Teaching social-communication skills to children with autism and related disorders: A parent-implemented approach
The Autism Parent Training Program was developed in 2004 by speech-language pathologist Anna Dvortcask, M.S., C.C.C.-S.L.P., and behavioral psychologist Brooke Ingersoll, Ph.D. Our therapists who teach this program have been trained extensively under the guidance of the two authors.

Providence St. Vincent Medical Center: 503-216-2339
Providence Child Center: 503-215-2233
Providence Newberg Medical Center: 503-537-3546
www.providence.org/childcenter
Why train the parents?
As a parent, you spend the most time with your child. Once trained to teach social-communication skills to your child, you can work with him or her throughout the day in various settings. Teaching you to implement intervention strategies at home is both time-efficient and cost-effective.

What is the focus of the program?
The program focuses on using social and communication techniques in daily routines. This will help your child simplify and maintain skills he or she has learned. The training can positively influence your child’s development while reducing your stress levels.

What is the program’s purpose?
We have two main objectives:
• To teach you and your family some techniques that will enhance your child’s social engagement, language, play and imitation skills.
• To help you develop appropriate goals for your child based on a combination of developmental milestones, family interests and therapy recommendations. You will learn to monitor your child’s progress over time.

What therapy approach is used?
Our program uses naturalistic therapy, which focuses on social communication. This means, if your child is interested in playing with a ball, the ball will be used as a natural way to reinforce your child’s behavior.
Techniques focus on:

- Being socially interactive with others (e.g., taking turns, using eye gaze)
- Developing receptive and expressive language (e.g., using words to request, following directions)
- Enhancing play skills (e.g., pushing a car, feeding a baby doll)
- Imitating a play partner to learn new skills

These skills may be disrupted in children who are on the autism spectrum, as well as in those who have language delays.

What happens during a therapy session?

Each session focuses on a new technique. The therapist reviews the techniques from previous sessions, then introduces and demonstrates the new technique. You will spend about 45 minutes practicing techniques with your child while the therapist observes, gives assistance and constructive feedback. Videotaping is also used to track your child's progress over time.

Do I receive any written information to take home?

You will receive a manual with all of the information you will need to learn the techniques taught in the program. The manual cites current research and assigns homework for you to do between sessions. Additional information is also available, such as specific resources and strategies for working with autistic children.
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What is expected of the parents?
Parents who participate in this program will complete some required reading and homework between sessions. You should also plan to spend 30 to 60 minutes per day at home practicing the techniques with your child.

How often are sessions scheduled?
The program is designed for families to attend therapy with their child twice a week for 90 minutes per session. Twice-weekly sessions are ideal for a child’s progress and for parent participation. We can design the program to meet your scheduling needs by reducing the content or concentrating your child’s training to certain areas.

How do I schedule an appointment?
A prescription is required for our services. Please speak with your child’s physician if you are interested in autism training. If your child is already seeing a physical, occupational or speech therapist, that therapist can help you by obtaining a prescription from your child’s physician.

Once you have the prescription, please call 503-215-2233 to schedule an appointment.

Will my insurance pay for the treatment?
Contact your insurance company to find out if your coverage includes autism services. Please refer to the insurance information that was included in the packet you received from our clinic. Your therapist will assist if you have additional questions.