinforcing consequences to promote appropriate and/or replacement behaviors are discussed, in addition to strategies to decrease inappropriate behavior.

Another key difference between *IY-ASD* and *IY-BASIC* is that *IY-ASD* does not present the use of time-out as a primary discipline strategy. Children with ASD often avoid social interaction. Time-out can inadvertently reinforce problem behaviors by rewarding those behaviors with escape from the nonpreferred social interaction. Rather, *IY-ASD* focuses on ignoring inappropriate behavior and redirecting and reengaging when the child is calm. This approach promotes attentive parenting, as parents learn to monitor child behavior during an "ignore" period and immediately reengage once the child has calmed. It also supports development of the child's emotion regulation by refraining from interrupting the child's regulatory process and by reinforcing the state of being calm.

Lastly, due to the isolation felt by many parents raising a child with ASD, increased emphasis on support and network building is critical. Parents of children with ASD often report being unable to take their children into community settings due to their behavior. *IY-ASD* promotes relationships with other families experiencing similar circumstances and networking to build understanding of ASD within the community and to increase advocacy for resources. Children with ASD also often require time-consuming and

Table 17.1 How IY-ASD differs from basic IY parenting program

<i>IY-BASIC</i> preschool program (3–5 years)	IY Autism spectrum and language delays program (2–5 years)
<i>Topics</i> 1. Strengthening children's social skills, emotional regulation, and school readiness 2. Using praise and incentives to encourage cooperative behavior 3. Positive discipline: Rules, routines, and effective limit setting 4. Handling misbehavior (ignoring, time-out, consequences, and problem-solving)	<i>Topics</i> 1. Increased focus on coaching language development, imitation and sensory routines, social communication, use of pretend play to promote empathy and social skills, and promoting self-regulation skills 2. Enhanced focus on self-care and building support group 3. Older (4–5 years old) verbal children with conduct problems: Families can continue with program 4 of basic <i>IY</i> program to discuss time-out and problem-solving (not included in <i>IY-ASD</i> program)
Basic <i>IY</i> vignettes	New <i>IY-ASD</i> vignettes depict children with ASD. Additional vignettes from basic <i>IY</i> may be added if parents in the group need more help with behavior management and problem-solving
Program dosage (18–20 sessions)	(14–18 plus sessions) increased dosage often needed to adequately cover the material since there are more practices and discussions to tailor the strategies to each unique child
Group size: 10–12 parents	Smaller group size: 6–8 parents plus partners or other family members
Group leader: Knowledgeable in child Development	Group leader: Knowledgeable and experienced in ASD practice, local ASD-specific supports, and functional approaches to behavior change
Key group teaching/learning methods (behavioral practice, principle building, values exercises, tailoring to meet cultural and developmental issues, home activities)	1. Increased teaching about ASD and ways to use visual support including picture schedules, choice cards, command, and feeling cards 2. Tailoring group practices according to children's communication stage; imitation as a means to gain attention, learning alternative incentives to motivate children with ASD (e.g., sensory activities) 3. More explicit teaching about prompting, use of nonverbal signals, and the functions of behavior and ABCs of behavior change 4. More practice with use of pretend play and puppet use as well as self-regulation strategies
Alliance-building techniques (collaborative learning, buddy calls, weekly leader support calls, praise to parents, incentives for parents)	All standard alliance-building techniques apply to this population but increased efforts to help build families support systems and reduce their stress by working on self-care and promoting weekly buddy calls and peer dates with other parents. Regular emails, texts, and calls from group leaders are essential
Food, transportation, daycare	No adaptations needed but essential to offer these for this population in order to reduce barriers to participation
Core model does not offer home visits	Providing home visits to coach parent-child interactions using coach home visit manuals and additional DVD vignettes as needed; use these to make up missed sessions or show additional vignettes or do coached practice with the children
Core model does not address collaboration with educators and other professionals for coordination of care	Coordinate with educators and therapists for developing behavior plans with agreed upon goals for child's target behaviors. Consult with medical providers to understand effects of medical issues on child behavior and parent stress
Core model suggests use of IY advance, child, and teacher programs for children with diagnoses or very high risk families	Consider additional IY programs: Advance program to teach anger and depression management and problem-solving steps Child social, emotional and problem solving skills program ("dinosaur school") offered alongside parent program Offer follow-up training in the <i>Helping Preschool Children with Autism: Teachers and Parents as Partners</i> to help parents learn how to promote positive peer interactions and social communication with 2–3 children

costly neurodevelopmental and medical interventions. Parents need support to advocate for and provide these therapies to their children. Group leaders must be knowledgeable about community resources and assist families in accessing them both during and after the program. Efforts to coordinate care among educators, therapists, and medical providers are also essential.

The Incredible Years Program Content

This section briefly summarizes each of the eight parts of *IY-ASD*, with some examples from the video vignettes and the rationale for the content with this population. In addition, the foundational principles of the program are discussed, such as the importance of the collaborative process and building family support networks to reduce family stress.

Part I: Child-directed narrated play promotes positive relationships All *Incredible Years®* Parent Programs have at their foundation child-directed play. This is important because young children's key language, social, and emotional learning come from watching, imitating, and interacting with parents. However, children with ASD are often more interested in interacting with nonsocial objects than with people. Therefore, parents learn how to increase their children's attentional focus with them by following their interests, getting into their attentional spotlight, and making their play interactions more rewarding. By linking the child's favorite activity to social interactions with parents, the child will be more motivated to interact with them (Ingersoll & Gergans, 2007; Rogers & Vismara, 2008; Sussman, 2012). Thus, the parent can facilitate joint play and create more opportunities for their child to learn from them.

