



Approach and strategies for an easier everyday life

**An introductory course in skills training for
parents of young children with autism**

Workbook

Welcome to an introductory course for parents!

The aim is to provide you with knowledge and tools that make everyday life easier and help you support your child's development.

We will go through strategies that you will try at home with your child, and then reflect upon with the course instructors and the other parents.

The course consists of three sessions, each with a different theme. At the end of each session, we will go over homework assignments for you and your child to practice until the next occasion. Bring your workbook to each session, in it you will plan your homework and document your progress. It is important that you participate every time.

Active parenting

- We will guide you, but you are the one who will practice between sessions
- Learning happens in everyday life
- Learning is most effective in enjoyable situations

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Behavioral excesses and deficits

Excesses

Behaviors that

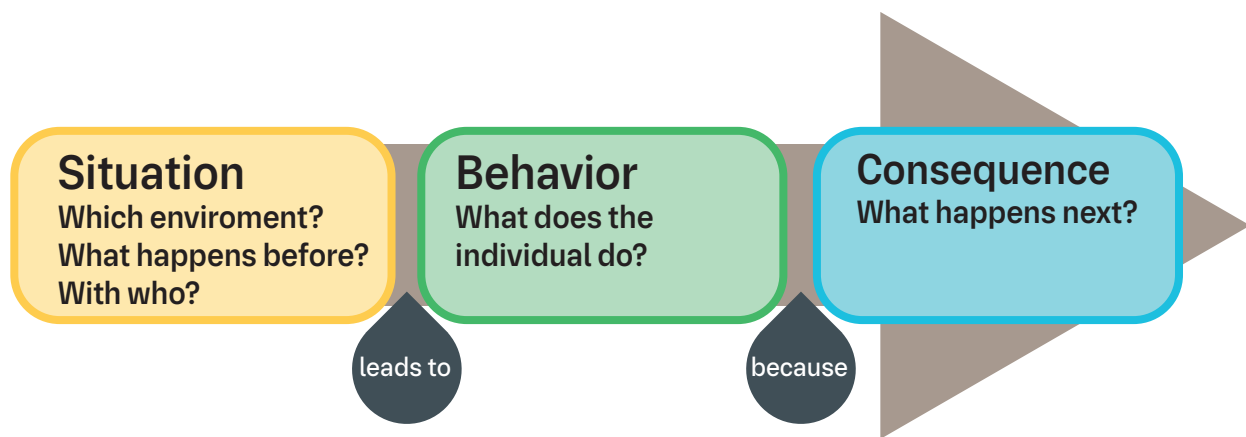
- are always problematic
- occur too often
- in the wrong context

Deficits

- Behaviors that are absent or occur too infrequently
- Caused by lack of skills or motivation

Describe what your child does too much or little of:

[illegible]



Situation, behavior and consequence – the SBC-chain

If something positive occurs when we perform a behavior in a certain situation, the likelihood of us repeating the behavior in a similar situation increases.

Exemple

I say 'Hi!' to my neighbor when we meet at the store, and the neighbor responds 'Hi!' and smiles. The likelihood that I will greet them next time we meet at the store increases.

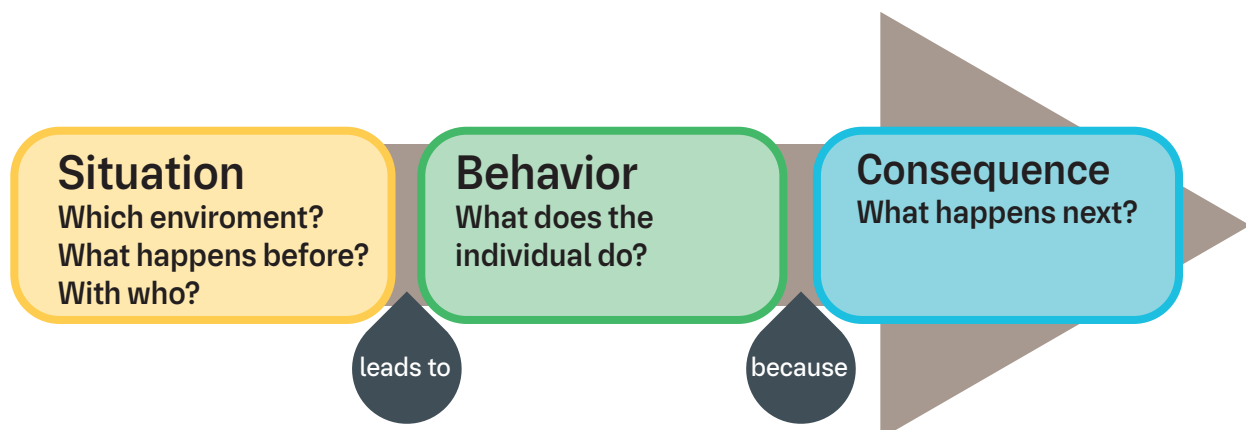
Exemple

I say 'Hi!' to my neighbor when we meet at the store, but the neighbor looks away and doesn't seem interested. The likelihood that I will greet them next time we meet at the store decreases.

