



# **Autism**

## **Thriving with Early Intervention**

**Presenter:**  
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**October 13, 2021**

LANL 2021 Educational Series



# Miguel 3 years Old - Concerns

(now 8)

<https://www.brightfuturesaei.com/autism-early-signs>



# Learning Objectives

- Basic overview of autism (spectrum disorder)
- How to help families in identifying additional autism specific services and access them
- Evidence Based Strategies for the Home and Classroom



# Overview



# What is Autism (Spectrum Disorder)?

- **Neurodevelopmental Disorder/Difference**

- 1:54 children
- Affects brain function
- Occurs early in life
- Has developmental consequences

- **Symptoms manifest in core areas**

- Social Communication
- Restrictive and Repetitive Behaviors

- **Symptoms vary**

- Early intervention is Critical
- In severity
- Across time
- Between individuals
- Higher numbers in boys
- Girls often go unidentified

- **What causes autism?**

- There is no blood or genetic test
- Genetic vulnerability
- Environmental Trigger
- We don't really know



# Jack 5 years Old - Receiving a Diagnosis

(now 11)

<https://www.brightfuturesaei.com/autism-diagnosis>



# DSM-5 Criteria

- Deficits in ***social communication and social interaction***  
***Restricted, repetitive*** and ***stereotyped*** patterns of behavior, interests or activities
- Symptoms present in early childhood
- Symptoms cause clinically significant impairment in functioning
- Symptoms can't be better explained by intellectual disability (ID)



# Other Important Changes in the DSM-5

## Single diagnostic category – AUTISM

(NO Autistic Disorder, Asperger's, PDD, PDD-NOS)

## Severity Criteria

Level 3- Requires very substantial support

Level 2- Requires substantial support

Level 1- Requires support





# Autism Does Not Discriminate

- Autism knows no racial, ethnic, or social boundaries.
- It affects all family income levels and educational levels.
- It can affect any family and any child.

**Autism is nothing to be ashamed of - Autism is no one's fault!**



# Identifying and Accessing Services



# Help Families Advocate for Their Children

- Help families identify medical and educational service in our communities and their children.
- Help families understand their children's rights to services through insurance and public education.
- Let them know where they can go for additional information and support.



# Jack 5 years Old – Learning the Lingo

(now 11)

<https://www.brightfuturesaei.com/advocating-for-services-public-schools>



# Educational vs. Medical

- Who is responsible?
- Criteria to qualify for services?
- Educational exceptionality versus medical diagnosis?
- What services are provided?
- Location of services?
- Law that ensures access/entitlement



# Autism Specific Services?

## Educational Services

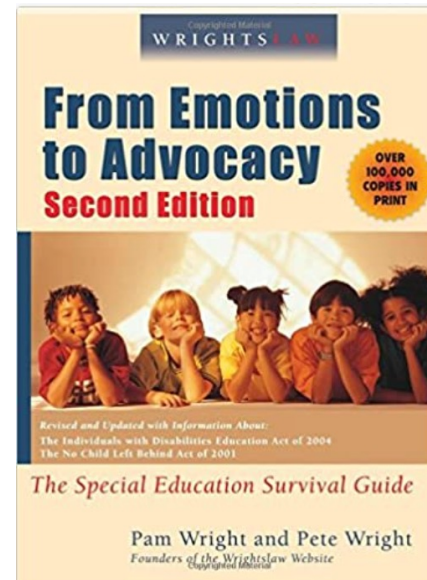
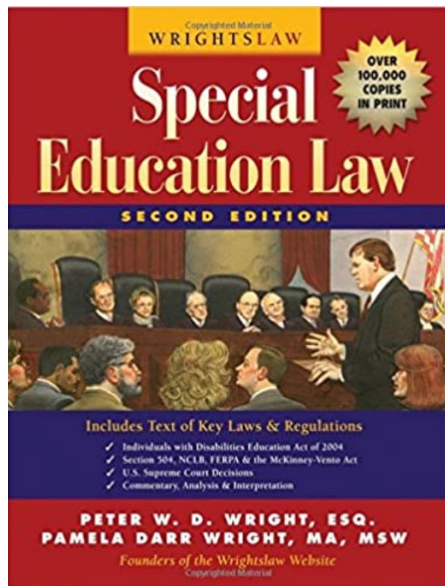
- EI 0-3 years old
- School Age 3-21/22 years old
  - SLP, OT, PT, SW, SI
  - Individual, group
  - School-based
  - IDEA
  - 11 Considerations
- If child qualifies for it, service must be provided
- Providers must be highly qualified
- Must be made accessible (time and distance)
- Must be Evidence-Based
- Varying levels of expertise
- You have a right to know the qualifications
- Must be provided in your primary language

