

## About This Manual

This manual is written for parents like you: parents of a young child who has difficulty interacting and communicating. This includes children who have or are at risk for social communication delays and autism spectrum disorder or ASD. It is designed to be used as part of a Project ImPACT parent program. ImPACT stands for Improving Parents As Communication Teachers. This program does not teach parenting skills. Rather, it teaches you to use special techniques to help your child develop social communication skills. These techniques are “evidence-based,” which means that they have been researched and found to be effective in helping children improve their social communication skills. Many professionals use these techniques when they work with children who have social communication delays, and research shows that parents can learn these same techniques to help their children.

You are likely to learn the strategies best if you work with a coach. However, you may find the information helpful even if you are not currently in a coaching program. If you are not working with a coach, we suggest that you talk through the information with family members, friends, or other service providers who know your child. If you are participating in a group or individual Project ImPACT program with a coach, you can expect to practice using the techniques with your child during your coaching sessions. Your coach will help you to set goals for your child, show you what to do, and then give you a chance to practice each technique while offering suggestions. Together, you will decide which techniques work best for you and your child. You will also work together to plan practice times with your child at home.

Many children with social communication delays have behavior problems such as tantrums and aggression because they have trouble communicating. As their social communication skills improve, their behavior problems often get better. However, parents of children with more severe behavior problems may benefit from additional strategies to help them manage their child’s behavior. Therefore, we have included an optional chapter at the end of this manual called **Manage Your Child’s Challenging Behavior**. This chapter describes positive behavior support strategies. Your coach will help you decide whether you and your child will benefit from learning these strategies.

This manual is the second edition of *Teaching Social Communication to Children with Autism*. It includes a number of updates to make the manual more user-friendly and appropriate for a wider range of children. This second edition also has a companion website, where you can use links to

view video examples of parents using intervention techniques with their child. In addition, you can download electronic copies of all of the checklists, Practice Plans, and other forms included in this manual.

Although we use the term “parents” throughout this manual, this program is designed for all caregivers of young children with social communication delays, including extended family members and legal guardians. For simplicity’s sake, we use the pronoun “he” to refer to a child. However, we recognize that many children with social communication challenges are girls.

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