If we know how behaviors are shaped, we can use this knowledge to teach the child new behaviors.

Exemple

You are playing with bubbles, you blow while the child stomps on the them. You then intentionally pause. When no more bubbles come, the child looks at the bottle, and when you hold the bottle near your face, the child briefly looks at you and you make eye contact. Since making eye contact is a behavioral deficit and a behavior you want to see more of, you immediately start blowing new bubbles.



Child-led playtime

Show attention and interest in your child. Create a foundation for interaction and, eventually, skills training.

Purpose

The purpose of child-led playtime is to give your child attention without demands and to recharge yourself as a fun person to be with. You'll learn to let your child be themselves and to let go of your own expectations and wishes about how things should be. The child will learn that it's enjoyable to be together.

Goal

The child should experience that it is fun and relaxing to spend time with you. You will learn to give positive attention without expecting or demanding attention in return.

Materials

Objects that the child chooses to play with and can handle.

Situation

The child is doing something enjoyable.

Or: you set up a playtime by presenting toys/activities that you know the child enjoys.

Tell the child "It's your playtime" (or something to that effect) when you are ready to begin.

Behavior

The child plays in their own way, with or without objects. You are fully focused on the child and what they are doing. You pay attention and acknowledge the child in different ways without using evaluative words. Let the child know everything they do is interesting to you.

Consequence

The child receives attention and/or active participation in their play, on their own terms.



Suggestions for ways to give your child attention

- Imitate what the child is doing
- Use encouraging and expressive facial expressions, such as smiling or looking surprised
- Use easy-to-read body language, like giving a thumbs-up, a hug, or tousling their hair

What you can say:

Describe what's happening;

"The car is crashing!"

"Shh, the doll is sleeping."

"Wow, that cow can jump!"

Describe what the child is doing;

"I see you're running!"

"You found another puzzle piece!"

Describe the moment;

"This is so cozy."

"I like playing with you!"

"What a wonderful girl/boy you are!"

Short reactions:

"Fun!"

"Oh my!"

"Wow!"

"Oops!"

"No way!"

Sound-imitating words:

"Crash!"

"Vrooom!"

"Boink!"

"Whee!"

Tips!

- It's best if siblings don't join so you can give your full attention.
- How much time feels right for you and your child to play together?
Set aside 5-15 minutes.
- You can either tell your child that it's time to play or simply join in on a suitable activity.
- Let your child's interests guide the activity, within reasonable boundaries. Screen-based activities are not recommended here, as they make it hard to interact and your child may not even notice that you are there.
- Let go of any ideas about how play is supposed to look. Start by observing your child for a few minutes, then join in and follow their lead.
- You're simply there to show interest and give your child attention. You build trust when it becomes clear that this time together doesn't come with demands or expectations they can't handle.
- Try describing what your child is doing — this can be especially helpful if your child doesn't communicate much or doesn't often engage in play with you. By putting words to your child's actions, you show that you're interested and present. It also helps you stay focused. Be expressive if you can, and adjust your language to match your child's developmental level.
- Don't use this time as a teaching opportunity!
- Avoid asking questions or giving instructions.
- Avoid using evaluative words like 'good', 'nice,' or 'well done'. Praise implies there is a 'right' way to play and that you want the child to continue that way, which can feel like pressure.
- If your child is doing something that could be harmful, of course you shouldn't go along with it. It's okay to stop your child when needed. If possible, try to redirect their attention by introducing a different activity.

Journal for child-led play

Date:

Minutes:

Which activity?

Who is playing?

What did you do differently?

How did your child react?

Date:

Minutes:

Which activity?

Who is playing?

What did you do differently?

How did your child react?

Date:

Minutes:

Which activity?

Who is playing?

What did you do differently?

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Who is playing?

What did you do differently?

How did your child react?

Date:

Minutes:

Which activity?

Who is playing?

What did you do differently?

How did your child react?

Communication

How and why does your child communicate and express themselves?

