

# Mentor training booklet



## Goal of ACT:

To educate people about autism to protect children from harm, and connect them with education in order to live better lives.

## WHAT IS AUTISM?

Autism is a term used to describe a developmental brain disorder. Today, it is estimated that one in every 68 children is diagnosed with autism. An estimated 1.5 million individuals in the U.S. and tens of millions worldwide are affected by autism. Studies suggest boys are more likely than girls to develop autism. Autism affects the way a child views the world and makes communication and social interaction difficult. The child may also have repetitive behaviors or intense interests. Symptoms are different for each of the affected areas - Communication, Social Interaction, and Repetitive Behaviors.

A child may not have the same symptoms and may seem very different from another child with the same disorder.

## AUTISM AFFECTS THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

### **SOCIAL CHALLENGES**

- Most children with autism seem to have difficulty with everyday human interactions. They may not understand social rules and making friends is hard.
- Children with autism may use fewer behaviors to interact socially, such as eye contact or pointing to communicate. Also, understanding what people are saying and using spoken language may be challenging.

### **NEED FOR SAME**

- Many children with autism need, and demand, absolute consistency in their environment. A slight change in routines, such as mealtimes, dressing, taking a bath, and going to school at a certain time or by the same route, can be extremely stressful.
- Children with autism may become very upset when there are changes in the environment that impact their senses such as loud noises, unusual tastes, or feeling different textures.

### **REPETITIVE BEHAVIOR**

- Although children with autism usually appear physically normal, odd repetitive motions may set them apart from other children. Some children and older individuals repeatedly flap their arms flick their fingers or rock back and forth.
- They might also play with objects in a repetitive or unusual way, such as lining up toys or take interest in playing with unusual objects most children do not prefer.

Children with autism that use language often repeat what others say or use the same words over and over.

## EARLY SIGNS OF AUTISM

**Infancy**

- \*When carried, she/he does not get settled or remain still
- \*Does not want to be carried or held
- \*Doesn't make baby sounds
- \*Doesn't smile often
- \*Cannot make eye contact
- \*Does not respond to name
- \*However, has typical motor development

**Early childhood**

- \*Use others body parts as tools
- \*Does not have close relationship with others
- \*May smell or lick objects
- \*Interacts very minimally with parents
- \*Doesn't play with others
- \*Does not engage in pretend play
- \*Cannot speak properly
- \*Refuses to eat certain foods
- \*When talking, repeats words that have already been spoken
- \*Doesn't appropriate voice intonation when speaking (the voice doesn't go up or down)
- \*Gets angry when his schedule/program is changed
- \*Relationship grows but with difficulty
- \*Gets angry when disturbed and is not easily comforted
- \*Cannot make eye contact

**Notes/comments**

## BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION TECHNIQUES

Kids with autism tend to be viewed by society as troubled or naughty children. Often times children with autism exhibit negative behaviors during periods where they are extremely overwhelmed and cannot communicate their needs.

### ***Behavior is Communication:***

When a child is misbehaving think about:

- 1) What in the environment might be causing the child to behave this way?
- 2) Does the child understand what the expectations are?
- 3) Is there a way for the child to communicate that everyone understands?
- 4) Remember they are trying to communicate- what might they be trying to say?
- 5) How are your own behaviors impacting the child?



6) Understand why the behavior is happening:

–Antecedent – What happened directly before the behavior?

–Behavior – What is the behavior?

–Consequence – What happened directly after the behavior?

