



The ACE Program: What Skills will My Child Learn?

As an applied behavior analysis (ABA) program we will use behavior analytic principles to reduce your child's challenging behaviors and teach new replacement skills. Behaviors identified as deficient are targeted for skill acquisition and excessive behaviors will be targeted for reduction.

Each program is designed to meet your child's unique repertoire of behavioral deficits and excesses. Skill Acquisition targets are selected from domains in which children with autism typically present with delays and are listed below. Programming will start with the earliest skills to emerge in typical development and continue to progress in developmental order. With a firm knowledge base in both the principles of applied behavior analysis and the typical skill development of young children we believe the unique learning needs of your children can be accommodated here at the Autism Center for Education.

Early Learning Skills	Social Skills
Language/Verbal Behavior	Theory of Mind
Play Skills	Executive Functioning
Motor Skills	Academic Skills
Adaptive Daily Living	New Foods
Pill Swallowing	

Early Learning Skills

The skills in this area are typically the first to be targeted in a child's program because they are pivotal skills that build the foundation for future learning targets.

- Imitation Skills
- Compliance
- Eye Contact
- Following simple Instructions

Language / Verbal Behavior

Teaching language and communication is one of the largest curriculum areas and is taught using a Verbal Behavior framework to ensure children learn all functions of language.

- Echoic Training
- Expressive Language (Tact Training)
- Mand Training
- Intraverbal Training
- Receptive Language (Manded Behavior)
- Pragmatics & Conversation Skills



Play Skills

Extensive language and social development emerge through play for young children. As such, the development of age appropriate play skills is an important component to our early intervention program.

- Beginning Play
- Functional & Symbolic Pretend Play
- Constructive Play
- Socio-dramatic Play (e.g., dress up)
- Gross Motor Play &
- Games with Rules

Motor Skills

Due to many of our children being significantly delayed in the areas of Fine & Gross Motor skills these areas are targeted for increased strength and coordination. As with all skill areas, targets are selected on an individual basis based on the strengths and weakness each individual child presents with.

- Finger & Hand Strength & Coordination
- Walking & Balance (e.g., stairs)
- Leg Strength & Coordination (e.g., running, tricycle, etc.)
- Ball Skills

Adaptive Daily Living (ADL)

Self-help skills are targeted to increase each child's independence within age appropriate levels. As with all curriculum areas, targets are selected on an individual basis depending on present functioning levels and age of the child.

- Toileting
- Feeding
- Dressing & Undressing
- Grooming
- Safety Awareness

Pill Swallowing

Many children with autism are on special diets and take a variety of daily supplements. Parents often report that it is difficult to get their children to ingest these supplements due to the taste when hidden in foods or drinks. Due to this regularly occurring need expressed by parents ACE has started working with families to teach children pill swallowing. A systematic approach is used when teaching pill swallowing in which the capsule size is systematically increased until the desired pill size is achieved.



New Foods

In addition to being on limited diets, children with autism often refuse to include new foods into their regular diets resulting in an extremely limited repertoire of foods they will tolerate. The refusal to include new foods into their diet may be sensory related or perhaps an insistence on sameness often observed in children on the spectrum. ACE works with families to introduce identified target foods into a child's repertoire using systematic procedures and reinforcement.

Social Skills

Social skill development is started from the very beginning of each child's program and increases in social complexity as their skill repertoire strengthens. The development of play skills and social skills work hand-in-hand to establish a rich play and social skill repertoire for each child. Skills may be taught using a variety of instructional strategies often including a combination of both structured and incidental methods with opportunities to practice & strengthen these skills in the natural environment.

- Joint Attention
- Imitation of peers
- Cooperative Play
- Joining, Initiating, & Maintaining Play
- Social Cues (reading & responding)
- Social Rules (Rule Governed Behavior)

Theory of Mind

Social cognition includes the ability to identify the perspectives of others and then use this knowledge in social interaction across the natural environment. If a child is having difficulty identifying the social perspectives of others it is easy to see how establishing social interactions and friendships may be challenging. The development of perspective taking skills, or Theory of Mind, is an important component to building social skills.

- Emotions & Desires
- Knowing
- Preferences
- Intentions & Deception

Executive Functioning

In this skill area skills targeted include being able to make a plan & execute it, problem solve, and engage in self-monitoring behaviors.

- Working Memory
- Inhibition
- Flexibility
- Planning & Goal Setting
- Problem Solving
- Self-Monitoring

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Academics & Classroom Skills

Age appropriate academic skills can be incorporated in to a child's program to ensure they are able to participate in the classroom setting to the fullest extent possible. In addition to teaching specific academic skills (e.g., color identification) assistance in the classroom setting can be provided to develop desired classroom behaviors such as sitting in circle time, following teaching instructions, transitioning between activities, etc.

- Letters & Numbers
- Phonemic Awareness
- Counting & Quantities
- Classroom Behavior
- Reading Comprehension
- Social Cues (reading & responding)
- Social Rules (Rule Governed Behavior)