

BUILDING A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR AUTISTIC CHILD

Transforming Autism Project



WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A PARENT:

**IT'S ONE OF THE HARDEST THINGS YOU'LL EVER DO,
BUT IN EXCHANGE IT TEACHES YOU THE MEANING
OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE.**



REMEMBER:
NO ONE IS
MORE
IMPORTANT
THAN YOU!

- Although professional intervention or therapy can be helpful, parents or caregivers who interact every day with their child will have the greatest, most lasting impact.
- Too many parents have been led to believe that a therapist or teacher is the answer to improving their child's abilities.
- As a result, many parents of children with autism stop trusting themselves & their ability to help their child develop!

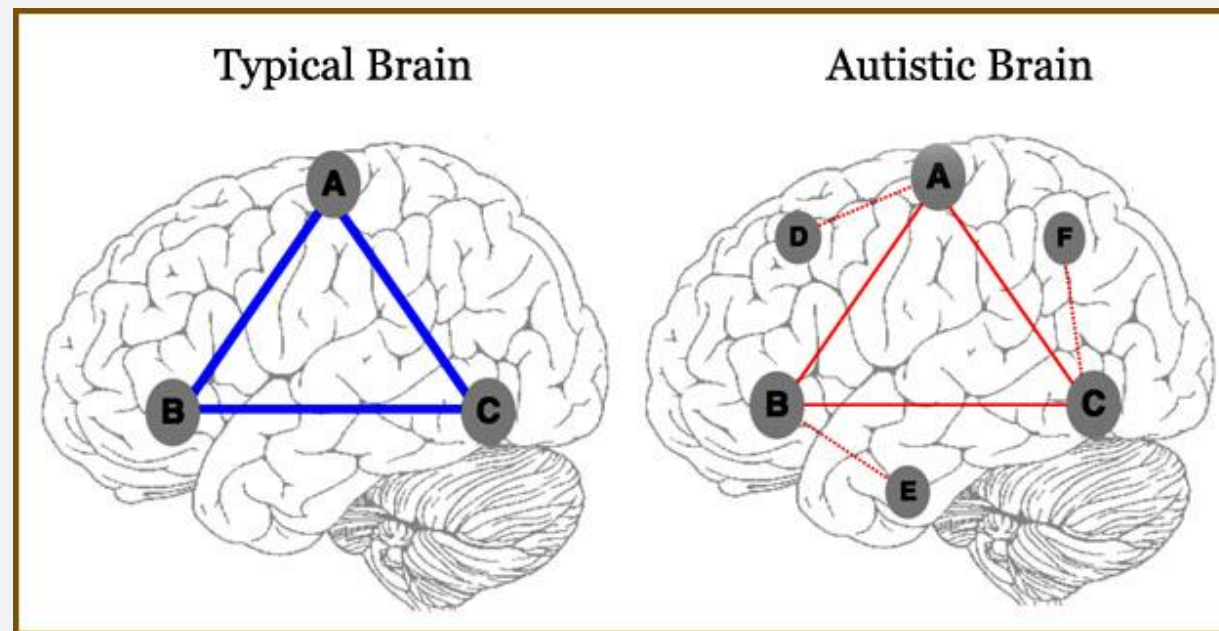
REMEMBER:
NO ONE IS
MORE
IMPORTANT
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- The truth is that parents and family members have a deep emotional bond and many more interactions to help their child develop socially and emotionally.
- There are very simple things you can do in everyday life to help your child learn, grow and develop!

REMEMBER

- ❖ Children with autism have different brains!
- ❖ Frequent evolving research

AUTISM BRAIN DIFFERENCES VIDEO



❖ *Your child's brain is different!*

Autistic Brain

- Easier to focus on
objects

Typical Brain

- Easier to focus on
people

REMEMBER

- ***As a result, communicating & interacting with people is more difficult & stressful, and takes more effort!***
- ***Your child needs extra support to develop the ability to communicate and interact with people!***

QUICK
THOUGHT

- ❖ Understanding how this research relates to you as the parent and your relationship with your child

ALL PARENTS HELP THEIR CHILDREN LEARN
TO BE SOCIAL AND DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS
THROUGH EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS

Including children with Autism!



