

# *BUILDING A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR AUTISTIC CHILD*

Transforming Autism Project



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!

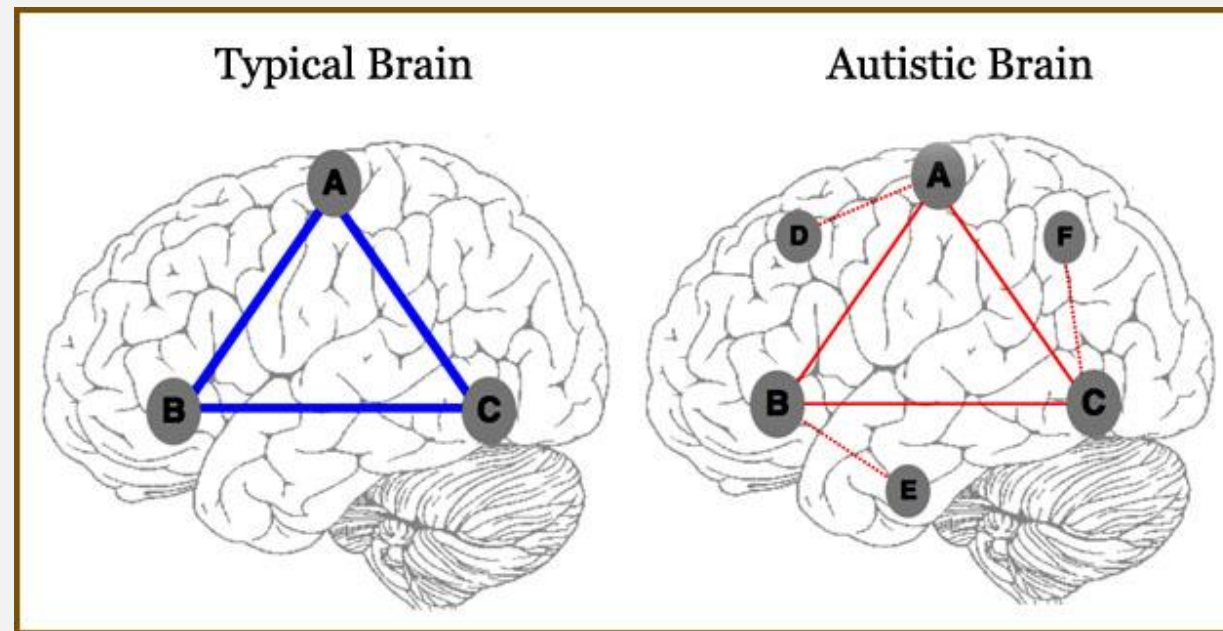
REMEMBER:  
NO ONE IS  
MORE  
IMPORTANT  
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- The truth is that parents and family members have a deep emotional bond and many more interactions to help their child develop socially and emotionally.
- There are very simple things you can do in everyday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

REMEMBER

❖ Children with autism have different brains!

# AUTISM BRAIN DIFFERENCES VIDEO



REMEMBER

❖ *Your child's brain is different!*

Autistic Brain

- Easier to focus on  
*objects*

Typical Brain

- Easier to focus on  
*people*

➤ ***As a result, communicating & interacting with people is more difficult & stressful, and takes more effort!***

REMEMBER

❖ *Your child's brain is different!*

Autistic Brain

- Easier to focus on  
*objects*

Typical Brain

- Easier to focus on  
*people*

➤ ***Your child needs extra support to develop the ability to communicate and interact with people!***

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

CHILD  
DEVELOP-  
MENT

**Following  
&  
Leading**

**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*

CHILD  
DEVELOP-  
MENT

# Initiating & Responding

- *Children with autism who develop the ability to **initiate** communication and interaction have the best long-term outcomes!*
- *However, many autism programs & therapies still focus heavily on teaching **responding***

CHILD  
DEVELOP-  
MENT

***Initiating  
&  
Responding***

*Your child's ability to **initiate** communication and social interaction is vital for their long-term success!*

# 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.”

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?”

- ***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