Building Arizona Educator Capacity to Serve Students with Autism: Effective Approaches to Achieve Improved Outcomes

Suzanne Perry, M.Ed., NBCT
Director Early Childhood Special Education
Arizona Department of Education

Goals of the Presentation

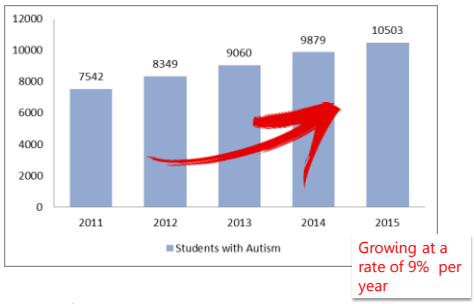
- Build awareness of the characteristics of autism
- Share data about its prevalence
- Provide experiences representing the characteristics of autism
- Describe state challenges and strategies for supporting educators working with children with autism and other developmental disabilities
- Get feedback from participants about strategies for furthering educator capacity around the state

Arizona is a huge state with currently more than **10,000** children with **autism** with IEP's. Incidence is now:

1:68 acc. to CDC

Challenge #1

Number of Students with Autism is on the Rise



Challenge #2

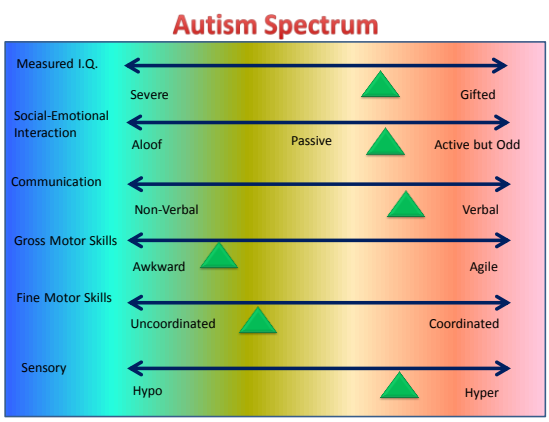
Autism

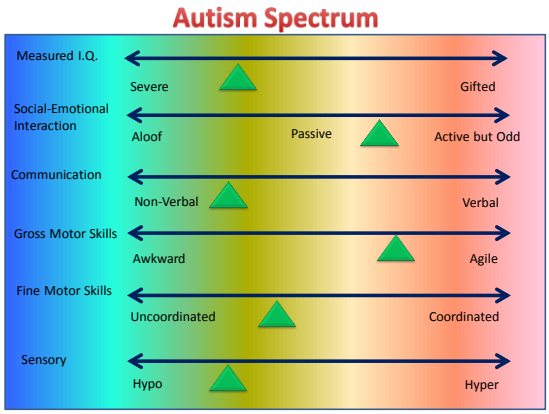
"If you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism,"-

- Dr. Stephen Shore, person with autism and Professor at Adelphi University

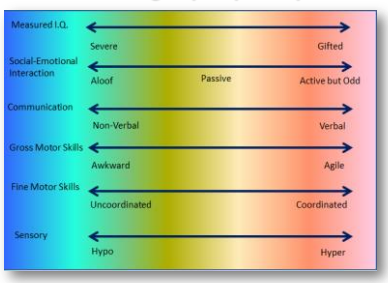
Challenge #3

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtvP5A5OHpU



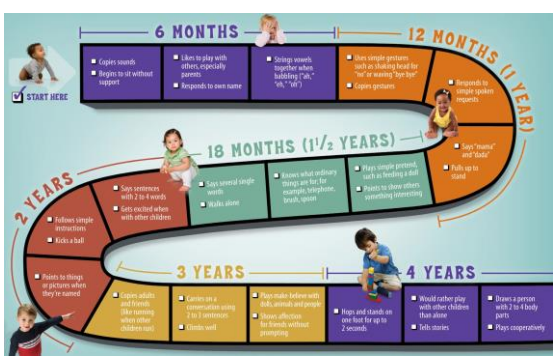


Your Turn…Where might you place your markers?



How might differences impact teachers? Families?
What are some ways you might use this chart?

Developmental Milestones to Monitor

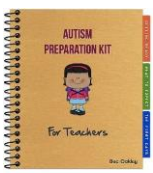


Clues for Possible Autism

- Delay or absence of spoken language
- Looks through people; not aware of others
- Not responsive to other people's facial expressions/feelings
- Lack of pretend play; little or no imagination
- Does not show typical interest in, or play near peers purposefully
- Lack of turn taking
- Unable to share pleasure
- Qualitative impairment in nonverbal communication
- Not pointing at an object to direct another person to look at it
- Lack of gaze monitoring
- Lack of initiation of activity or social play
- Unusual or repetitive hand and finger mannerisms
- Unusual reactions, or lack of reaction, to sensory stimuli

Adapted from Table III-5, Evidence-based Clinical Clues of Possible Autism, New York State Department of Health, Early Intervention Program, 1999. Report of the Recommendations: Autism/Pervasive Developmental Disorders, Assessment and Intervention for Young Children (Age 0-3 Years), pp 58-60. See Appendix B of this protocol for this table.