Children with ASD often exhibit atypical or unconventional play behaviors (e.g., repetitive or nonfunctional play). Their sensory needs may influence the way they play, and they may chew or smell toys, rub them against their face, or repetitively line them up in rows to make a pattern and become upset if someone tries to move

them. For this reason, parents must develop several strategies to engage their children in interactive play. Parents learn to follow their child's lead and utilize his or her interests during play and to describe and comment on the child's actions. Key concepts in Part I of *IY-ASD* include engaging in child-directed play, narrating and imitating play, waiting for the child to indicate choice, considering positioning for face-to-face interaction, encouraging verbal and nonverbal communication, and modeling and prompting play behaviors and language. The concepts are individualized using parents' observations of their own child's play and language skills, preferred activities, and what seems to motivate their children. Parents share their children's favorite toys and foods, any hyper- or hyposensitivities (e.g., sights, sounds, touch, and smells), and what kinds of physical or sensory routines they enjoy (e.g., running, jumping, hide-and-seek games, spinning, songs). This group-sharing process helps parents see similarities and differences in their children's sensory preferences, and parents begin to develop a support group around their children's shared experiences.

Part II: Pre-academic coaching promotes language development and school readiness After parents have learned how to get into their child's "attention spotlight" by being child-directed and using descriptive commenting, imitation, and modeling, in Part II they learn another type of descriptive commenting called *pre-academic coaching*. This coaching method is used for children who have begun communicating with gestures, sounds, and some back-and-forth exchanges. In essence, parents learn to turn up the volume of their communication and attention by describing pre-academic concepts such as colors, shapes, names of objects, sounds, numbers, and positions during play. For children with no language, parents incorporate pictures of objects, shapes, colors, sounds, and actions to communicate the concepts. The use of visual supports is encouraged for all children to support both expressive and receptive language development. Additionally, visual supports can promote child engagement, making choices, and understanding

of routines or expectations. Group leaders can provide parents with tailor-made books with targeted pictures illustrating such things as a child's favorite toys or activities (e.g., train, blocks, bubbles), actions (e.g., sit, play, read, tickle), common routines (e.g., wash hands, eat dinner), clothing (e.g., hat, coat, shoes), or food items (e.g., apple, cereal).

Children with ASD often get frustrated when their pattern or routine is disrupted, or they are trying something new. They may also become frustrated about their inability to communicate or be understood by others. They may give up easily and revert to solitary play or repetitive actions that are more comfortable. In Part II, parents learn a second type of coaching called *persistence coaching* that is used to help scaffold a child's ability to stay focused and persist with a difficult learning activity, even when frustrated or anxious. Parents name the child's internal state when she/he is being patient, trying again, staying calm, concentrating, persisting with a challenging task, or trying to engage in joint play. Parents explore how to support their children to persevere with tasks such as brushing their teeth, getting dressed, doing a puzzle, looking at a book, or initiating an interaction. Pairing pre-academic and persistence coaching, along with engaging in a child's favorite activities, is intended to expand children's communication abilities and improve school readiness.

Part III: Social coaching promotes friendship skills The ability to share, ask, help others, wait, initiate interactions, and take turns is fundamental to social development and social communication. Yet, these social behaviors are more difficult for children with ASD. The ability for these children to cooperate in give-and-take exchanges is difficult because they are far more interested in exploring their own nonsocial object and often do not have the language to ask for a turn. They may even be unaware of another child's desire for a turn or need for help, because they are less tuned into subtle communication of others' eyes, face, gestures, and tone of voice. The risk is that these children will continue to play alone, rather than draw others into their activities. This means that they

will miss important learning opportunities provided from parents or peers in joint play. In Part III, parents learn to use *social coaching*, modeling social skills and prompting social communication in their play interactions. Parents learn how to help these children shift their attention from objects to other people by spotlighting others' needs and activities. Social coaching builds on the content in Parts I and II. Given the common challenges, children with ASD have with regard to social communication; this part of the program is one of the most complex. The major learning goals of this part of the program are:

- Using play and books, gesturing, prompting, and modeling to promote turn-taking skills.
- Introducing parents to the "ABCs" (antecedent, behavior, consequence) and function of a behavior. An example of teaching this concept is provided in Box 17.1.
- Increasing children's enjoyment of social interactions through shared sensory activities (e.g., dancing, bouncing on a trampoline, swinging).
- Prompting and enhancing face-to-face joint attention.

Parents learn how to use social coaching during play interactions with their child to encourage critical social skills. They learn that the same principles used during child-directed play can also be regularly used with daily family life routines, such as getting dressed for school and toilet training.

Box 17.1: Teaching Parents the ABCs of Social Behavior Change

The group leader shows parents a vignette of a father engaging his son's attention by playing with a red balloon, one of the boy's favorite games. This shared activity appears to be light-hearted play, but serious learning about social interaction is taking place as the child learns to ask for a turn, share, listen, and communicate with his father. First, the father holds the balloon next to

(continued)

Box 17.1: (continued)

his face to capture his son's attention and gain eye contact. Then he waits for his son to use his words to ask for what he wants. Holding up the prized balloon, which he knows his son will want, is the antecedent (A) that precedes the behavior the father wants to encourage. Once he gets his son's attention, he models and prompts the verbal requesting behavior he wants his son to learn by saying, "You can say, I want the balloon please." When the father gets the desired behavior (B) from his son, his verbal request, the father rewards his use of verbal or nonverbal language by giving him the balloon and praising his verbal request, which is the consequence (C). These are the ABCs of how parents turn a play interaction into a social communication learning opportunity. The function of the behavior is also discussed, which in this case is the child's desire to obtain a preferred object. After the video vignette has been paused several times for group discussion, the group leader sets up practice experiences with parent dyads, where one parent acts as their child, while the other is the parent using the ABC learning steps. Several more vignettes are shown to illustrate these interaction sequences, and then parents are given home activities that include completion of an ABC chart regarding their efforts to create a social learning opportunity during their play times.

