

Preface

This book and its companion materials provide a comprehensive parent-mediated intervention curriculum developed specifically for families of young children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and related social communication delays. It is designed for children from the age of earliest concern to about age 6, although it has also been used with older children (up to about age 12) who have significant language and cognitive delays. The curriculum offers providers a step-by-step guide for teaching families to use naturalistic developmental-behavioral intervention (NDBI) strategies to enhance their children's social engagement, communication, imitation, and play skills within meaningful activities and daily caregiving routines. The curriculum is designed to be used by service providers working with families whose children have social communication challenges; these providers may include early childhood professionals, speech-language pathologists, special educators, behavioral specialists, clinical psychologists, social workers, and occupational therapists. As described in more detail in Part I of this manual, the parent-mediated intervention program offered here—known as Project ImPACT (Improving Parents As Communication Teachers)—is a unique blend of intervention techniques drawn from the developmental and behavioral literatures. These intervention strategies have a strong evidence base for increasing social communication skills in young children with ASD and related disorders (see Schreibman et al., 2015).

This program is the result of over 15 years of development and implementation with hundreds of families and multiple early intervention sites across the United States. It was originally designed to be used by clinicians working with children with ASD, in a one-to-one setting with each child and parent, at the former Hearing and Speech Institute in Portland, Oregon. Through our collaborations with the Statewide Regional Programs Autism Training Sites (RPATS), sponsored by Portland State University and the Oregon Department of Education, a group coaching model was added that would allow the program to be conducted in early childhood special education classrooms. Detailed guidelines for conducting parent coaching in both individual and group models are contained in this volume.

This manual is the second edition of what was originally titled *Teaching Social Communication to Children with Autism*. It includes updates based on new research and our ongoing collaborations. In particular, these updates have focused on making this program appropriate and accessible for a wider range of children and families, including those without an ASD diagnosis who have social communication delays, as well as more flexible for use in a range of practice settings. This second edition also includes an optional behavior management unit that can be used to support families experiencing significant behavioral challenges.

The present version of the program includes the following:

1. A manual for coaches (this volume), which covers how to conduct the program in either an individual or group coaching context and includes a guide to the companion website (see the box at the end of the table of contents).
2. A parent manual, which is appropriate for use in either the individual or group model.
3. Access to the companion website, which includes downloadable parent and coach forms, as well as PowerPoint slides for group presentations.
4. Video clips of parents using techniques with their children, which are available for downloading or streaming.

Coach Manual

The coach manual (this volume) provides the necessary background information and detailed procedures for conducting a parent-mediated intervention program with parents of young children with social communication delays. It is divided into three parts, plus an Appendix. Part I presents the rationale and research support for Project ImPACT. It describes the overall program, including the core social communication skills targeted, the strategies used to teach children these skills, and the strategies used to coach parents. The practicalities of planning and implementing Project ImPACT in community settings are also covered.

Part II provides a step-by-step guide to conducting the individual coaching model. It is designed for providers working with families on a one-to-one basis in a home or clinic setting. Organized into seven basic units, it teaches parents intervention strategies that build sequentially on each other over the course of 24 sessions. After the program is complete, follow-up sessions are recommended; the step-by-step guidelines for a follow-up session can be found in Unit 7. Finally, Part II includes a five-session optional unit (Unit 8) that the coach can use at any point in the program to help parents manage a child's challenging behavior through positive behavior support strategies.

Part III provides a step-by-step guide to conducting a group parent coaching model. This model is appropriate for providers who serve children primarily in a classroom or other group setting. This version of the program teaches parents the same strategies, but is organized into six group sessions alternating with six individual sessions for one-on-one coaching. Group sessions are taught with the visual aids of PowerPoint slides and video examples showing parents using techniques with their children. Part III includes notes that highlight the important information the coach should cover during the group presentations, along with a sample script for the corresponding slides. Both the slides and the videos can be found on the companion website (see below).

In the Appendix, Table A.1 lists all the supporting forms used in both the individual and group coaching models, including assessment and other data collection materials. Table A.2 lists the video clips.

Parent Manual

The parent manual is designed for use with either the individual or group coaching model. Briefly and clearly, it describes the purpose and procedure for each of the intervention strategies. The

manual includes illustrations and practice plans. Additional copies of the parent manuals may be purchased separately.

Throughout this book and the parent manual, we use the term *parent* to refer to any adult involved in the care of a child with social communication delays. However, we recognize that other caregivers besides actual parents participate in parent-mediated intervention programs for children with autism, including stepparents, extended family members, and legal guardians. Except for the sample scripts and examples, we use the pronoun “she” to refer to the parent and practitioner, and “he” to refer to the child. This convention is used to maintain consistency and clarity throughout the text, rather than to indicate a specific gender.

Companion Website and Video Access

This second edition of Project ImPACT features a companion website with downloadable copies of all the supporting forms used in both the individual and group coaching models, including assessment and other data collection materials and PowerPoint slides for the six group sessions detailed in Part III. Program purchasers are granted permission to download and use these materials with families.

Video examples of parents using the intervention techniques with their children are available for free download or streaming; links for video access are provided at the companion website (see the box at the end of the table of contents). Again, a list of the clips, with the techniques and language levels they illustrate, is provided in this volume’s Appendix (Table A.2).

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