PLAY Project
Community Presentation

www.playproject.org
Agenda

• Introduction: The Need for Relationship based models
• Overview of the PLAY Project
• 7 Circles of the PLAY Project
• Research: Evidence for PLAY
• Where to find The PLAY Project
The Autism Policy Dilemma: Part 1

• More children with ASD need more intervention.
• Too many are not getting services and are on waiting lists.
• The deficits of ASD are in the realm of social interaction
• Current service arrays not meeting the need
The Autism Policy Dilemma: Part 2

• Main intervention: ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) or EIBI (Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention)
• ABA has strong evidence for children with ASD over age 3
• But it is delivered by professionals
• ABA is hard to administer with fidelity in community settings
• Policy: Long wait lists, too many underserved
Need: Intensive Intervention

National Research Council (2001)

- Begin early: 18 month-5 years
- 25 hours/week
- 1:1 or 1:2
- Engaging
- Strategic Direction
- Comprehensive programs address ASD
## Comparison: Intensive Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLAY Project</th>
<th>ABA/EIBI</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on social reciprocity</td>
<td>Focus on IQ, cognition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unstructured: naturalistic</td>
<td>Highly structured</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow child’s lead/intent</td>
<td>Train child in small steps</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal reinforcement: fun</td>
<td>External reinforcement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intensive 20+ hrs/wk</td>
<td>Intensive 30-40 hrs/wk</td>
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<tr>
<td>One-on-one to begin</td>
<td>One-on-one to begin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence established</td>
<td>Measurable, strong research</td>
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<tr>
<td>More generalization</td>
<td>Less generalization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less expensive</td>
<td>More expensive</td>
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Parent Implemented Interventions

- Developmental, relationship-based
- Less costly, easily implemented
- Recognized as evidence based by the National Professional Development Center
- Parents as the child’s best play partner
- Uses natural environment of the home
- Gain in hours of intervention by making every interaction count
Together we can change the course of life for children with autism.
What is the PLAY Project?

- Autism Early Intervention
- Intensive (15 hrs/week)
- Home-based (usually)
- Parent implemented
- Developmental &
- Relationship focused
- Strengths oriented
- Fun & playful
- Collaborative
- Evidence-based
PLAY Consultants Provide the Service

• PLAY Consultants are masters level pediatric professional and child development experts

• Speech/Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, Early Intervention Providers, Psychologists, & Physicians

• We have trained over 700 PLAY Project Consultants both nationally and internationally

• PLAY Consultants coach parents to do what the child loves.
PLAY Autism Intervention

- Using the 7 Circles of PLAY as a guide, PLAY Consultant trains and supports parent to effectively engage child
- 7 Circles is the actual experience of the family
- Key elements of the program:
  - Parent support and guidance: coaching, modeling, and feedback
  - Video footage: capture parent-child interaction
  - PLAY Plan: provides clear techniques and activities for parents to engage child
PLAY Autism Intervention is . . .

- Family and child centered
- Empowering for parents
- Relationship-based
- Playful & fun: Addresses the core deficit: Social impairment

“When you do what the child loves, the child will love to be with you.”- Dr. Rick
7 Circles of the PLAY Project

1. READY, SET, PLAY! Introduction to Principles & Methods
2. UNDERSTANDING THE CHILD: Create a Unique Profile
3. THE PLAY PLAN: Individualized Techniques & Activities
4. FAMILY GUIDANCE Coaching, Modeling and Feedback
5. ENGAGEMENT: Adult & Child PLAY time
6. REVIEW: Video & Written Feedback
7. CHANGE & GROWTH: Revise PLAY Plan as child develops
Circle 1: PLAY Project Principles

• Fun with people—doing what the child loves
• Put in the time—2 hours per day broken up into 15-20 minute sessions
• Accurately profile the child in terms of their Comfort Zone, Sensory-Motor Profile & Functional Developmental Levels
• Based on the child’s profile, play at the right level
Circle 1: PLAY Project Methods

- Read the child's cues and intent
- Slow the pace of play, observing and waiting for the child’s idea
- Follow the child's lead, responding to what the child wants
- Open and close circles of communication (back and forth interactions)
- Build on the child’s interests
Circle 2: Understanding Each Child’s Unique Profile
Circle 2: Each Child has a Unique Profile

