

Using the SCERTS Model  
to guide practice  
with children with ASD

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# Objectives

- Participants will be able to:
  - Use the SCERTS assessment-curriculum model for planning and monitoring intervention
  - Use the SCERTS model to guide practice for Philadelphia children with Autism under three years of age and their families
  - fill out the Worksheet for determining Communication Stage, SAP-O, SAP Summary form, and the SCERTS objectives and SCERTS Family Support Plan and identify how these apply to practice with families.

# SCERTS: Intervention Model

- Barry Prizant
- Amy Wetherby
- Emily Rubin
- Pat Rydell
- Amy Laurent
- [www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com)

Slides were adopted from a presentation given in Philadelphia by Wetherby & Woods, 2006

# SCERTS: Intervention Model

- S – Social
- C – Communication
- E – Emotional
- R – Regulation
- T – Transactional
- S - Support

# Social Communication

- Joint Attention:
  - Capacity to coordinate and share attention and interest with another person
- Symbol Use:
  - Capacity to learn conventional or shared meanings of symbols

# Core Challenges – Joint Attention

- Difficulty orienting and attending to a social partner and sharing emotion
- Difficulty coordinating attention between people and objects/events (engaging in intentional communication).

# Core Challenges – Joint Attention

- Difficulty drawing another's attention to objects or events for the purpose of sharing experiences.
- Difficulty reading/sharing affect, emotional states or perspectives

# Core Challenges – Symbol Use

- Difficulty learning “shared” meanings for gestures and words (limitations in conventional gestures and symbolic language).
- Use of unconventional ways of communicating (echolalia, self injury)
- Difficulty pretending in play



# Social Communication

## How SCERTS addresses Joint Attention

- Supporting a child's ability to orient to social stimuli and share emotion
- Supporting the transitions to intentional communication
- Supporting the range of communicative functions
- Supporting the development of inferential reasoning of emotional states and perspectives.

# Social Communication

- **How SCERTS addresses Symbol Use**
- Supporting the transitions to conventional forms of communication
- Supporting the transition from pre-symbolic to symbolic forms of communication
- Supporting the transition from echolalic language to more creative linguistic communication

# Emotional Regulation

- Emotional Regulation is a core developmental process underlying attention, arousal, and the establishment of social relationships.

(Prizant, Wetherby, & Rydell, 2000).

# Self Regulation vs. Mutual Regulation

(Prizant, Wetherby, Rydell, 2000).

- Self Regulation

- The ability to attain an optimal level of arousal independently.

- Mutual Regulation

- The ability to solicit and secure assistance from others in regulating one's arousal.

# The 4 A's of Behavior

(Lester, Freier, & LaGrasse, 1995; Anzalone & Williamson, 2000).

- Careful observation of a child's **arousal level, attention, affect** and **actions** can provide insight into the child's internal experience of the social and physical world.
- Each "A" has a regulatory influence on and effects the other "A's."

# Optimal State of Arousal

(Prizant, Wehterby, & Rydell, 2000)

- A state of being in which a child is focused, can problem solve, can communicate effectively, and benefit from learning opportunities in his/her environment.
- Coincides with demand of the social and physical environment.

# Emotional Regulation

- Regulatory Capacities
  - Sensorimotor Level
    - Sucking, chewing, rocking, deep pressure
  - Cognitive Level
    - Predictable schedule, calming activity, information to reduce anxiety

# Optimal State of Arousal

- Children with ASD typically have a narrow window of optimal arousal resulting in fluctuating responses to sensory input and variation in behavior secondary to poor self and mutual regulation of the 4 A's.



# Transactional Support

- Meaningful learning occurs within the social context of everyday activities and within trusting relationships.
- Optimize the back-and forth interaction between the child and parents/caregivers in his/her learning environment.

# Transactional Support

- Interpersonal Supports
  - Ways for parents/caregivers to adjust language use, emotional expression and interactive style that are effective in helping a child with ASD process language, participate in social interaction, and maintain well-regulated states

# Transactional Support

- Learning Supports
  - Ways for parents/caregivers to arrange the environment, structure activities, provide visual supports, and adapt or modify the curriculum to foster social communication and emotional regulation and support success in learning

# SAP Domains & Components

- Social Communication
  - Joint attention
  - Symbol Use
- Emotional Regulation
  - Self Regulation
  - Mutual Regulation
- Transactional Support
  - Interpersonal Supports
  - Learning Supports

# Determining the Communication Stage

- Social Partner Stage
  - Transition to communicating with a purpose or intent
  - Transition to conventional gestures and vocalizations
- Language Partner Stage
  - Transition to first words
  - Transition to word combinations and the vocabulary burst
- Conversational Partner Stage
  - Transition to sentence grammar
  - Transition to conversational discourse

# Completing the SAP-O

- The scoring is divided into 4 quarters so that the same form may be used more than once.
- The scoring key is from 2 – 0
  - 2 – child performs skill consistently, 1 – child performs skill but inconsistently, 0 – child does not perform skill

# Completing the SAP-O

- Read each statement and determine how the child what the child is capable
  - There are definitions located for each statement starting on page 165 in volume one of the SCERTS manual

# Completing the SAP Summary Form

- Integrated Information
- Assists in prioritizing goals and objectives
- Design a SCERTS Educational Program
- Ongoing Tracking/Progress Monitoring



# Completing the SCERTS Objectives & Family Support Plan

- How SCERTS goals are selected:
  - Goals must be functional
  - Goals must address family priorities
  - Goals must be developmentally appropriate

# Active Engagement

- Is the child well regulated?
- Is the child ready to communicate OR does the child have the opportunity to communicate?
- Is the child actively participating in a productive activity?
- Does the parent/caregiver provide a balance of support and demand within the activity?

# By January 30, 2009

- Initial tapes
- Completed SAP-Os
- Progress summary
- Objectives
- Family Support Plans

All need to be mailed to Beth – use TLC mailing address

# By February 27, 2009

- Tape #2
- Completed SAP-Os
- Progress summary
- Objectives
- Family Support Plans

All need to be mailed to Beth – use TLC mailing address

# By March 27, 2009

- Tape #3
- Completed SAP-Os
- Progress summary
- Objectives
- Family Support Plans

All need to be mailed to Beth – use TLC mailing address

During April, 2009 – team prepares case study (one of 3 families you worked with) for presentation at ASD Group Meeting on May 5, 2009.

- Include snapshot of family context
- Video clips of family/child interaction
- Discuss intervention strategies and outcomes
- Comment on how SCERTS Model worked in this situation