Since children on the spectrum often enjoy sensory physical activities such as throwing and catching a balloon, dancing to music, bouncing on a trampoline, being chased, and swinging, parents learn how to use these motor play experiences to increase their children's internal motivation to play with them and create social coaching opportunities. As seen in the balloon example above, in order to prompt and enhance face-to-face joint attention, parents learn how to get into

their child's attention spotlight (showing balloon) and motivate them to shift their gaze from objects to people and back again. By watching the video vignettes, parents learn the value of exaggerated facial expressions, getting down close to their child's face, making eye contact, prompting or modeling the desired behavior, and waiting for a response before giving the child what he wants and rewarding this behavior.

Part IV: Emotion coaching promotes emotional literacy In Part IV of the program, parents learn the importance of drawing attention to their child's feelings by using *emotion coaching*. This is helpful for all young children but especially for children on the autism spectrum. While children with ASD experience the full range of feelings, they often find it hard to share their emotions with others through language, facial expressions, or gestures. Parents start this coaching by naming their children's emotions at the time their child is experiencing them, which helps the child link the feeling word with an internal emotional state. The goal is for children to develop a feeling vocabulary, recognize their own feelings, and share them with others. The ultimate aim is for children to be able to recognize and respond sensitively to others' feelings. Moreover, supporting a child's emotional language eventually contributes to the development of emotional self-regulation, empathy, and secure attachment.

IY-ASD demonstrates several ways for parents to begin to build their child's feeling literacy. One method is through the use of pictures of feelings faces (e.g., mad, happy, excited, calm, frustrated), which children use to indicate their emotions. Parents learn the importance of describing and naming the feelings of book characters to help their children learn feeling words. Reading face to face also gives parents the opportunity to make eye contact and to model facial expressions and gestures or sound effects to represent the emotions they are naming. Parents learn to use social coaching in combination with emotion coaching, for example, taking turns when reading to point out a picture and using a partial prompt by pausing to let the child fill in the answer. Finally,

physical games (e.g., water play, spinning) can be used to motivate a child's feeling vocabulary. Coaching children's unpleasant emotions is tricky because giving excessive attention to negative emotions can make the child more angry, frustrated, fearful, or sad. Therefore, parents are encouraged to give more attention to naming the "positive opposite" behaviors such as feeling calm, patient, brave, or happy. Parent's naming of uncomfortable feelings is paired with persistence coaching such as a positive coping statement. For example, saying, "*You are frustrated getting those shoes on, but you keep trying. You can do it.*" When emotion coaching is done skillfully, this can strengthen a parent's relationship with their child and help the child feel understood. In total, these emotion coaching methods can be incorporated into parents' efforts to engage in positive, child-directed activities with their children.

Part V: Pretend play promotes empathy and social skills For young children with ASD, the world of pretend play does not always emerge naturally. In this part of the program, parents learn how to encourage their children's imaginary play skills. Studies have shown that when a child with ASD develops pretend play, his language abilities and social skills also increase (Rogers, Dawson, & Vismara, 2012). Pretend play with parents helps the parent and child engage in a shared experience, opens the door for powerful learning opportunities, and helps the child learn what others are feeling and thinking.

Group leaders help the parents discuss how to use pretend play to encourage empathy, emotion language, and social behaviors such as helping, sharing, waiting, and trading. The use of puppets, dolls, or other figures is another effective way parents can encourage children's imaginary play. In one video vignette, a boy has become so attached to his turtle puppet that the boy wants to take the puppet spinning with him. The father effectively builds his son's empathy and language skills by stopping the spinning game periodically to talk together about how the turtle is feeling while they are spinning. Because the boy is highly motivated to spin, stopping the spinning

forces the child to verbally communicate and interact with both the turtle and his father. In another vignette, the mother uses a baby dinosaur puppet to express feelings of shyness and fear of coming out of his shell. The mother prompts her daughter with the words to help the puppet feel safe to come out and play. The mother models a gentle, friendly behavior, which leads the little girl to use more positive behavior that is reinforced by the mother. If a child does not have the language skills to respond verbally to the puppet, it is still good for the puppet to model the words involved in the social interaction. Parents can also structure interactions that involve nonverbal responses from their child (such as "Would you like to shake the puppet's hand?"). Echolalic responses also receive attention, rephrasing, and praise, as parents learn to reinforce successive approximations of desired behavior.

Part VI: Promoting children's self-regulation skills One of the major developmental tasks for all preschool children is to learn to manage their anger and develop emotional self-regulation skills. In Parts IV and V, parents have learned how emotion coaching, puppets, and pretend play can be especially helpful to gain their children's attention and build their emotion vocabulary. Once children are able to recognize and express their own feelings verbally, or with pictures and signs, then they can begin to understand feelings in others and express their own.

As emotional literacy and empathy slowly develop, parents can begin to teach children some self-calming strategies. Because children are visual thinkers, it continues to be effective to use pictures, books, puppets, and coaching methods discussed earlier in the program. In Part VI, parents learn scenarios designed to help children use visual tools such as a "calm down thermometer" and practice self-calming strategies such as positive imagery, self-talk words, and deep breathing. For example, parents view a video vignette where a father is helping his child learn about breathing by practicing taking big breaths while visualizing smelling a flower and blowing out a candle. This imaginary visualization, also shown on a picture cue card, helps

children to stay calm and remember how to take deep breaths. Because this father has previously spent a lot of time teaching his son emotion vocabulary, he is ready to support his son to learn what the boy can do when he experiences feelings of anger, sadness, frustration, and anxiety. When the boy looks at another picture, he repeats the breathing strategy, and the father helps him understand how it helps him feel calm.