- Comfort Zone (CZ)
- Sensory Motor Profile (SMP)
- Functional Developmental Levels (FDLs)
Circle 2: Comfort Zone

- What the child does when you let them do whatever they want to do
- Repetitive, stereotyped, and dominating interests
- When you see CZ activities the child has ‘holes’ in FDL 1
- In their own world, not ‘with us’
- Give examples...
The unique way a child experiences the world through the various sensory modalities and movement:

- Visual Processing
- Tactile
- Auditory
- Oral
- Olfactory
- Motor Planning
- Vestibular
- Proprioceptive
Greenspan’s 6 Functional Developmental Levels

FDL 1: Self-Regulation & Shared Attention
*begins at birth to 3 months*
- Can remain calm and regulated enough to share attention with people
- Can sustain brief episodes of interaction
- Regulation derailed by Comfort Zone activities
  - Stimming, scripting, lining up, etc. remove attention
- When you see CZ, child has holes in FDL 1
- Use ‘The Rabbit Hole Techniques’ to join the child at FDL 1

Key Questions:
How much is the child with us?
Where is the child’s attention? What is the child’s intention?

FDL 2: Engagement & Relating
*begins between 2 and 7 months*
- More sustained attention = engagement
- You call to them and they look—Circles begin!!
- Peek a boo is the classic FDL 2 game
- Key Question: How easy is it to engage the child?
- This is the ‘sweat’ level. The parent/professional has to do the work (i.e. sweat) to keep the child engaged
- Hard to follow child’s lead, but you can!
- Watch out for visual activities
- Use Rabbit Hole Techniques
Greenspan’s 6 Functional Developmental Levels

FDL 3: Intentionality & 2-Way Communication

*begins between 3 and 10 months

- Opening and closing of 6-10 circles
- Key activities: Simple cause and effect games
- Key Question: Is the child initiating?
- We want to ‘create a monster’ (i.e. child won’t leave you alone!)
- This is the ‘wait’ level. The parent/professional has to wait to see if the child will initiate (i.e. open circles)
- Beginning of understanding routines
- Beginning of first single words

FDL 4: Social Problem-Solving & Mood Regulation

*begins between 9 and 18 months

- Opening and closing of 10-30 circles
- Solid 4 = Totally ‘with us’. Continuous flow of interaction
- Gestural communication along with words. Imitation
- 50+ words
- Follows spontaneous 1 step commands: Go, get, give to...
- Feelings more and more organized
- Problem solver! Has his/her own ideas
- ‘Little stories’: ‘Gets’ meaningful sequences
- Simple pretend: Phone to ear. Bottle to baby’s mouth
Greenspan’s 6 Functional Developmental Levels

FDL 5: Creating Symbols & Using Words & Ideas

*begins between 24 to 30 months*

- Classic two year old communication
- 1-2 word phrases
- What, Where, Who, Actions, Yes/No
  - Not open ended ‘What’, Why, or When or Pronouns
- One thematic pretend play with adults
- Follows 1-2 step commands.
- Greetings emerging
- Compliance
  - It is not following their lead to follow their lead

FDL 6: Emotional Thinking, Logic, & Sense of Reality

*begins between 36 to 48 months*

- Talking in sentences
- ‘Why’. Can recall the immediate past
- Builds bridges between ideas
  - Identifies own and others’ feelings
  - Recognizes relationship between feeling, behavior and consequences
- Two thematic play
- Carries on simple conversations
- Peer play established
- Misbehavior as developmental accomplishment
Zone of Proximal Development

We must challenge the child at the ‘just right’ level!
Circle 3: The PLAY Plan
Individualized Techniques & Activities
Circle 3: PLAY Plan

- Techniques and activities answer the question: “What can I do to engage my child?”

- Individualized techniques and activities based on the child’s profile.