### Notes/Comments

### ***Some strategies to help control behavior:***

- 1) Create a clear way to communicate expectations
  - Always use the same words, pictures, hand signals every time you want to communicate the expectation. BE CONSISTENT.
- 2) Create a consistent routine for every day that is communicated clearly to the child.
  - When changes need to be made to the routine prepare the child by communicating the situation often prior to the change that must occur.
- 3) Provide consistent consequences and praise for both negative and positive behavior
- 4) To increase positive behaviors: use positive reinforcement:
  - Pick a reward your child is excited about
  - Reward immediately after behavior occurs
- 5) To decrease negative behaviors:
  - Ignore the behavior
- 6) If a child is aggressive think about the questions above and make sure you respond immediately and in the same manner every time.
  - Do not be aggressive with the child. If they see you respond aggressively to aggression they will not understand that you want them to be calm.
- 7) Have a game plan for meltdowns
  - Know your child's behaviors and think about a plan ahead of time for dealing with your child before the meltdown occurs.

MYTHS AND FACTS

**Myth #1: Autism is a behavioral disorder.**

**FACT: Autism is a brain disorder**, but there are no medical tests to diagnose autism. Doctors and psychologists learn about children by asking questions and watching their behavior.



**Myth #2: Autism is caused by vaccinations.**

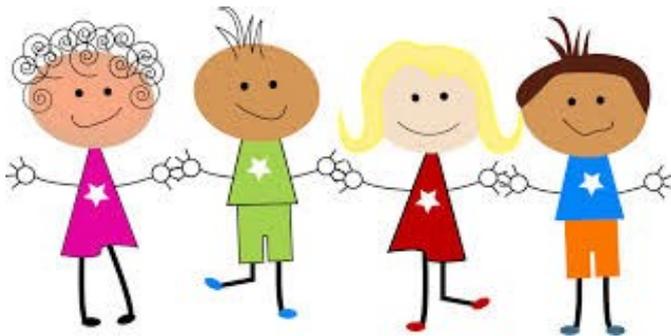
**FACT: Research shows that vaccines do not cause autism.** Vaccines are important in keeping children safe in other ways. It is a coincidence that parents notice the 1st signs of autism around the same time as when vaccines are given.

**Myth #3: Children with autism don't show affection.**

**FACT: Children with autism have feelings**, but they often show them differently. Children with autism can form relationships with others, especially those who are important in their lives.

**Myth #4: Children with autism can't make eye contact, communicate, or play.**

**FACT: Children with autism can communicate**, but they may have trouble using eye contact or understanding what people say. They may repeat phrases or play in unusual ways. They may need time to learn rules of how to play and interact with others.



**Myth #5: Children with autism can't learn.**

**FACT: Children with autism can learn!** Most children with autism learn through gestures, pictures, sign language, spoken language, and/or with the help of computers.

**Myth #6: Children with autism will never get better.**

**FACT: Autism is a lifelong condition**, but behaviors can improve with therapy over time. Children can learn how to communicate, play with others, go to school, and succeed in areas that are interesting to them.

## TECHNIQUES TO HELP STUDENTS SUCCEED

- Give them enough time to answer.
- Talk a bit, give brief instructions and on point.
- Teach students with examples. 1866-845-0871
- Prepare schedule; with pictures, words and objects to help them know what will happen later.
- Time table and calendar help students know what follows after another.
- Parts of consciousness tend to have pain to persons with autism. Some smell, sounds, etc. give these individuals pains, give them time to relax every time.
- Use basic techniques for job teaching.
- People with Autism (disease) often learn by seeing/examples.
- Use objects to support the needs of individual; Example calculators/ computers
- Body exercises are important for people with Autism
- Students with Autism need to be taught good manners by using models/examples
- Offer them sufficient time and let them know they can relax at their own time/pace



- Do not expect them to sit on their seats every time. Sometimes it is difficult for them.
- Repetition is part of them so that they conform to the environment.
- People with Autism normally need a cooperate schedule.
- The rest (relaxing) technique is good for settling
- People with Autism do not understanding about the state of emergency
- If a student with deficiencies can learn by using the same techniques
- Like other students, it is possible that she/he cannot be deficit again
- Usually students with Autism eat food but with a tendency of choosing because of their problem of understanding
- "SHOW THEM THEY ARE GOOD!" Every day force/encourage them with something good.
- Prepare means and techniques of communication.
- Prepare means of communicating example: "stop", "resting".
- If you eat or drink, do so in the same routine in which students can eat well.
- Change procedures based on the reality if something (an incident or event) being done does not please/ make the student happy
- Create safe and predictable environment
- Have humanity



### TEACHING LIFE SKILLS

The goal of every parent is to raise a successful independent child. Having a kid with autism does not mean this is impossible it just means things have to be taught in a different way. A parent needs to be more available, more hands on, more patient and have a specific plan of how to teach life skills that other kids may learn on their own.