Part VII: Using praise and rewards to motivate children Children on the autism spectrum may seem unaware or less interested in their parent's pleasure, approval, or praise in response to what they say and do, signals that normally motivate most children. In this part of the program, parents learn they cannot be subtle or vague with praise; rather praise must be put in the spotlight by being more attractive, exciting, and clear for positive behaviors. Parents discuss methods to enhance praise with a warm tone or enthusiasm, smiles, eye contact, as well as gestures or specific language. For example, one of the vignettes shows a boy who has been rather aggressive with his cat. His parents give him attention and labeled praise whenever he is gentle with his cat in order to teach him what it means to be gentle. They help him understand the connection between his being gentle and the cat's happiness and willingness to stay with him. Their use of effective praise helps this boy develop empathy for his cat and understanding that his gentle behavior results in more positive consequences for himself.

Parents also learn how to add to the impact of praise by pairing it with tangible rewards such as their child's favorite stickers, bubbles, or special food items. Other powerful motivators are sensory physical activities such as spinning, running, jumping, chasing, riding on a parent's legs, or being tickled. These activities can be used as a reward for practicing a social communication skill or for using some self-regulation calming strategies.

Finally, the group leader helps parents learn how to praise and reward themselves and other family members for their parenting efforts. The leader starts group sessions by asking parents to

share their successes and to think about how effectively they handled a particularly difficult situation. Parents learn how to formulate positive statements about themselves and to compliment each other. The group leader helps parents set up tangible rewards for their efforts, such as dinner out with a spouse or friend, a hot bath, or a good book, and encourages them to reward themselves for achieving their weekly goals. Prizes are given out at this session for parents completing their home assignments, which include self-care items such as bubble bath, chocolate, lotion, and gift certificates. This promotes a sense of parenting competence, helps parents reframe their experiences by focusing on positive aspects of their interactions and effort, and encourages the development of positive self-talk.

Part VIII: Effective limit setting and behavior management By this stage in the program (group session 11 or 12), parents have been encouraging and motivating their child's interest in pleasing and being with them through their use of child-directed play and engaging rewards. Parents have been learning and practicing the ABCs of behavior change and applying it to the goals they have set for their children. But just like any other child, at times a child with ASD will be defiant and refuse to comply with a parent's requests or prompts. Parents learn that children are not deliberately misbehaving but actually are biologically programmed to explore and test the limits as part of their development. This exploration stage is thought to help children develop a sense of independence and eventually self-control, both of which are goals for most parents. Moreover, for children with ASD and limited language, their resistance may stem from the fact they do not actually understand the parent's verbal instructions because the request is too complex or unclear.

In the final part of the program, parents learn ways to:

- Give positive, clear, simple, and necessary limits or instructions verbally and nonverbally.
- Transition their children to new activities using visual-auditory tools (such as buzzers,

music, sand timers, and songs), command cards, and positive reminders.

- Utilize proactive discipline approaches such as distractions, redirections, self-regulation prompts, and ignoring selected misbehaviors.
- Understand the principle of “differential attention.”

Most parents need to give children extra time to understand what is happening and what they can do or say. Slowing down the pace is a key behavior management principle. Discussions of the function of behavior show how behavior is a means to an end. It is critical to identify whether a behavior is motivated by attention-seeking, a desire to obtain a favorite object or activity, an escape from something nonpreferred, or a sensory stimulation, in order to promote appropriate behaviors that meet the child’s needs.

The Incredible Years Program Principles

The Incredible Years (IY) series are guided by a set of principles that allow parent programs to be flexible enough to permit adaptations for given family and cultural situations, parent skill levels, and children’s developmental and communication abilities. The following section summarizes each principle and how the group leader uses each principle to support parents.

Principle 1: The Collaborative Model

The core value driving the *IY* program is that work with families should be experiential, self-reflective, and collaborative. In the collaborative model, the group leader does not set him/herself up as an “expert” dispensing advice about how caregivers should parent more effectively. With the root meaning of “to labor together,” collaboration implies a reciprocal relationship based on utilizing equally the group leader’s expertise and the parents’ knowledge, strengths, and perspectives of their own children’s communication and relationship difficulties (Webster-Stratton, 2012b). For instance, during *IY* sessions the group leader invites parents to share their experiences,

thoughts, and feelings and engage in problem-solving. The collaborative group leader style is demonstrated by open communication patterns within the group and an attitude of acceptance toward all the families. By building a relationship based not on authority, but on group rapport, the group leader creates a climate of trust. The goal of this approach is to make the group a safe place for parents to reveal their problems and worries, to risk trying new approaches, and to gain support. The collaborative group leader is a careful listener and uses open-ended questions when exploring issues. In the leader’s manual, there is a list of suggested open-ended questions for each vignette shown. Some example group leader questions include *What is effective about this parent’s approach with his child? What are the benefits for his child? What is this child learning? What would you do differently? Can you use this approach with your child? Let’s try it.* During the discussion, the group leader encourages all parents to respond and records their key ideas on a flip chart and even at times, gives a parent credit for a “principle” when sharing an important idea or concept. The group leader’s empathy is conveyed by the extent to which she/he actively reaches out to parents, elicits their ideas, listens reflectively, affirms positive steps taken, and attempts to understand parents’ challenges.

