

Ventura County SELPA  
Autism Certification Program  
MANUAL  
Professional Level

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Dear Autism Competency Certification Candidate:

Thank you for your interest in the Ventura County SELPA's Autism Certification Program. The manual is enclosed for you. This manual explains the requirements for completion of each module. At the end of each completed module, you will receive a certificate. When you have gone through the entire certification process, you will receive a certificate showing that you have met all the requirements for the overall program.

After reviewing the manual, if you still are interested in the Autism Competency Certification program, please fill out the attached sheet and return to the SELPA. You will then be considered enrolled in this program.

We look forward to working with you in this exciting and challenging endeavor. We appreciate your commitment to improving your skill and knowledge in working with students with autism spectrum disorders.

Sincerely,

The Autism Certification Team

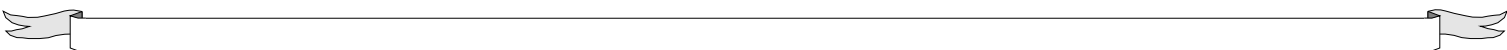






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# INTRODUCTION

In September 1995 a Task Force was convened by the Ventura County SELPA to look at best practices for children with autism. The Task Force consisted of over forty administrators, special education teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, parents and others. The Task Force visited many different programs for children with autism all around the country. World-renowned speakers were brought in to Ventura County, and members traveled to other locations to hear various autism related subjects. All information was presented to the Task Force so that the group could make informed recommendations on what was important to Ventura County SELPA.

## **TASK FORCE PURPOSE:**

1. Articulate and define issues regarding educational service delivery to young children with autism.
2. Research, compile and study literature and other sources of information.
3. Develop some possible “common philosophies” for our community regarding considerations about educational services to young children with autism.
4. Provide leadership for resulting personnel development activities:
  - a. Compilations of resources, articles, literature.
  - b. Sponsor and develop trainings for staff as needed (professionals, paraprofessionals and families).

Several positive changes in the Ventura County SELPA were brought about as a result of the dedicated individuals of the Task Force. One of the results is this Autism Competency Certification Program. It is the belief of the Ventura County SELPA that staff working with students with autism should have an opportunity to attend a wide variety of staff development training events on the various aspects of autism. Additionally, their experiences must be validated and documented. This is one way of addressing the vision of the Task Force for top-quality programs to meet the needs of our children.

There will be two levels of certification in this program, one for professionals and one for paraprofessionals. This manual will address the professional level. Candidates who participate in this level must have acquired or be in the process of acquiring professional degree, credential or licensure in special education or a related field.



# PROCESS

In order to get the Autism Certificate, the candidate needs to attend workshops, courses, conferences or activities and submit documentation to the Autism Certification Team (ACT). The ACT will meet quarterly to review and verify documentation submitted by candidates. The quarterly dates will be determined on a year-to-year basis and made known to candidates.

This manual will give the candidate more specific information about what is required for each module. If a candidate is unsure whether an activity will suffice, they may call or e-mail the SELPA, Assistant Director, Fran Arner-Costello at farnerco@vcss.k12.ca.us. Or, if they have already attended the event, simply submit the documentation. For each event attended, the candidate must submit a completed Activity Summary Sheet, (see first page) with additional verification of attendance. Verification should include information about the event (flyer, brochure, handouts, etc.) and evidence of your attendance (receipt, certificate, etc.). If an event was attended in the past, it may be acceptable if there is no actual receipt or certificate. Events must have been attended within the last five years of submission. The ACT may accept events attended prior to the past five years if the candidate submits evidence of ongoing implementation.

The ACT will review your documentation. If it is adequate, the ACT will sign off on your Activity Summary Worksheet and send a copy to you. If not, you will receive an explanation. As you complete all of the competencies for each Module, you will receive a Module Certificate. When you have completed the whole program, you will receive the overall Autism Certificate.