CHILD
DEVELOP-
MENT

Following & Leading

Following: a child first begins to connect with their parents when their early initiatives (looks, actions, sounds) are seen & followed

Leading: Parents who teach their child to cooperate well do so through “positive leading”. They make their behavior very predictable by slowing down and saying/ showing exactly what they will do or what will happen next

Initiating & Responding

CHILD DEVELOP- MENT

- Much of therapy is focused on the child's **responding**
- Children with autism who develop the ability to **initiate** communication and interaction have the best long-term outcomes!
- Your child's ability to **initiate** communication and social interaction is vital for their long-term success!

INITIATION

- ***Ask yourself: Is this already happening around me but not in the way I would expect?***

REMEMBER

❖ Child Development:
Interactions = Connections

HELP YOUR
CHILD
CONNECT
WITH YOU

- Try spending 5 minutes once or twice a day just sitting with your child as they play. Don't do anything yourself with your child's toys! Instead, simply:
 - **Observe** you child attentively
 - **Wait for** your child to do or say something (make an "initiative")
 - **Follow** what your child does by **naming** it or repeating what he/she says

HELP YOUR
CHILD
CONNECT
WITH YOU

- This helps you notice where your child is most concentrated and focused, and show's your child:
 - Mommy/Daddy is with me - I'm not alone!
 - What's inside of me (my own thoughts/feelings/interests) is ok!
 - People like to be with me!

HELP YOUR
CHILD
COMMUNI-
CATE MORE
WITH YOU

- ***Imitate you child's sounds and words as much as possible***
 - This shows your child that their sounds and words are *powerful* ways to communicate with people. Simple back-and-forth sound imitation games are the beginnings of social conversations!

HELP YOUR
CHILD
INTERACT
MORE
WITH YOU

- Make social interactions easy and **very predictable** for your child by:
 - **Repeating** a familiar, preferred activity (e.g. a tickle game, swing, or song) several times (so your child can anticipate your behavior).
 - **Pausing & waiting expectantly** for your child to *continue activity/interaction* (with a look, sound, word or action).
 - ***Immediately responding*** to your child's communication by continuing activity, then pausing & waiting again, etc.

TRY TO
AVOID

- Constantly directing your child's attention to what *you* are focused on or interested in
- ***Not recognizing or acknowledging*** what your ***child*** is *focused on/interested in*

TRY TO
AVOID

- Constantly asking your child questions:
 - “What color is it?”
 - “How many do you have?”
 - “Do you like this one?”
 - “What are you doing with that?”

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

- Affection without any limitations, or love without conditions
- No bounds and is unchanging
- No expectations on actions or responses

“When we make the choice to fill our heart space with unconditional love, our worlds blossom into a beauty far greater than we have known.”

BUILDING A STRONG RELATIONSHIP

The parent's thoughts, attitude and behavior conveys to a child:

- “I completely accept you as you are right now and want to be with you.”
- “I want to know you better/ find out more about you.”
- “I’m with you and I’m listening to you - you have my full attention.”
- “What you enjoy and like to do/say is good/ interesting/ important to me.”
- “You are a good, interesting and fun person to be with.”

WHY THIS BENEFITS THE CHILD

- Long lasting effects on your child and their connection with you
- Deeper interactions and connections between you both
- Strong bond that is constantly growing

- ***You are the most important relationship in your child's life!***
- ***Your child's brain is different, so he/she needs extra special support to develop strong relationships***
- ***Following and leading are essential for your child's healthy social and emotional development and relationships***
- ***Encouraging your child's initiatives helps him/her develop confidence and social motivation***

FINAL
TAKE-
AWAYS