The collaborative process can be effective for parents raising children with ASD for several reasons. This approach gives back respect and self-control to the parents who, because of their children’s difficulties, can be in a vulnerable time of low self-confidence and intense feelings of guilt and self-blame. A collaborative approach is more likely than didactic approaches to increase parents’ confidence and self-efficacy, as well as their engagement and motivation for change (Webster-Stratton, 2012b). The group leader works with each parent to adapt concepts and skills learned in the group session to their particular situation. This flexibility increases the likelihood that the skills learned during the group will generalize into home practices in a way that fits with each parent’s skill level, values, and the specific needs of their children. For more details on the collaborative group leader process, see the

book *Collaborating with Parents to Reduce Children's Behavior Problems* (Webster-Stratton, 2012b), which is the text group leaders receive during the training.

Principle 2: Start with Parents Assessing Their Child's Stage of Communication, Setting Goals, and Self-Monitoring Progress

In the first group session, parents share descriptions of their children's strengths and difficulties and identify their long-term goals. These goals are written on flip charts and posted on the wall and can be changed over subsequent weeks if parents recognize their goal is unrealistic or another goal is more important. Also in the first two sessions, parents actively self-assess what they believe is their children's present communication stage by completing two *Child Communication Checklists*, focused on child-parent and child-peer communication skills, respectively. For example, parents are asked to identify their children's communication abilities (e.g., using pictures rather than words) and behavioral challenges (e.g., lack of response to directions). It is important to help parents think about how, why, and when their children communicate (e.g., child is requesting something, is protesting, is using sounds or words to calm down or express feelings). Children may communicate primarily to get what they want or may function at a more advanced level to ask and answer questions, socialize, and engage in pretend play. Once parents complete the checklists, group leaders help them set realistic goals for their children and family. For example, if a child ignores the parent whenever the parent offers a choice, then the goal will be for the parent to identify ways to get into their child's attention "spotlight," so the child can attend to the request. On the other hand, if a child responds to a parent choice with eye contact or gestures, then the parent's goal may be to use pictures or other signs to encourage further communication. Parents' understanding of their child's present stage of communication and social abilities is important. Through this process, group leaders can assist parents to set

realistic goals and provide the kind of coaching that suits their child best.

Over subsequent group meetings, the group leaders continue to reevaluate the communication checklists and set new goals with parents. This process helps group leaders to individualize each week's program content and select the most appropriate video vignettes for particular parents, as well as to set up tailored practices that address the specific communication and play-related challenges faced by each parent. As the program continues, the group leaders help parents develop plans that target specific parenting strategies toward a particular child's behavior and communication goals.

Principle 3: Build Parents' Confidence and Self-Efficacy

Given the connection between knowledge, efficacy, and behavior, increasing parent confidence and self-efficacy is a major principle of the *IY* program (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1989). The collaborative partnership between the parents with each other and with *IY* group leaders empowers parents to celebrate success and support their knowledge and skill acquisition. *IY* group leaders utilize an array of strategies that focus on parent strengths and emphasize the positive. For instance, embedded in the collaborative process is the strategy of group leaders asking probing questions that promote parents' self-reflection and problem-solving and giving them time to discover the rationale for a specific strategy. Parents feel empowered by this process and the opportunity to learn from each other and share ideas. Additionally, group leaders recognize and praise parents' achievements from completed home activities. These achievements are shared and celebrated in the group, and sometimes parents are asked to demonstrate a particular strategy that worked well for them. Further, group leaders reward parents for reaching personal weekly goals and completion of home practice exercises with prizes (e.g., special stickers, balloons, bubbles), all the while building self-efficacy and modeling a host of strategies the parents are being trained to use with their children.

Principle 4: Address Parents' Cognitions, Emotions, and Behaviors

IY targets the link between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (Bandura, 1989). For instance, parents who have worked for months with a challenging child on the autism spectrum with limited success may have developed very negative views of the child. Frequent thoughts, such as "He's doing that just to irritate me," "Nothing I try is working," and "He is never going to change," make it likely that the parent will have negative feelings and antagonistic interactions with their child. These feelings can also influence parents' interactions with others, such as the child's teacher, who parents may believe is not qualified to work with their child. Parenting stress, limited access to resources, and lack of support may lead to parental depression and low motivation to implement effective new strategies offered during the parent groups. Likewise, negative perceptions of their own ability to manage their frustrations (e.g., "I'm going to explode!") produce unproductive internal dialogues that will undermine nearly any intervention unless these are systematically addressed.

The *IY* Parent Program directly addresses these self-defeating thoughts and the emotions and behaviors they engender. Group leaders work with parents to reflect on their internal dialogue bringing negative thought patterns to light and encourage parents to develop positive coping mechanisms. This can include group activities designed to challenge and rewrite specific negative thoughts, to use positive imagery about successful implementation of new practices, and to practice simple coping messages and calm down breathing throughout the day. For example, one session activity includes breaking the group up into parent buddy pairs to work on a record sheet that lists negative gripes and asks parents to rewrite them with positive statements or coping thoughts. Another activity asks them in pairs to share calm down strategies they can use in problem situations. After this buddy sharing, the group leader asks the group to share these ideas with everyone and records them on the flip chart. This flip chart list can be added to in subsequent sessions as new self-talk scripts

or strategies are discovered. *IY* weekly group meetings provide opportunities to practice these self-talk strategies through role plays. For example, a parent may be practicing how to ignore a child who is tantruming, and another parent will act as the "angel on her shoulder" giving her the positive thoughts to use while she is ignoring this defiant behavior. After this practice the group leader solicits positive feedback from other parents as well as giving encouragement herself. Furthermore, the safe, supportive group atmosphere where other parents are facing similar difficulties, thoughts, and feelings normalizes their experience and provides the parent with opportunities to express emotional challenges with others while learning new strategies for coping.