# MODULE I

## Autism Spectrum Disorders: Foundations

**This module is the foundation upon which all other modules are built. The participants will gain a broad understanding of the autism spectrum and its related disorders. All workshops in this module will include the latest research, characteristics of autism, and best educational practices.**

*Candidates must attend a minimum of 2 days of training.*

### **EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCES:**

- Diagnostic Center Training – A one day training on autism spectrum disorders offered by the California Diagnostic Center (Part One, Part Two or both)
- Foundations of Autism – A one day workshop offered by the Ventura County SELPA, presented by a parent-professional team.
- Books – At least two books to be read from the attached list. One must be from the “scientific literature” list and one must be from the “applied literature” list. The requirements for this option are included on that page. Counts as one day.
- Comparable College/University Coursework – If a candidate has completed coursework, which covers the foundations of autism, the course content may be submitted, along with evidence of satisfactory completion, to the ACT for verification of competency

# **MODULE I - *continuation***

## **Autism Approved Book List Available for Autism Competency Certificate Program**

Some books are available at:

**Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Professional Library, Special Education**  
Collection “Autism”,  
Educational Services Building,  
570 Airport Way, Camarillo  
(805) 388-4407

**Rainbow Connection Family Resource Center**  
2220 East Gonzales Road, Suite 210  
Oxnard, CA 93036  
(805) 485-3177

After reading the book, please write a summary of each book, no more than one page. Send the written summary along with your completed Activity Summary sheet.

### **Applied Literature**


- 1. A Work in Progress Behavior Management Strategies and Curriculum for Intensive Behavior Treatment of Autism**  
R. Leaf, J. McEachin
- 2. Activity Schedules for Children with Autism**  
Lynn E. McClannahann & Patricia J. Krantz
- 3. Asperger’s Syndrome: A Guide for Educators and Parents**  
B. Myler & R. Simpson
- 4. Asperger Syndrome and Rage: Practical Solutions for a Difficult Moment**  
B. Myers & J. Southwick
- 5. Asperger’s Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals**  
Tony Attwood
- 6. Autism and Asperger Syndrome**  
U. Frith
- 7. Autism, An Introduction to Psychological Theory**  
Francesca Happe



# **MODULE I - *continuation***

## **Autism Approved Book List Available for Autism Competency Certificate Program**


- 8. Autism Through the Life Span: The Eden Model**  
D. Holes
- 9. Breaking Autism's Barriers: A Father's Story**  
Bill Davis, Wendy Goldband Schunick
- 10. Children with Autism, A Parents' Guide**  
Michael D. Powers, Ph.D.
- 11. Creating a Win-Win IEP for students with Autism! A How-to-Manual for Parents and Educators**  
Beth Fouse, Ph.D.
- 12. Emergence – Labeled Autistic**  
Temple Grandin, Ph.D.
- 13. Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities – Interventions for Children and Youths with Autism parts I & II**  
L. J. Heflin, & R. L. Simpson
- 14. Functional Programming for People with Autism: A Series Developing a Functional & Longitudinal Individual Plan**  
Nancy Dalrymple
- 15. Enhancing Communication in Individuals with Autism Through the Use of Pictures and Words**  
Michelle Winner
- 16. Functional School Activities 1**  
Nancy Dalrymple
  - **Growing Towards Independence by Learning Functional Skills and Behaviors**  
Barbara Porco
  - **Helpful Responses to Some of the Behaviors of Individuals with Autism**  
Nancy Dalrymple



# MODULE I – *continuation*

## **Autism Approved Book List Available for Autism Competency Certificate Program**


- **Learning Self-Care Skills**  
Valerie DePalma & Marci Wheeler
  
  - **Learning to be Independent and Responsible**  
Nancy Dalrymple
  
  - **Reading**  
Barbara Porco
  
  - **Sex Education: Issues for the Person with Autism**  
Dalrymple, Gray & Ruble
  
  - **Some Interpersonal Social Skills Objectives and Teaching Strategies for People with Autism**  
Nancy Dalrymple
  
  - **Some Social Communication Skill Objectives and Teaching Strategies for People with Autism**  
Nancy Dalrymple
  
  - **Toileting**  
Nancy Dalrymple & Margaret Boarman
- 17. High Functioning Autism and Asperger Syndrome: A Roadmap**  
Linda Andron, et al
- 18. Incorporating Social Goals in the Classrooms: A Guide for Teachers and Parent with High Functioning Autism and Asperger Syndrome**  
Rebecca A. Moyes
- 19. Infants and Young Children – Areas of agreement about effective practices among programs serving young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder** J. Hurth, E. Shaw, Izeen, S. J. Rogers
- 20. Journal of Autism and Developmental Disabilities – Guidelines for evaluating Intervention programs for Autistic Children**  
B. J. Freeman



