



PARTNERING WITH PARENTS

WEBINAR WORKSHEET

Part One

About this webinar

We knew it before, but one thing highlighted by our current circumstances due to COVID-19 is the critical role parents play in the life of their child. Since March, many children with ASD have been primarily, if not solely, at home with their parents. Research tells us parents have a greater influence over the life of their child than anyone else. This is but one reason it is critical that professionals and parents work closely together to support a child with ASD to achieve his/her best life.

In this first webinar session we will discuss the reasons why partnering with parents is so critical for children with ASD. Participants will learn about the principles of family-centered care and key components of effectively working with parents. In part two next week, participants will learn basic strategies for working together to develop goals, and the use of basic coaching strategies to more effectively support parents in using strategies with their child in home and natural settings.

Purpose of this worksheet:

This worksheet is a tool you can use during the webinar to remember key points and to take notes about how you can apply the information you learn.

The content included is general information and is not specific medical or behavioral advice. The information provided may not work for every child with autism or their family. We recommend working closely with your child's doctor(s), therapist(s), and/or educator to discuss how the ideas shared may be individualized to meet your child's needs. If you have an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room right away.

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A FEW IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

“Scientists have discovered that the experiences children have early in life—and the environments in which they have them—not only shape their brain architecture, but also affect whether, how, and when the developmental instructions carried in their genes are expressed. This is how the **environment of relationships young children experience with adult caregivers**, as well as early nutrition and the physical, chemical, and built environments, all get “under the skin” and **influence lifelong learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health—for better or for worse**. Starting at birth and continuing throughout life, **our ability to thrive is affected by our ongoing relationships and experiences and the degree to which they are healthy, supportive, and responsive or not.**”

Core Principles of Development Can Help Us Redesign Policy and Practice. Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University. Available at:

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/three-early-childhood-development-principles-improve-child-family-outcomes/#responsive-relationships>

Partnering with Parents:

- Maximizes benefit to child and family
- Results in better overall outcomes not only for the services you provide, but for the child and family as a whole
- Better prepares family and child for future – we are not in their life forever
- Partnering builds families’
 - Confidence, competence, and capacity

A few reasons why partnering is so important for children with ASD:

- Core deficits of ASD – parents and caregivers may need additional support to identify and use strategies that we know are effective for children with ASD
 - Reciprocal relationships – difficult for children with ASD
 - Serve and return interactions between child and their parents and other caregivers
- Generalization and use of skills in ways that are meaningful – avoid acquisition of discrete sets of skills that don’t translate into meaningful skills outside of a specific setting/context



OKLAHOMA AUTISM NETWORK
The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center

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Components of Family Centered Care:

- **Respect and dignity** - Health care practitioners/educators listen to and honor the individual and family perspectives and choices. The individual and family knowledge, values, beliefs and cultural backgrounds are incorporated into the planning and delivery of care.
- **Information Sharing** - Health care practitioners/educators communicate and share complete and unbiased information with the individual and families in ways that are affirming and useful. The individual and families receive timely, complete, and accurate information in order to effectively participate in care/education and decision-making.
- **Participation** - Individuals and families are encouraged and supported in participating in care/education and decision-making at the level they choose.
- **Collaboration** – Individuals and families are also included on an institution-wide basis. Health care leaders/educators collaborate with individuals and families in policy and program development, implementation, and evaluation; in health care/education facility design; and in professional education, as well as in the delivery of care/education.

Below are some questions that you can ask yourself as you consider how you incorporate family-centered care principles into your practice as a professional. Think first if you do these things, and then about how you demonstrate this to the individuals and families you serve.

- Do I believe that individuals and family members bring unique perspectives and expertise to the clinical/educational relationship?
- Do I work to create an environment in which individuals and families feel supported enough to speak freely?
- Do I listen respectfully to the opinions of individuals and family members?
- Do I encourage individuals and family members to participate in decision-making about their care/education?