#### HOW TO TEACH LIFE SKILLS:

Create opportunities to teach your child decision making skills by providing choices. There are many ways to provide choices.

- Offering Choices not threats
  - \* Instead of “Eat your dinner or else.”
  - \* Say “Would you like to eat your ugali or your bananas first?”
- Offering Choices that are specific
  - \* Instead of “What do you want to do today?”
  - \* Say “Would you like to play inside or outside the house?”
- Explain the choices that have natural consequences
  - \* Instead of “Don’t touch the stove it is hot and will burn you.”
  - \* Say “You can play in the kitchen but if you get to close to the stove it will burn you”
- Explain choices that have parent-imposed consequences
  - \* Instead of: “Don’t throw rocks at the house”
  - \* Say “You can play outside but if you throw rocks at the window you will have to come back inside”
- Provide choices that are fun and humorous
  - \* Instead of “Wash the laundry now”
  - \* Say “Do you want to be super laundry man or captain washing machine?”

Offer no choice- Offer no choice to the child if he is going to hurt himself, hurt others, or if the decision is to only be made by the adult. If offering no choice explain to the child why choices are not an option.

#### Notes/comments



#### WHEN USING CHOICES ALWAYS REMEMBER:

- 1) Allow your child time to think about an answer
- 2) Be positive and let your child know you believe they can make good choices
- 3) Acknowledge their choice and thank them for making a good one
- 4) Offer only as many choices as they can handle. Start with two choices and after a while add more
- 5) Offer choices the child will want to do
- 6) Offer real choices they can accomplish and make sure they are always specific
- 7) Don’t push the child on making a choice if you notice they are starting to melt down. If a meltdown is starting to happen refer to page \_\_\_\_ of this booklet

## PROVIDE ACTIVITIES THAT TEACH INDEPENDENT LIVING

### Nursery School Years

- Give a kid a title or role to play within the house that is specific
  - \* Kitchen Manager or Chores Supervisor
- Assign child jobs they will be successful in doing as a young child
  - \* Sweep floor, Fill water
- Use a visual chart or schedule of activities and have look at it to refer to the jobs you want the child to do
- Praise the child when they complete the task
- While they complete the task help them to work on
  - \* Dealing with mistakes
  - \* Trying to work their hardest
  - \* Managing their time to complete their work

### Primary School Years

- Have them work on making their own snacks or helping with cooking
- Have them help with the dishes
- Have them help with doing the laundry, hanging clothes, and fetching water
- Have them help fold clothes and put them away
- Teach them each step of an activity you want them to complete and create a visual chart with them that they can use to help them complete the tasks
- Find a way to reward them for activities they complete that are more challenging

### The Older Years

- Have them learn how to navigate public transportation and areas of importance for life skills
- Have them attend grocery/market trips and help with paying for objects and collecting change
- Have them learn to clean all areas of the house
- Teach them how to cook different foods independently

All life skills are developed through parents teaching, practice, patience and reinforcement. Never assume the child understands how to do things they have not been taught. Your attitude toward them will be the attitude they have towards themselves so be patient and positive.

### Notes/Comments



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**Online resources**

- Autism Connects Tanzania at <http://www.autismconnectstanzania.org/>
  - Screening tools: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/hcp-screening.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/>
- Autism speaks at <https://www.autismspeaks.org/>
- Empowerment through Education at <http://edpowerment.org/>
- Autism Society of America at <http://www.autism-society.org/>