PLAY Project
Community Presentation
www.playproject.org
Mission & Vision

The PLAY Project’s Mission

“To support families in having a joyous and playful relationship with their children with autism spectrum disorders so each child can reach his or her full potential.”

PLAY Project’s Vision

“To train a global network of pediatric professionals and child development experts to provide The PLAY Project’s autism intervention program to as many families as needed.”
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
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
Developmental Course of Autism

Developmental Age

Typical Development

Autism: Intensive Intervention

Cognitive Impairment

Autism: Natural Course

Chronological Age

FDL 1

2

3

4

5

6

6 yrs
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.
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
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
7 Circles of the PLAY Project

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’
• Examples: Shutting lights on and off, lining objects up, spinning, etc.
Greenspan’s 6 Functional Developmental Levels

- Self regulation and shared attention (FDL 1)
- Engagement (FDL 2)
- Two-way Communication (FDL 3)
- Complex two-way Communication (FDL 4)
- Shared Meanings & Symbolic Play (FDL 5)
- Emotional Thinking (FDL 6)
7 Circles of the PLAY Project

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

- Video Review
  - Observations and Suggestions
- Written summary
  - Keys to the child’s case
  - Child Profile (CZ, SMP, FDL)
  - Methods
  - Techniques
  - Activities
Circle 7: Change & Growth
Revise PLAY Plan
As child develops
Circle 7: Change and Growth

• Reassess the child’s progress

• Modify the PLAY Plan to best meet the changing needs of the child and family
Circle 7: PLAY Clinical Goals

- Joyful relating
- Simple and complex nonverbal gestures
- Long interactive sequences (e.g. 50+)
- “Circles” of spontaneous verbal communication”
- Shared social attention (FDL 1-3)
- Symbolic language related to feelings (FDL 4-6)
- ‘With us’ continuously, not fragmented/stuck in CZ.
- Socially functional & interested in others.
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
PLAY Project Research

- SBIR NIMH Phase II—Awarded, Sept. 2009
- 3 Year, $1.85 Million
- Easter Seals & Michigan State University
- RCT, multi-site, blinded study
- 5 ES sites, 60 children per year x 2 years = 120. Largest study of its kind in US.
- Results published in Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics
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
Settings for PLAY

- The research was based on monthly 3 hour home visits
- PLAY has been used successfully in the home, clinic and early intervention settings
- Because PLAY is a parent implemented model, application is flexible for individual needs
The PLAY Project is an intensive, evidence-based, Parent Implemented model that was born out of desperation to served underserved families.

The model empowers parents to engage their hard to engage children with ASD

PLAY a highly structured but play-based approach called the 7 Circle of The PLAY Project

Taught by masters level child development professionals

Who teach the principles, methods, techniques and activities that help children with ASD improve in their functional development.

Rigorous research has proven its effectiveness
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
Thank you!

Please visit our website to learn more!

www.playproject.org