# **MODULE I – *continuation***

## **Autism Approved Book List Available for Autism Competency Certificate Program**

- 21. Keys to Parenting the Child with Autism: Barron’s Parenting Keys**  
Marlene Targ Brill
- 22. Making a Difference: Behavioral Intervention for Autism**  
Catherine Maurice, et al
- 23. Management of Autistic Behavior**  
R. Simpson & N, Regan
- 24. Parent Survival Manual**  
Eric Schopler
- 25. Picture Exchange Communications System (PECS)**  
L. Frost & A. Bondy
- 26. Preschool Education Programs for Children with Autism**  
S. Harris & Handleman (Eds.)
- 27. Reaching the Child with Autism through Art**  
Toni Flowers
- 28. Solving Behavior Problems in Autism**  
Linda A. Hodgdon
- 29. Solving Behavior Problems with Visual Strategies – Advocate**  
L. Hodgdon
- 30. Steps to Independence**  
B. Baker
- 31. Teaching Strategies for Parents & Professionals**  
Schopler, et al.
- 32. The new Social Story Book**  
C. Gray
- 33. The World of the Autistic Child**  
B. Siegel



# **MODULE I – *continuation***

## **Autism Approved Book List**

### **Available for Autism Competency Certificate Program**

**34. Teaching Your Child the Language of Social Success**  
Marshall Duke, Stephen Nowicki Jr. & Elisabeth Martin

**35. Thinking in Pictures**  
Temple Grandin, Ph.D.

**36. Visual Strategies for Improving Communication**  
Linda A. Hodgdon

**37. Working Together for a Brighter Future**  
Marilyn Hays


### **Scientific Literature**

- 1. Asperger Syndrome or High-Functioning Autism?**  
Schopler, Mesibov, & Kunce
- 2. Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule – WPS (ADOS-WPS)**  
C. Lord, M. Rutter, P.C. DiLavore and S. Risi
- 3. Autism in Adolescents and Adults: Current Issues in Autism**  
Edited by Eric Schopler & Gary B. Mesibov
- 4. Behavioral Issues in Autism**  
Eric Schopler & Gary Mesibov
- 5. Communication Problems in Autism**  
Eric Schopler & Gary Mesibov
- 6. Diagnosis and Assessment in Autism**  
Eric Schopler & Gary Mesibov
- 7. Educating children with Autism**  
National Research Council (Editor), et al
- 8. Handbook of Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders**  
D. Cohon and F. Volkman

# **MODULE I – continuation**

## **Autism Approved Book List Available for Autism Competency Certificate**

- 9. High-Functioning Individuals with Autism**  
Eric Schopler & Gary Mesibov
- 10. Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders – Autism Diagnostic Interview Revised**  
C. Lord, M. Rutter and A. LeCouteur
- 11. Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders – Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale Scores as a function of age and initial IQ in 210 Autistic children.**  
B. J. Freeman, M. Del’Homme, D. Guthrie, & F. Lang.
- 12. Journal of child Psychology & Psychiatry – Spectrum Disorders at 20 and 42 months of age. Stability of Clinical and ADI-R Diagram**  
Klein A. Cox, Baird T. Charma, C. Barm-Cohen, J. Sweetenham, A. Drew, S. Wheelwright, S. A
- 13. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry – Validity and Neuropsychological Characterization of Asperger Syndrome. Convergence with Nonverbal Learning Disabilities Syndrome.**  
Klin, F. Volkner, S. Sparrow, D. Cicchette, B. Rourke
- 14. Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry – DSM-IV Autism Diagnostic Interview - Revised**  
Klin F. Volkman, Satzmore B. Siegal, D. Lord C., M. Campbell, B.J. Freeman, D.
- 15. Autism Approved Book List**  
Available for Autism Competency Certificate
- 16. Learning and Cognition**  
Eric Schopler & Gary Mesibov
- 17. Neurobiological Issues in Autism**  
Eric Schopler & Gary Mesibov
- 18. Positive Behavior Support. Including People with Difficult Behaviors in theCommunity.**  
R. Koegal (Ed)



# **MODULE I – *continuation***

## **Autism Approved Book List Available for Autism Competency Certificate**

### **19. Preschool Issues in Autism**

Edited by Eric Schopler, M.E. Van bourgondie, et all.

### **20. Preschool Issues in Autism**

Edited by Eric Schopler, M.E. Van bourgondie, et all.

### **21. Social Behavior in Autism**

Eric Schopler & Gary Mesibov

### **22. Teaching Children with Autism: Strategies to Enhance Communication and Socialization**

Kathleen Ann Quill

### **23. Teaching Children with Autism: Strategies for Initiating Positive Interactions and Improving Learning Opportunities**

Robert L. Koegel, Ph.D. and Lynn Kern Koegel, Ph.D.