Principle 5: Video Modeling, Mediation of Vignettes, and Self-Reflection

Observation and modeling can support the learning of new skills (Bandura, 1986). This theory suggests individuals can improve parenting skills by watching video examples of other parent-child interactions that promote their children's social communication and interactions and decrease inappropriate behaviors. *IY-ASD* video vignettes depict four different children on the autism spectrum. All are the same age but have very different developmental abilities. One boy has limited language, uses echolalia frequently, flaps his hands, and often responds with a blank stare or ignores the parent's choices offered. Another girl has quite a bit of language but at school does not initiate interactions with peers, plays alone, and can be oppositional at home. Another boy has no language and is shown in a classroom throwing tantrums. The fourth boy has one- to two-word language skills. All vignettes show mothers or fathers interacting with their children during play or snack time. The majority of vignettes depict one-on-one play, with a few additional vignettes incorporating siblings in the interactions. The parents are shown using a variety of strategies to gain their children's attention and promote their children's social communication and emotion regulation. The vignettes are intended to trigger group discussion, self-reflective learning, and

practices to reenact vignettes using some of the suggested strategies.

Before the group leader shows a vignette, she/he begins by helping the parents understand what they are about to see and what they should look for when they watch the vignette. For example, the group leader might say, *“In the next vignette, see if you can determine why this parent is effective and what her child is learning.”* While the group leader is showing the vignette, she/he pauses the video at various points to give parents a chance to discuss and react to what they have observed. Sometimes vignettes are paused two to three times to encourage parents to reflect on or even practice what they would do next. The group leader asks open-ended questions such as, *“Why do you think singing gets your child’s attention and promotes language development?”* Suggested questions and discussion topics are included in the group leader’s manual. If parents are unclear about the specific strategy, or have missed a critical feature of the vignette, the vignette can be shown again. The goal is not only to have parents grasp the intended concept but also to ensure parents become actively involved in reflecting on the interactions, problem-solving, and sharing ideas. The group leader promotes integration and relevance of the concepts or behavioral principles by asking how the concepts illustrated in the vignettes do or do not apply to their own interactions with their child at home. For example, *“Do you think could use a puppet at home with your child to enhance your interactions? What kind of puppet would you use? Would this be difficult? How will your child react?”* After several of these vignettes are shown and discussed, then a puppet practice is set up.

It is important to emphasize video vignettes are used collaboratively, as a catalyst to stimulate group discussion and problem-solving, not as a device that renders parents as passive observers. Parents’ reactions to the vignettes and the ways in which they process and interpret what they see on the vignettes are more important than what is actually shown on them. The vignettes are designed to illustrate specific concepts, and it is up to the group leader to ask questions that permit parents to self-reflect and discover the key

behavior management or communication principle and how this can be used with their child. For example, a group leader may explore a principle arising from a vignette such as prompting a child’s verbal response and then ask the parents, *“How do you see yourself prompting some of the social skills you have identified on your goals list at home with this idea?”*

Principle 6: Experiential Practice Learning Methods

IY parent training places a major emphasis on experiential learning such as role-playing scenarios, rehearsal and practice of newly acquired behaviors and cognitions, rather than simply didactic instruction. A group leader might believe from the discussion of the vignette that parents understand the behavior management principle or content. However, until the parent is seen “in action,” it will not be clear whether she/he can put the ideas into real-life behaviors. There can be a discrepancy between how participants understand a strategy and how they actually behave. It can be very difficult for parents to think of the right words to use with children and manage angry thoughts and stressful or depressed feelings when children misbehave or fail to respond. Role play or experiential learning is effective because it helps parents anticipate situations more clearly, dramatizing possible sequences of behaviors, feelings, and thoughts. It helps them to rehearse behaviors, practice staying calm, use positive self-talk, and get feedback from the group about their skills.

It is recommended that group leaders set up three to four brief role plays in each session. During weekly sessions, parents are first given the opportunity to discuss several vignettes of a new parenting skill, such as social coaching. Their ideas and social coaching scripts have been recorded on a flip chart. Then, the group leader sets up a large group practice by inviting a parent to demonstrate implementation of the new skill learned (such as coaching of emotions or social skills, prompting, and using picture cards) with another parent who plays the role of “child.” Or, one of the group leaders using a large child-size puppet can act the part of child with no language

and/or with echolalia. Afterward, the group debriefs and gives positive feedback to the parent for the particular skills she/he was demonstrating, such as imitation, prompting, gesturing, or picture cards. The parent “in role” as child also gives feedback from the child’s perspective of her experience and finally the group leader summarized the key learning that came out of the practice. Sometimes replays occur, trying out different ideas from the group. Putting parents in the role of the child can be very helpful not only to learn parenting skills but also to help parents experience the perspective of their child and to show what their child does.

Once the large group role play or practice has been demonstrated and debriefed, has role-played or practiced, the parent group is divided into triads, so everyone can practice the particular skills being covered in the session. During these practices one person is parent, one is child, and the third is observer who watches the interaction and offers suggestions and support as needed. At the end, the observer parent gives positive feedback for the skills she/he observed. Then the triad members change positions. It is important that all parents have opportunities to practice. At the end of these small practices, the triads report the key ideas learned from this experience back to the larger group. The *IY* manual recommends some planned role plays, but group leaders are encouraged to do spontaneous practices. For example, a parent might say, “My child doesn’t let me touch his line of cars in play or let me change anything.” This is the strategic moment for the group leader to do a spontaneous role play and ask that parent to demonstrate her child’s behavior. The group leader then chooses another parent who seems to have an understanding of how to enter into play even when she feels rejected by her child by showing how she/he would respond to this rejection. The group leader can prompt the parent in role to keep back some cars and set up the ABC sequence, so the boy has to ask for each car and engage in joint play. While parents are often nervous about role plays and may resist at first, our weekly evaluations indicate that over time, parents find the role plays one of the most useful learning methods and frequently request to act

out certain situations. Parents report role plays help them prepare realistically for what occurs at home. Here are a few group leader tips to setting up successful role play practices:

- Do large group practices before small group practices. This allows participants to observe exactly what you expect them to practice in small groups.
- Remember you are the “director” of the role play and get to choose actors, set the stage, and determine the script or roles or props needed.
- Scaffold large and small group practices and remember you can always pause action to give feedback and replay if needed.
- Be sure you have covered the content to be practiced first and have developed a script before practice begins.
- Start with simple role-play first (with well-behaving child) to practice and learn parenting skill, and then add complexity by changing the difficulty of the child’s response.
- Tailor the parenting skill to be learned according to child’s developmental and communication level. Ask parents to role-play what their children would do and practice possible responses.
- Make practices fun and relevant to their personal situation.