- Activities answer the question: “What would be fun for Johnny/Susie?”
Circle 3: Techniques

The Purpose of the Techniques:

• Provide parents and professionals with ideas for engagement
• Improve initiative & flexibility
• Increase numbers & complexity of circles of communication
• Improve ability to solve problems
• Promote fun, silly, engaging interactions!
Activities are generated based on the child’s profile (FDL, SMP, & CZ). Examples:

• Rolling child up in a rug
• Swinging in a blanket
• Finger painting with shaving cream, colored glue with sparkles, etc.
• Puzzles
• Pretend: dress up, crashing cars, tea party, dolly sleeping, dinosaurs chasing a man, etc.
Circle 4: Family Guidance
Coaching, Modeling, & Feedback
Circle 4: Family Guidance

• PLAY Consultant
  – **Models** PLAY Techniques
  – Observes and **Coaches** PLAY Partners (Parents)
  – Provides written **Feedback** on PLAY Session
7 Circles of the PLAY Project

Circle 5: Engagement
Adult & Child PLAY time
Circle 5: PLAY Time Engagement Between Parent and Child

• Playful & fun: “When you do what the child loves, the child will love to be with you.”

• 2 hours per day, broken up into 10-20 minute PLAY sessions

• Daily routines such as meal time, bath time, and bed time should be used for interaction

• Research says completely doable for families
7 Circles of the PLAY Project

Circle 6: Review
Video & Written Feedback
Circle 6: Visit Review
Video & Written Feedback

PLAY Project Visit
Parents & Child + PLAY Project Consultant

Report + Video
Circle 7: Change & Growth
Revise PLAY Plan
As child develops
Significant improvements in:

- Caregiver/parent and child interaction
- Social interaction of children with autism
- Social-emotional development of children with autism
- First study using parent implemented, developmental, relationship based model to show improvements in autism symptomology
- No increase in stress; reduction in depression
Research: Implications

- PLAY Project offers a replicable method
- Uses an efficient training and certification model
- Cost effective to parents and society
- Can be broadly and quickly disseminated
- Serves a growing need
- Gets children off of waiting lists and into services
What is Teaching PLAY?

A school staff training program that adapts the 7 Circles of PLAY to the preschool and kindergarten classroom setting:

A. **Addresses social impairment** in students on the autism spectrum

B. **Built on the foundation of the PLAY Project’s evidence-based practices**

C. **Complements parent-implemented services that start in the home and continue during preschool**
Teaching PLAY:

- Focuses on social **INTERACTION**, leading to learning readiness
- Values fun, playfulness, and joy in learning
- Is NOT a curriculum, but a developmental lens to apply in any educational environment
- Does NOT interfere with usual pre-school teaching practices

“Engagement leads to educational readiness.”
• The number of children with autism has increased so much that despite insurance laws there are still too many children waiting for services nationally.
• The PLAY Project has been implemented on a statewide basis.
• We have shown that we can achieve our mission to support families to help their children reach their potential.
• But we have not achieved our vision of serving the many families who need services.
• We believe that parent-implemented models like The PLAY Project should be adopted as a national public policy to reduce waitlists and serve more children.
How can professionals learn more about The PLAY Project?

- Playproject.org has a list of upcoming training & events in your area.

- The PLAY Project works with community partners to offer intensive training.

- Early childhood professionals with a Masters level or equivalent can be trained to become a Certified PLAY Project Consultant
  
  - Attend a 2 day intensive workshop
  - 6 week online course with assignments, live sessions and case study exams
  - 12-18 Months of PLAY Project supervision

- The PLAY Project offers online educational courses to learn everything about The PLAY Project and the principles and methods of PLAY Project Autism Intervention

- Go to www.playproject.org to sign up for our email notifications to receive the latest updates, stories, helpful resources, and more
Go to www.playproject.org/locations to find a PLAY Project Consultant in your area:

- If The PLAY Project is not available in your area, contact your local Community Mental Health, Speech & Language or Occupational Therapy provider and advocate for an intensive training in your area.

- The PLAY Project offers online courses for parents to learn everything from what is The PLAY Project, transition tricks for your child with autism, how to use behavior to help your child developmentally, and more! Go to www.playproject.org/learning

- Go to www.playproject.org to sign up for our email notifications to receive the latest updates, stories about the PLAY Project, helpful resources and more.
Thank you!

Please visit our website to learn more!
www.playproject.org