How? In what way does my child communicate his or her will?	Why? What does my child want?							
	Get attention	Get help	Get edibles	Get objects/toys	Start or continue activity	Show something	Respond yes/no	Protest or refuse
Speech, one-word utterances	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Speech, multi-word utterances	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Echolalia	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sign Supported Communication	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PECS	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pointing to pictures	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Giving objects	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Body language	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Shaking their head	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hand-leading	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pointing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fixating the gaze	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Shouting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tantrums	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Self-injury	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does not show at all	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Don't know, other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Communication

How and why does your child communicate and express themselves?

How? In what way does my child communicate his or her will?	Why? What does my child want?							
	Respond to "What is that?"	Respond yes or no	Choose between options	Express pain	Express feelings	Say hello or bye	Say thanks	Apologize
Speech, one-word utterances	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Speech, multi-word utterances	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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Situation, behavior and consequence

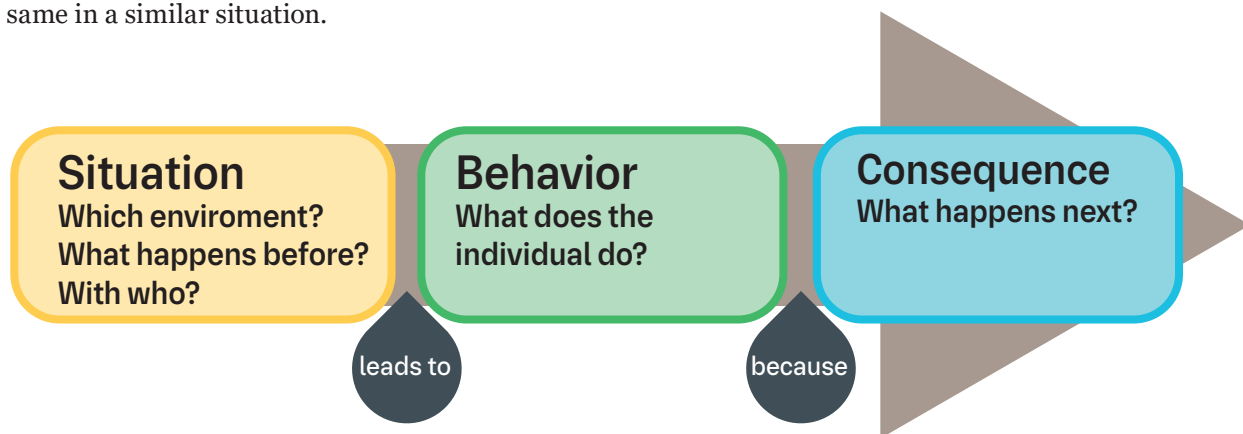
– the SBC-chain

If something positive occurs when we perform a behavior in a certain situation, the likelihood of us repeating the behavior in a similar situation increases.

Example

I ask the person blocking my view at the cinema to take off their cap, and they do so, allowing me to see better. This increases the likelihood that I will ask someone else to do the same in a similar situation.

I ask the person blocking my view at the cinema to take off their cap, and they respond rudely with a no and sit up straighter. This decreases the likelihood that I will ask someone to do the same in a similar situation.



If we know how behaviors are shaped, we can use this knowledge to teach the child new behaviors.

Example

Serve the child's favourite drink in a very small toy tea set cup so that it runs out quickly. After the child finishes drinking, wait until they communicate that they want more through the method you are practicing—such as with a word/sign/picture. Since communicating by word/sign/picture is a deficit in your child and a behavior you want to see more of, immediately pour a few more sips into the glass.

Communicative temptations in everyday life

Build upon the child's interests and create a situation that gives the child a reason to communicate. When the child signals that they want more or to continue, reinforce that signal by giving more or continuing. Perhaps you need to assist or prompt the child to make a clear communicative signal?

Approach

Place items within sight but out of reach

- Favorite toy on a shelf
- Fruit in the refrigerator

Give small portions

- Break the biscuit or fruit into small pieces and give one piece at a time
- Pour a little drink at a time

Short activities

- Soap bubbles
- Blow up a balloon
- Knock down a block tower
- Toys that require assistance to start

Let the child choose

- Do you want milk or water?
- Do you want to swing or go down the slide?
- Do you want to watch Babblarna or Pippi?

Pause in fun activity

- Pause in tag game
- Pause in a song or nursery rhyme

This is how I plan to do it

How did it go?

After implementing the communicative temptations as planned above, document how it went on the next page!

How did it go?

Situation: What situation did you create to make the child want more/continue?

Behavior: What communicative signal did the child use? Did you provide any help/prompt?

Consequence: What was the consequence?

