

Classroom Intervention

Active Engagement: Supporting Evidence and Guiding Principles of SCERTS

What is active engagement?

- Active engagement is an essential component of effective programming for children with ASD (NRC, 2001).
- Research has found active engagement to be an important predictor of educational success in school-age children with ASD (Ruble & Robson 2007).
- There is evidence of a causal relationship between teacher instruction, active engagement, and academic achievement (Greenwood, 1996).

What is recommended as best practice for student's with ASD?

- The National Research Council recommends that children with ASD spend a minimum of 25 hours per week actively engaged in systematically planned and developmentally appropriate activities and interactions (NRC, 2001).
- Intervention targets for students with ASD should include functional spontaneous communication, social instruction within a variety of settings, and proactive approaches to problem behavior.

What are the guiding principles of the SCERTS model?

1. Goals and activities should be developmentally appropriate and functional, relative to a child's adaptive abilities.
2. Activities should be meaningful and motivating—maximizing enjoyment, success, and independence.
3. Natural routines across home, school, and community environments provide the educational and treatment contexts for learning and development of *positive* relationships. **Progress is measured in reference to increasing competence and active participation in everyday social experiences and routines.
4. All behavior is viewed as purposeful. Functions of behavior may include communication, emotional regulation and engagement in adaptive skills. For children who display unconventional or problem behaviors, there is an emphasis on determining the function of the behavior and supporting the development of more appropriate ways to accomplish those functions.
5. The way in which a communication partner interacts with a student with ASD and how an environment is adapted with learning supports has a significant impact on that individual's social and communicative competence. If a child's rate of spontaneously initiated communication is low or if challenging behaviors are present, an immediate consideration is made with respect to partner behavior and the presence or absence of specific transactional supports.