## Medical Services

- ABA, SLP, OT, PT, MH, Care Coordination
- Individual
- Home and Community
- Adequate Network of Care



# Resources for Early Intervention and School Age 0-5



<https://www.wrightslaw.com/>



# **Evidence Based Strategies**





# Calder 2.5 years Old – I didn't Know what to do!

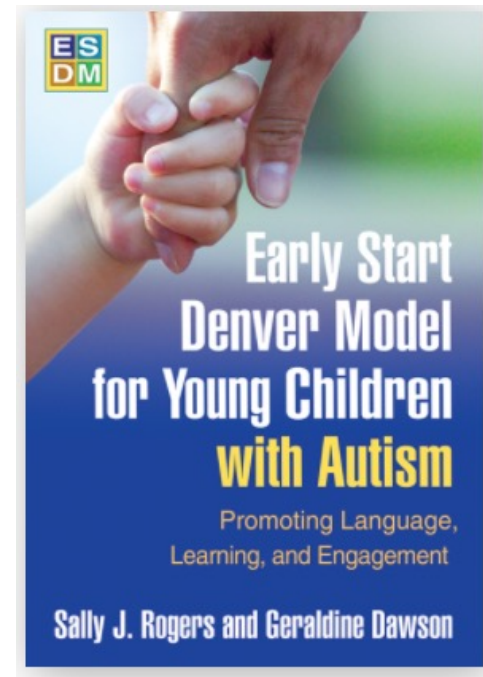
(now 15)

<https://www.brightfuturesaei.com/autism-early-signs>



# Evidence Based Practices (EBPs)

- Practices/strategies have been through a rigorous scientific process that supports their usefulness
- Must be implemented well
- Not every EBP will work for everyone
- 27 EBPs
- Applied Behavioral Analysis
- Early Start Denver Model
  - Children 0-5
  - Play Based
  - Routines Based
  - Child Development
  - Relationship Based
  - <https://helpisinyourhands.org>



# Evidence Based Practices for Children on the Autism Spectrum



The National Professional Development Center  
on Autism Spectrum Disorder



HOME

ABOUT NPDC

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

NPDC MODEL

RESOURCES

TESELA

## EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

WHAT CRITERIA DETERMINED  
IF AN INTERVENTION WAS  
EFFECTIVE?

HOW DO I FIND OUT MORE  
ABOUT EBPS?

## WHAT ARE EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES?

An evidence-based practice is an instructional/intervention procedure or set of procedures for which researchers have provided an acceptable level of research that shows the practice produces positive outcomes for children, youth, and/or adults with ASD.

## WHAT EBPS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED?

The National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice (NCAEP) recently released their new report identifying EBPs. The new report reviews literature published from 1990-2017 and identifies 28 EBPs and 10 manualized interventions that also met criteria. The list of EBPs is [here](#).

The NCAEP and AFIRM teams are working to update our user-friendly materials and AFIRM modules to reflect these changes. Until then, please select an EBP identified in our 2014 review to access the AFIRM module about the practice. Each module provides an overview and general description, step-by-step instructions of implementation, an implementation checklist, and the evidence-base which includes the list of references that demonstrate the practice meets the NPDC's criteria.

[https://behavioruniversity.com/index.php?route=blog/article&article\\_id=9](https://behavioruniversity.com/index.php?route=blog/article&article_id=9)

<https://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/evidence-based-practices>



# What is ABA?

## **Strengths – Families must have high expectations**

- Paid for by insurance, is going to be coming to schools through Medicaid
- Intensive 25-40 hours a week
- Highly Individualized
- Data Driven
- Provided in the home, community and center
- Evidence Based for Children with Autism
- Children should make significant progress
- Best possible chance for reaching full potential

## **Weaknesses – Families Need to Advocate**

- Not always taught with context
  - Natural Environment
  - Daily Routines,
  - Cultural Sensitivity
  - Relationship Centered
- Is not Trauma Informed Care/Practice
- Staff may lack experience or expertise
- Not always accessible (no providers, long waitlists)

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/applied-behavior-analysis>



# Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)

Evidence Based Practice (EBP)

Why is he doing that???