Principle 7: Buddy Buzzes and Brainstorms

In order to keep all parents actively involved in self-reflective experiential learning, build relationships among parents, differentiate activities, and manage time during the group sessions, group leaders frequently do buddy “buzzes” and brainstorming exercises. Buzzes are when parents are paired up with a buddy to work on a specific exercise such as writing praise statements for their targeted “positive opposite” behavior (i.e., replacement behavior for negative behavior), sharing calming strategies or self-care efforts, or rewriting negative thoughts into positive coping thoughts. These exercises contribute to the shared experience of raising a child with ASD and allow for further individualization of

the program to specific child and parent needs. The benefit of doing a paired buzz instead of a group brainstorm is that every parent is immediately engaged in a task and involved in coming up with solutions. While large group brainstorms can be beneficial as well, they can be less effective than buzzes as perhaps only half the group contributes ideas, and the other half is disengaged, quiet, or distracted. After these buzzes (3–5 min), each buddy can report to the group on their buddy ideas, and these are recorded on the flip chart by the group leader. Buzz handouts are also included in the group leader manual for use in these exercises.

Principle 8: Weekly Home Activity Practice Assignments and Self-Monitoring Checklists

Parents practice the strategies they are learning first in the group with other parents and subsequently at home with their children. They are asked to record their experiences with these activities on *record sheets* that can be found in the *IY* manual. For example, in the first part of the program, parents identify play behaviors they want to increase, such as imitation, use of choice activity boards, being child-directed, and descriptive commenting. They record a brief script of their practice on the record sheet and how their child responded. Parents return these records at the subsequent group session for the group leader to review and help parents fine tune their approaches with further role plays as needed. The record sheets can also assist group leaders to assess parents' understanding of program content and their success at applying these ideas with their children at home. For parents who are having difficulty using these approaches, it can be helpful to set up some additional parent play sessions with their children where they receive individual coaching from the group leader. In addition to home practice assignments, parents are also given *The Incredible Years* book or *Incredible Toddler* book (Webster-Stratton, 2011) and asked to read or listen to a chapter each week to prepare for the subsequent session.

Although standard home assignments are suggested, each week parents complete the self-

monitoring checklists, which allow them to commit to what aspect of the home activities or goals they will try to achieve. Each week the group leader reviews these goals and gives parents personal written feedback, as well as placing surprise stickers, candies, cartoons, or cards in their personal folders to applaud a particular achievement. These personal folders become a private communication between the group leader and the parent. The individual attention to the home assignments encourages parents to self-monitor their own progress.

Principle 9: Reviewing Weekly Evaluations and Making Calls

At the end of every group session, parents complete brief weekly evaluation forms. This provides the group leader with immediate feedback about how each parent is responding to the group leader's style, group discussions, the content, and video vignettes presented in the session and the role play practices. The evaluations bring to light a dissatisfied parent, a parent that does not see the relevance of a particular strategy for their child, or a parent who wants more group discussions or vignettes or practices. The group leader calls or meets with parents individually to resolve issues and ensure the program is addressing their goals. At the end of the program, the entire program is evaluated. This information is helpful for identifying parents who may need further help.

Principle 10: Building Parents' Support Team

Parenting is stressful at times for most parents, but research indicates that parenting a child with ASD is associated with significantly elevated depression and anxiety symptoms and disorders (see Introduction). Parents of children on the spectrum experience a sense of being stigmatized and socially isolated from others. Parents often do not feel they can share the burden of the many decisions they make each day and fear if they are honest with their friends about their child's strange behaviors; they will be met with misunderstanding, indifference, or outright rejection. Struggling to get support services, relentless worry about the future, and financial strain all can

be overwhelming. The group leader's role, then, is to facilitate the parent group so that it serves as a powerful source of support: an empowering environment.

The collaborative learning process allows parents to problem solve together, to express their appreciation for one another, and to learn to cheer each other's successes in tackling difficult problems. The group leaders encourage parents to curb negative thoughts, use positive imagery, take deep breaths, get enough sleep, and develop support systems to stay calm. For example, in Part VI, when children are learning the calm down breathing techniques, the parents also learn how these techniques can be applied to themselves. In Part VII, on the topic of praise and incentives, leaders explore self-reinforcement and self-care with the group, another important strategy for reducing stress. One of their home activity assignments is to do something pleasurable for themselves (e.g., coffee with a friend, date night out, massage, exercise class, etc.) which they share the following week. It is important to help parents understand the importance of self-care in terms of refueling the energy required to care for their children. Weekly calls from group leader also help parents feel supported as they try out new parenting strategies. Group leaders help parents become support systems for each other. Each parent is paired with a "buddy" from the group, to allow parents to support one another outside of the weekly group sessions, process challenges and successes, and share ideas and experiences generalizing *IY* skills at home. Throughout the program parents are given weekly assignments to call or contact their buddy to talk about the new skill they are trying out. Parents can make these weekly contacts in a variety of ways: texting, email, web groups, phone calls, or meeting in person. Initially parents may be hesitant about making these calls but become more confident as they receive support from other parents. Buddies are changed at least once during the program so that parents can benefit from other parents' insights. These assignments further expand the parents' support networks, as they usually express a desire to continue calling their previous buddies.

