



STAR Autism Support

Working Together: A Series for Caregivers

This series provides information and training on topics of interest to caregivers of individuals with autism or other developmental disabilities. These workshops discuss effective evidence-based strategies for caregivers to support their child at home or in the community. Skills addressed include communication, play and social, behavior, self-help, and self-management. Presentations include lecture, demonstration, video examples, discussion, and practical ideas to support children with a variety of support needs.

Session 1 – Identifying Strategies That Work

How does autism impact learning and behavior? This session presents the importance of using evidence-based practices to support the learning needs of children with autism and other related disabilities. Caregivers will learn which strategies have been proven to be effective and how they can collaborate with educators to support their child at home and at school.

Session 2 – Behavior: Increasing Desired Behaviors at Home and in Your Community

To address behaviors perceived as challenging, it's important for caregivers to understand and effectively use behavioral principles to help children understand expectations and increase desired behaviors. This session identifies commonly-used behavioral terms and provides a variety of tips and suggestions families can use for building positive behaviors at home and in the community.

Session 3 – Visualize It: Using Environmental Supports Effectively

This session outlines how to design structured, organized, and predictable environments that support children's independence and success. Learn how to use visual schedules, visual supports, and effective environmental arrangements to teach children important skills and routines.

Session 4 – Understanding: Caregiver Supports for Increasing Receptive Language

In this session, caregivers will learn how to help their child understand language. By teaching children to understand what others are communicating, caregivers can increase children's receptive language skills, which are important for understanding and responding to adult requests as well as expressive communication skills.

Session 5 – Communication: Caregiver Supports for Teaching Expressive Language

Children express their wants and needs through various modes of communication, and there are many ways caregivers can build language skills at home and in the community. In this session, caregivers learn how to create opportunities throughout the day for children to practice their verbal and nonverbal communication skills, as well as how to respond to children's communication attempts in ways that increase motivation.

Session 6 – Do With, Not For: Teaching Skills Through Functional Routines

Children who are independent and motivated during home routines are better prepared for success in other environments, including at school and in the community. This session describes how to break down routines into small steps and identify ways to support the child during difficult parts of the routine, such as setting up the environment, adding visual supports, and using reinforcement. Additionally, caregivers will learn examples of how to embed skill instruction into daily routines.

Session 7 – I Can Do It Myself! Toilet Training and Adaptive Skills

Self-help skills like toileting and personal hygiene are crucial for independent living and social acceptance. In this session, caregivers learn how autism and developmental disabilities impact adaptive skills and strategies for building self-help skills at home. Through routines and motivation, families can support their children's independence in skills like using the bathroom and maintaining good personal hygiene.

Session 8 – The Fun Part: Fostering Play and Social Skills

This session discusses the importance of teaching play and social skills so children can build positive relationships with their peers. Caregivers will learn strategies for building skills such as sharing and turn-taking, imitation, following play directions, and cooperative play. During natural play opportunities, families can use strategies such as prompting, modeling, and reinforcement to increase children's play and social skills.

Session 9 – Making the Most Out of Mealtime

Mealtime challenges are common for children with autism and other developmental disabilities. This session outlines the importance of having a consistent mealtime routine and strategies for making mealtimes a positive experience for everyone involved. Caregivers will identify common mealtime challenges and learn practical strategies to address selective eating, overeating, and undereating.

Session 10 – Thriving in a Social World

Children with autism and other developmental disabilities benefit from learning and practicing specific skills in order to thrive in a social world. This training highlights important social and emotional learning (SEL) skills such as controlling impulses, identifying and interpreting emotions, and self-monitoring behaviors during daily routines. In this session, caregivers will learn how to identify skills to practice with their child at home and in the community.