### **24. The Effects of Autism on the Family**

Eric Schopler & Gary Mesibov

### **25. The World of the Autistic Child: Understanding & Treating Autism Spectrum Disorders**

Bryna Siegel

# MODULE II

## Collaboration: Transdisciplinary Teams; Parent/Professional Collaboration; Interagency Collaboration

As each child with autism is unique, working within a team of parents and professionals for that individual child will be just as unique. This module is to help you gain experience as a team player as you interact with various key people involved with the child.

*Candidates MUST acquire four different experiences, totaling 12 hours, at least 2 of which must involve direct interaction with parents of children with autism. In addition to documentation of the event, you must also submit a written summary (no more than 1 page) of each.*

### EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCES:

- Participate in an IEP for a child with autism.
- Rainbow Family Resource Center in Oxnard and Simi Valley sponsors many different workshops of interest throughout the year that would apply to this module. Some of the topics in the past have been: Visually Structuring your Home Environment, Issues in Communication, Full inclusion, Autismo (Spanish speaking support Group), Behavior Issues, and Sibling Issues. Attend one of these workshops. Rainbow: (805) 485-9643.
- Attend a Parent Discussion Meeting sponsored by the Ventura County Autism Society (805) 312-8227.
- Participate in various parent/professional meetings through the Ventura County SELPA.
- Attend a parent/professional ARISE! (Autism Resources, Information Sharing and Education) meeting sponsored in each region of the SELPA each quarter.
- Attend an Introduction: Autism panel presentation, sponsored regularly by the SELPA for new families.
- Transdisciplinary Play-Based Assessment/Intervention – Methods of assessing/providing intervention in the context of play, using a Transdisciplinary team. Includes Transdisciplinary Play-Based Assessment and Intervention as promoted by Toni Linder, Ph.D. (*counts as 8 hours*)
- Comparable College/University Coursework – If a candidate has completed coursework, which covers collaboration, the course content may be submitted, along with evidence of satisfactory completion, to the ACT for verification of competency.

# MODULE III


## Instructional Methodology

**The purpose of this module is to ensure that implementers have the basic foundations for designing and implementing a program for learners with autism. The Ventura County SELPA does not promote any particular methodology, but acknowledges the need for staff to be able to apply at least two of the leading research-based methods. Instructional methodology is considered to be the basic approach to teaching learners with autism.**

*Candidates MUST acquire at least six days of training, in at least two methods. One of the methods must be one of the first three listed below.*

### EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCES:

- Intensive Behavior Intervention: therapy and approaches- this includes any instructional method which includes a “behavioral” approach involving presentation of a stimulus, learner response, and feedback in the form of correction or reward. It includes methods involving a “Discrete Trial” approach, such as those promoted by Dr. Ivor Lovaas.
- Visually Structured Teaching approach- this includes any method which promotes visual structure including classroom cues and supports, instructional organization around visual strategies, and schedule supports. It includes methods promoted and taught by the University of North Carolina, Division TEACCH (Training and Education for Children with Autism and Communication Handicaps.)
- Developmental Approach- This includes any method which emphasizes the transactional approach with children, in which the teacher reflects on and responds to cues given by the learner with autism. The teacher presents information to the student at a pace which is appropriate to the student’s developmental level. It includes the “Floortime” method promoted by Dr. Stanley Greenspan.
- Pivotal Response Training - This includes any method, which examines key interest areas of children and capitalizes on them in order to make widespread changes. It includes methods promoted by Drs. Lynn and Robert Koegel.

- 
- Comparable College/University Coursework- If a candidate has completed coursework, which covers instructional methods for learners with autism, the course content may be submitted, along with evidence of satisfactory completion, to the ACT for verification of competency.
  - Other - Evidence of training in any other approaches which have been supported by accepted research methods may be submitted to the ACT for consideration

# MODULE IV

## Positive Behavior Support

**This module is designed to ensure that the candidate has knowledge of the theory and application of Positive Behavior Support and its pertinence to learners with autism.**

*The candidate MUST complete a minimum of two days of training, as well as submit evidence of implementation of two Behavior Intervention Plans in a school or therapy setting with children with autism.*

### EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCES:

- “Positive Behavior Support- It’s Easy as 1-2-3-4-5-6”- This is a course offered on a regular basis by the SELPA. It covers the basic principles and philosophy of Positive Behavior Support as well as the basics of application.
- Positive Behavior Support 102 - This is a more advanced course on Positive Behavior Support, which builds on concepts learned in the first course and gives the learner a chance to apply the principles with an individual Behavior Plan.
- BICM Training - This is an intensive four-day training offered yearly by the SELPA in which candidates are certified as Behavior Intervention Case Managers, as outlined in California Education Code. The training requires completion of a Functional Analysis Assessment, Behavior Intervention Plan, and passing of an examination.
- NCPI Training - This is a method of non-violent intervention with crisis behavior. It is a two-day course, which covers the principles of de-escalation and response. Although the Level One course is a two-day course, it counts as only one day toward this certificate.
- Comparable College/University Coursework - If the candidate has completed courses on Positive Behavior Support, the course overview and verification of attendance may be submitted to the ACT for review.

*Please remember, after completing two days of training in any of the above, the candidate must submit evidence of implementation of two Behavior Intervention Plans. Please submit 2 Behavior Intervention Plans and sample data collection sheets that show you have implemented the programs for at least six weeks.*

# MODULE V

## Communication

**Communication is a core deficit in people with autism spectrum disorders. Participants will gain understanding of the relationships between language development, cognition, behavior and learning.**

*The candidate MUST complete a minimum of three days of training, at least one in a method of Pictorial Communication.*

### EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCES:

- Pictorial Communication – methods that use pictures, symbols or photographs to communicate. Includes Blissymbols, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Boardmaker, etc.
- Assistive Technology Leadership Program – a five-day course offered by the Ventura County SELPA. (*Counts as 2 days*)
- Signing/cued speech – non-verbal methods of communication using hands signs and motions.
- Functional Pragmatics – teaching children with verbal language to use language in useful life-enhancing ways.
- Communication training offered by the University of North Carolina, Division TEACCH.
- Comparable College/University Coursework - If the candidate has completed coursework, which covers communication development for learners with autism, the course may be submitted along with evidence of satisfactory completion, to the ACT for verification of competency.

# MODULE VI

## Social Skills

**Persons with autistic spectrum disorders present with social skills limitations. These limitations may be categorized by marked impairment in the use of verbal and non verbal behaviors, failure to develop age appropriate peer relationships, lack of spontaneous seeking to share the interests of others and lack of social and emotional reciprocity. Participants will acquire strategies for promoting positive social interaction and/or play skills.**

*The candidate must submit evidence of two days of training, as well as documentation of how you implemented a social skills component in a school or therapy setting with children with autism.*

### EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTANCE EXPERIENCES:

- Integrated Play Groups – A method of training children without disabilities to learn to recognize and capitalize upon social initiation cues of children with autism, promoted by Pamela Wolfberg.
- Social Stories – A method of practicing through social stories, appropriate social interactions and positive outcomes, such as that promoted by Carol Gray of Social Stories Ltd.
- Cognitive Picture Rehearsal – A system to teach self-control promoted by June Groden and Patricia La Vasseur.
- Social Skills workshops – Any workshop which addresses social skill development in learners with autism. Includes those offered by Yellen and Associates, and “Social Skills Overview” and “Not Just ‘Please’ and ‘Thank You’” presented by the Diagnostic Center, Southern California.
- Comparable College/University Coursework - If the candidate has completed coursework which covers social skills development, the course overview and verification of attendance may be submitted to the ACT for review.

**Please remember, after completing the two days of training in any of the above, the candidate must submit evidence of implementation of social skills component. Examples: Lesson plan; Positive Behavior Support plan; IEP goals and date collection, etc.**



# MODULE VII

## Data Collection

**This module is designed to assist the candidate in demonstrating competency in methods of data collection and instructional planning.**

*Candidate **MUST** submit evidence of use of at least two different methods for collecting data on instructional methodology and student outcomes. Each should cover at least a 2-month period of time. This must be different than the data sheets submitted under Module IV. (Some examples of methods are event recording, interval recording, evaluation of steps in task analysis, etc.)*

### **EACH SHOULD INCLUDE:**

- An overview of the method was used
- How student outcome data was used to modify the instructional approach
- Copies of the actual worksheets themselves.

Ventura County SELPA  
**Autism Certification Program**  
**ACTIVITY SUMMARY SHEET**

**Your Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Module:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_

Professional Level

Paraprofessional Level

Name of event/activity/workshop:

Date (if applicable):

Brief description of event:

What do you feel is the MOST IMPORTANT thing you learned?

Describe how you will use this knowledge in your professional activities:

**Autism Certification Team**  
Approved  Not Approved  (*Explanation*):