In addition to building the support system within the group, the group leader also helps them build support within the extended family. Parents often report conflicts with partners, grandparents, and teachers over how to handle the child's problems, resulting in stressed relationships. Every parent is encouraged to have a spouse, partner, or family member such as a grandparent participate in the program with them to provide mutual support. During the program, parents complete a *support network handout* where parents fill in five "helping hands" with the people they think will support them (e.g., friends, family, teachers, counselors, health care providers, childcare providers, neighbors).

Principle 11: Combining Individual Home Coaching with Group Program

Generalization of the strategies parents learn is also an important consideration. To that end, some individual coached practice between the parent and child is recommended for all parents. The amount of individual coaching parents need will vary depending on their confidence in using the parenting techniques and level of the child's behavioral difficulties. Even if parents seem to demonstrate understanding of the parenting strategies in group discussions and role plays, seeing them interacting with their own children is the best way to find out how well they are integrating the skills. These coaching sessions can be delivered in a clinic setting but ideally will be provided in home- and community-based or naturalistic settings such as the grocery store, playground, or preschool. It is ideal for coaching to occur four times, after group sessions on language coaching, social and emotion coaching, pretend play and self-regulation, and handling misbehavior. The format for these coaching sessions includes (1) review of parent's goals, (2) discussion of one to two video vignettes relevant for goals, (3) coached practice between parent and child, (4) debriefing practice, and (5) setting new goals. Ideally the person doing the home coaching is the group leader; if this is not feasible, it is important that the home coach has connected with the group leader to discuss what has been covered in the

group at that time and builds on recommended home activity assignments.

Principle 12: Provide Follow-up Sessions and Promote Parent-Teacher Partnerships

Because social-communication deficits are core features of ASD, it is recommended that after parents complete *IY-ASD*, focused on one-on-one interactions, they are offered another program called *Coaching Children with Autism: Teachers and Parents as Partners*. This four- to six-session program that preferably is offered to both parents and teachers together focuses on classrooms where teachers are coaching two to three children with ASD to facilitate peer interactions and social communication with sequenced picture cue cards. Doing this curriculum with teachers builds the parent-teacher partnership and makes it easier for the parent to occasionally participate in the classroom if they have the time. It means that parents and teachers can work on behavior plans together and promotes cross-setting consistency in language and methods used. For example, if the “calm down thermometer” works well at home, the teacher can also use it in the classroom.

Supplemental content from the *IY-BASIC* program *Managing Misbehavior* may also be necessary for some older children with significantly challenging behaviors. Parents may require further practice understanding the function of behavior, antecedent and environmental accommodations, and consequence modification. *IY-BASIC* content regarding the use of time-out can be adapted for this population by helping the parent understand the value of allowing the child space and time to calm down while emphasizing the potential for time-out strategies to inadvertently reinforce behaviors of a child who prefers to be alone and escape social interactions.

Principle 13: Help Advocate for Families

Due to the limited knowledge regarding the causes of ASD and lack of a cure, parents find themselves researching for information and seeking a variety of interventions. Children with ASD and their families frequently participate in multi-

ple approaches with several different providers. For example, parents often seek behavioral, neurodevelopmental (i.e., speech and occupational therapies), school-based, and biomedical interventions. Effective group leaders will collaborate with other providers and coach parents in ways to advocate for their children’s needs. Several options can be incorporated into the program in order to promote collaboration and advocacy. For example, leaders can communicate directly with therapists and educators to share the approaches parents are learning, consult about the child’s behavior, or arrange team meetings. Additionally, supplemental content can be added from the *IY* Advanced Parent Program that focuses on advocacy, family and teacher problem-solving, and working as a team to support the child.

Future Directions and Summary

Over half of young children with ASD exhibit behavioral problems including oppositional behaviors and aggression (Bearss et al., 2016). However, evidence-based parenting training interventions known to reduce disruptive behavior problems have rarely been evaluated with parents raising young children with ASD. One example of an evidence-based parent training programs is *The Incredible Years (IY-BASIC)* which has been evaluated in over 50 randomized control group studies in an effort to prevent and reduce conduct problems (Menting et al., 2013). In a pilot study in which *IY-BASIC* was evaluated with parents of children with ASD, results indicated a positive response to the program, along with several recommendations, such as inclusion of children with ASD on the video vignettes (Dababnah & Parish, 2016c). A revised *Incredible Years* program, *IY-ASD* program, was developed by Webster-Stratton for parents of children 2–5 years with ASD. *IY-ASD* offers promise for improving parent confidence and support; reducing stress and depression; promoting children’s social, emotional, and language development; and reducing misbehavior. Preliminary evaluations of *IY-ASD* have found positive reductions in parenting stress and child behavior problems, as

well as high participant acceptability (Hutchings et al., 2016).

Future research is needed using randomized controlled group trials to examine the effectiveness of the *IY-ASD* Parent Program for parents and children. The outcomes of these studies should include parents' feelings of competence and level of support, parent stress and depression, as well as child behavior improvements. A recent study suggested that an individual home-based parent intervention was more effective than a group-based parent intervention program in terms of child outcomes of social communication and receptive language (Wetherby et al., 2014). We argue for the added benefits that a group-based approach can provide in terms of building family support systems and reducing parent stress and depression, which may in the long run lead to more sustainability of outcomes. However, by offering parents individual coaching alongside a group approach, we believe it is possible to enhance the outcomes for both children and their families and still reduce the cost of intense clinician-implemented interventions. This is an important direction for future research.

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