

5 ASD-Specific Strategies



A multi-disciplinary workgroup consisting of autism professionals and parents from across Alabama completed a work process to identify 5 key strategies that address core features of ASD within the Part C system of care and honoring the 8 Core Values.

1. Following the Child's Lead

- Coach the caregiver to present instruction or opportunity for the child to respond within the context of a child-chosen or child-preferred activity or familiar routine.
- The child indicates an interest in an activity or engages in a familiar routine, and the adult then presents a teaching opportunity within that activity.
- The goal of child-initiated teaching episodes is to increase the child's motivation for participation and to use the child's achievement of his or her goal as the positive reinforcement for the child's use of the target skill determined by the IFSP.

2. Naturalistic Teaching

- Identify the child's motivation through observation and conversations with caregivers.
- Encourage caregivers to use materials the child is likely to encounter on a daily basis across natural and functional environments and routines.
- Provide natural consequences that are naturally found in the environment and have a direct relationship to the activity you are completing.
 - During a diaper change, the caregiver encourages the child to hand him/her the new diaper.
 - During snack, the caregiver encourages the child to make a choice then the child receives the food.

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3. Natural Reinforcement

- Coach caregivers to use natural reinforcement that is intrinsic to the child's IFSP goal rather than unrelated to the child's goal.
 - Caregiver and child are playing with a preferred toy. Child would be reinforced by his/her continued access to the toy and freedom to play.
 - During bath time, child reaches for wash cloth and receives wash cloth.
- The goal of this is to keep the child's motivation high and to reinforce "trying," or initiating, while teaching novel behaviors (Koegel et al., 1988).
- An additional method for enhancing motivation involves interspersing easier (already mastered) tasks for more difficult (target learning skills) tasks.

4. Parent-Implemented Intervention

- Engaging and coaching parents to be the primary treatment facilitator rather than a bystander or observer.
- Examples of skills parents learn to use include strategies to develop imitation skills, commenting on the child, expectant waiting to elicit communication, appropriate sleeping routines, joint attention, and development of play date activities.

5. Modeling

- Adult demonstration of a behavior that follows the child's lead and often demonstrates the target skill from the IFSP.
- When providing live modeling, the caregiver:
 - Clearly outlines and describes the target behavior to model.
 - Ensures all modeling is done so in a consistent manner.
 - Obtains the child's attention prior to modeling the target behavior.
 - Develops a plan to fade or stop the use of modeling to encourage the child to independently display the target skill.