- Usually used for negative behaviors that interrupt a child's ability to move through his/her/their world successfully and is used for behaviors that inhibit the child's ability to learn.
- ABCs - Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence
- Antecedent (A) - Identify what came just before the undesired or desired behavior.
- Behavior (B) - Identify the behavior in terms of what was observed. (objective not subjective)
- Consequence (C) - Increases or decreases behavior.
- Tries to identify the function. What was the result of the behavior (attention, avoidance of demand, intrinsically reinforced).



# **Making the most of Alphabet Soup FBAs and ABCs**

**We need to help the child understand what she/he/they should do versus telling he/she/they what not to do.**

**Once we understand the function of an undesired/challenging behavior, we can identify a new skill to teach.**

**We need to be sure we are using effective strategies to reduce negative behaviors and to teach positive behaviors .**



# **Task Analysis (EBP)**

Teaching bit by bit...

- An activity is split up into smaller steps
- More manageable for the child
- Steps can be taught and mastered separately
- Individual steps are then put back together to gain mastery of the whole activity/skill



# Prompting(EBP)

Give all the support needed to succeed!

- Auditory, visual or tactile assistance to a learner to help them acquire a new behavior or engage in a new skill
- Most invasive (least amount of independence) to least invasive (most amount of independence)
- Prompts must be faded out as the child learns to support independence with the new skill
- Must be individualized – watch out for things the child finds desirable or unpleasant .





# Reinforcement(EBP)

Yes, that's it! You did it!

- Reinforcement is an event or activity that occurs
- Given after the child does the task/activity you are teaching her/him
- Because it is enjoyable/fun the child will try and do it again
- Needs to be individualized to the child – highly desirable to him/or her
- Positive and negative reinforcement
- Rotate – to keep it fresh



# Redirection (EBP)

Look over there!

Uses a highly desired activity/object/person to interfere with the undesirable behavior and divert the child's attention away from the behavior you want them to stop.

It is great if you can redirect to a more appropriately functional behavior/activity but that usually involves some teaching.

If the child is protesting because they are being asked to do something they do not want to do, always make sure they can do the thing you are asking of them. If they can do it, make sure you come back around and have them complete at least some part of the requested task.

If they do not want to leave the task you want them to stop, make sure the activity/object/person is more desirable than the task they are engaged in.



# Extinction/Ignoring (EBP)

I didn't see anything!!!

- Removes reinforcement of undesirable/challenging behavior
- Ignore the behavior not the child
- Try to be emotionally neutral to the undesired behavior and express high positive affect when the child makes any attempt to engage alternative activity/object/person you are presenting (redirection)



# Most Common Questions from Parents

*Is my child high functioning or low functioning?*

Most children under 5 are Level 3 - Requiring very substantial support

**Need for support can change over time**

Without support symptoms can get worse over time

With support symptoms can get better over time



# References and Resources

- **Local & Statewide**

- Bright Futures: Autism and Early Intervention (Child/family Advocate)
  - [www.autismandei.com](http://www.autismandei.com)
- Center for Development and Disability (Evaluations, Information, Services))
  - <https://hsc.unm.edu/cdd/>
- Parents Reaching Out (PRO) (Information, Advocacy)
  - [www.Parentsreachingout.org](http://www.Parentsreachingout.org)
- EPICS
  - <https://www.epicsnm.org/>
- NM Autism Society (Information, Support,, Advocacy, Community)
  - <https://nmautismsociety.org/>
- NM Education & Care Department (FIT) (Service Coordination, Services 0-3)
  - <https://www.nmececd.org>
- NM Public Education Department (School-based services 3-21)
  - <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us>
- Call their insurance provider about ABA (Autism Services, Care Coordination)

- **National**

- Autism Speaks (Information)
  - [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)
- Navajo Nation Office of Special Education and rehabilitation Services (NNOSERS)
  - <http://www.nnosers.org/>
- ECHO Autism (Information, community, advocacy)
  - <https://echoautism.org>
- Help is in Your Hands (ESDM) (Online Learning for Parents and Providers)
  - <https://helpisinyourhands.org>
- Wrights Law (Information and Advocacy)
  - [www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)





# BRIGHT FUTURES

## Autism & Early Intervention

[www.AutismAndEI.com](http://www.AutismAndEI.com)

[www.Facebook.com/AutismandEI](http://www.Facebook.com/AutismandEI)

[www.Youtube.com/AutismAndEI](http://www.Youtube.com/AutismAndEI)

**Facebook Parent Support Group – Autism 1**



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