Situation	
Behavior	
Consequence	

Build upon the child's interests and create a situation that gives the child a reason to communicate. When the child signals that they want more/to continue, reinforce that signal by giving more/continuing. Perhaps you need to assist/prompt the child to make a clear communicative signal?

'Communicative temptation' strategy

Children have different interests, ages, and developmental levels. Not all tips will suit every child. Remember, it should be fun and motivating for your child!

Evening routine

- Presenting the book upside down at story time
- Misread, for example, calling story characters by the wrong name.
- Pause while reading, for example, when it's time to turn the page, and give the child an opportunity to say 'turn the page'.
- Hide the stuffed animal under the child's shirt and pretend to look for it.
- Play rock instead of the usual bedtime music/story.
- Put the child's feet on the pillow and pull the blanket over their head.
- Hide the child under the blanket, touch the blanket and wonder aloud what's underneath. You can pretend it's different people or something else the child might recognize.

Getting dressed

- Put the wrong piece of clothing on the wrong part of the body
- Put the shoes up high, visible but out of reach

Mealtime situations

- "Forgetting" to set the table for the child
- Sitting in the "wrong" seat, e.g. on the child's chair
- Serving very small portions on the plate
- For a child being fed – putting the spoon in your own mouth instead, or pausing in the middle of feeding
- The adult wears the child's bib

TV

- Turning on the "wrong" channel
- Muting the sound

Bathroom

- Not turning on the light
- Placing the towel on or over the child's head
- Hiding the bath toys
- Pausing while pouring water
- Dropping a toy that usually isn't in the bath into the water
- Washing a different body part than the one the child is told about

Outdoors

- Holding onto the swing without letting go
- Sitting in the back seat when it's time to drive
- Walking backward instead of forward
- Pausing and not kicking the ball when playing
- Burying one foot in the sandbox

Reinforcer assessment

Instructions: Try to list at least 10 reinforcers, preferably from several different categories. Write only the things the child likes right now.

Date:

Filled in by:

Reinforcers, exemples

Eat

(grapes, chocolate, crisps)

Drink

(juice, water, baby formula)

Listen to

(music, rattling sounds, sound toys)

Watch

(iPad, bubbles, glitter, things that flash or spin)

Touch or feel

(vibrations, being scratched, different materials)

Engage in

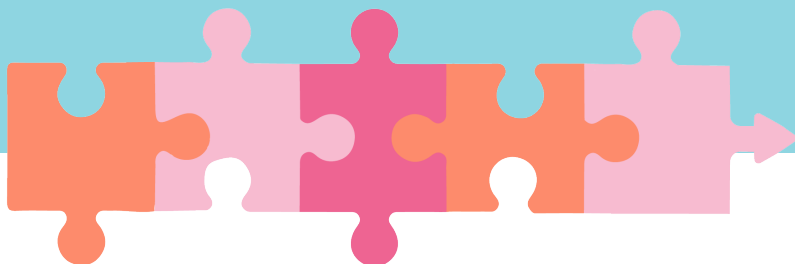
(lining up cars, marble run, puzzles)

Do together

(tickling, singing songs, playing chase)

My child especially likes to:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
-
-
-
-



Cooperation in daily routines

Routine:

What the child can do:

What the child can do with help:

What the child cannot do:

Plan

Situation

How should I adapt the environment?
What clear instruction should I give?

Behavior

What should my child do? What support should I provide and at which step?

Consequence

How do I reinforce it?

How did it go?

Situation

How did I adapt the environment? What clear instruction did I give?

Behavior

What did my child do? What support did I provide and at which step?

Consequence

How did I reinforce it?

Continuing with the strategies

Child-led play

When and for how long?

Activities we can do together:

During the child-led play, I will:

- ☐ Imitate my child
- ☐ Use clear body language and facial expressions
- ☐ Avoid questions and commands
- ☐ Describe what my child is doing

How to remember:

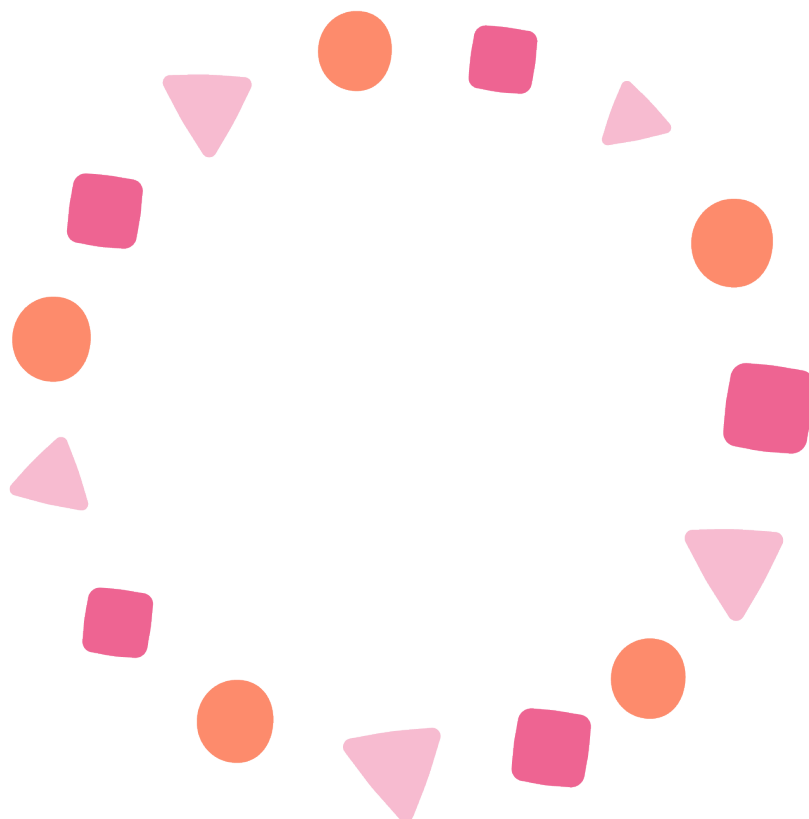
- ☐ Set a reminder on my phone
- ☐ Ask someone to remind me
- ☐ Put up a note where I often will see it

Communicative temptations in everyday life

I can do these two exercises to create communicative temptations:

1.

2.



Supporting cooperation in daily routines

It is easier to participate when one knows what is expected. I will support my child's cooperation in the following activity:

I will set reasonable expectations. In this activity, my child can do this independently:

My child can do this with my help:

I have to do this for my child because it is too difficult:

I will remove distractions:

- ☐ Turn off the TV
- ☐ Put away screens
- ☐ No siblings in the room
- ☐ Other:

I will adapt my way of communicating:

- ☐ Gain attention by being face-to-face and at the same level
- ☐ Speak in shorter sentences
- ☐ Speak slowly and clearly
- ☐ Avoid giving an instruction in the form of a question
- ☐ Other:

I will use visual support:

- ☐ Make a gesture
- ☐ Show a picture
- ☐ Show an object
- ☐ Show a schedule
- ☐ Show a time aid

Prompt

With a prompt (help to succeed), my child can practice new skills. I will use prompts in this activity:

I will prompt by:

- ☐ Physically helping the child perform a movement
- ☐ Clarifying with a gesture (e.g., pointing)
- ☐ Modeling and showing what I want my child to do
- ☐ Showing a picture of what I want my child to do
- ☐ Using words to tell my child what I want them to do

Reinforcement

When my child does something I want to see more of, I will reinforce the behavior immediately by giving my child something they like:

When my child does something I want to see more of, I will reinforce the behavior immediately by doing something my child enjoys:

Individual guidance

The next step in the care process is individual guidance over four sessions. Together with a clinician at the habilitation center, you will set a realistic goal, agree on suitable exercises to practice at home, and evaluate the intervention. The strategies you have learned in this course form the foundation.

Which skill do you want to practice with your child?

Have you filled in the excess and deficit behaviors you see in your child? If not, do it now. Consider the deficit behaviors—are there any skills that you think your child is ready to learn or improve?

Communication

Go back to the table where you noted how and why your child communicates. Are there ways of expressing themselves, or reasons for expressing themselves, that you think your child is ready to learn or do more of?

Routines

A day includes many routines, which require cooperation between you and your child. When there are parts of a routine that the child can do independently or with help, the strategies of prompting and reinforcement can be used to increase the child's participation. Adaptations can also make things easier. Are there routines in daily life that you would like help changing?

Good luck!
Remember to bring your workbook
to the guidance session!

Welcome to an introductory course for parents!

The aim of this course is to provide you with knowledge and practical strategies to make everyday life easier and help you support your child's development.

Throughout the course, we will introduce strategies for you to practice at home with your child. At each session, you will discuss and evaluate your experiences together with the course leaders and the other parents.

The course consists of three sessions, each focusing on a different topic. At the end of each session, you will receive homework assignments to work on with your child before the next meeting. Please bring your workbook to every session. You will use it to plan your homework assignments and record how it goes.

It is important that you attend all three sessions.

Session 1 – Play and interaction

Session 2 – Communication

Session 3 – Everyday cooperation