Teacher Preparation



"Although it is highly probable that both general and special educators will encounter students with ASD in their classrooms, consistent with the findings from the state analysis above and of the National Research Council [NRC] (2001), most teacher graduates receive minimal to no preparation in evidence-based practices for students diagnosed with ASD."

-Morrier, Hess, & Heflin, 2011

Challenge #4

Training Results

http://dilbert.com/strip/1997-12-21

DILBERT by SCOTT ADAMS

Training was not resulting in changes to practice

Challenge #5

State Level Data for Students with Autism

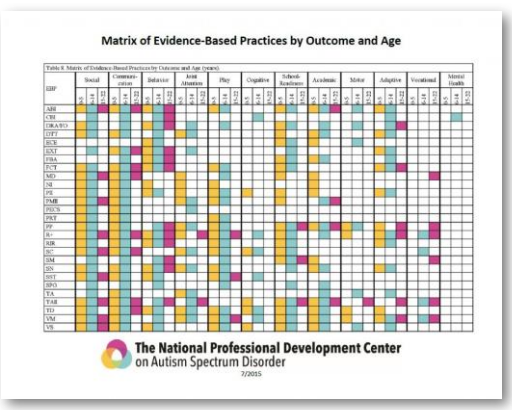
- SY 2012-13
- Schools that reported students with Autism
- 8902 took the AIMS test
- 4210 passed
- Average 48% pass rate

Challenge #6

So, What Do We Know?

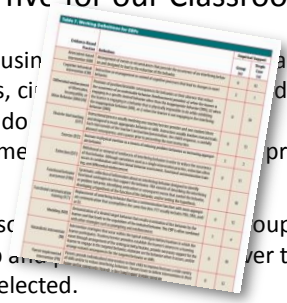
- We know that there are practices that work:
- National Professional Development Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders
- National Autism Center

- We know that **free** training is available:
- Vanderbilt Iris Center
- Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence
- UNC North Carolina AFIRM modules



http://www.azed.gov/special-education/files/2014/12/matrix-updated-7-2015-1024x793.jpg

Top five for our Classrooms



- In pairs, usin ased Practices, ci d consider using or do developme program.
- One persc oup will come up a ver the E you've selected.

Challenges identified ✅

Evidence Based Practices identified ✅

How do we get educators to use EBP's (for students with autism and other Developmental Disabilities) effectively?

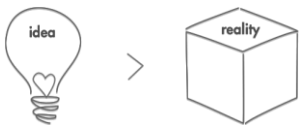
Implementation Science

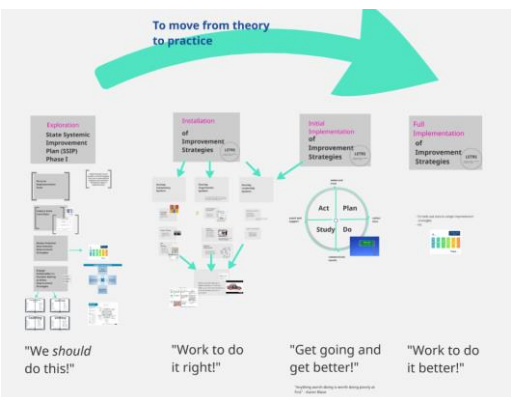
National Implementation Research Network

- Implementation is defined as a specified set of activities designed to put into practice an activity or program of known dimensions.

Implementation Successes?

- Talk to your table partners about conditions that enabled you to take one idea and make it a reality.





Arizona Statewide Autism Plan
AZ-SAP
Activities

- EBP's: Discrete Trial Training, Pivotal Response Training, Functional Routines, Reinforcement (ABA) all included in the Autism Grant Training
- Coaching: 10 coaching visits per district/year
- Leadership: Director/Principal included in all trainings, supported to look for implementation
- Environment: Key members of team are included in training, includes instructional resources, coaching, modeling and hands on support
- Data: Daily instructional data collected aligned to standards (both State and TSG, now)

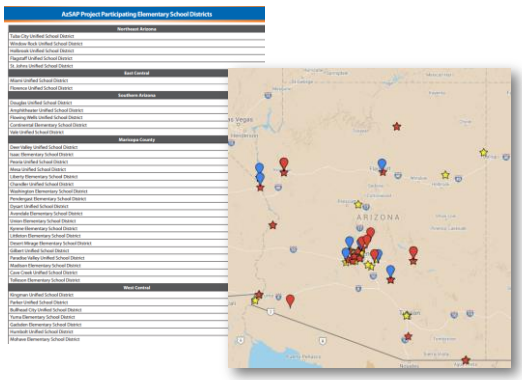
What is ABA?

Applied Behavior Analysis

- Package of treatments that include
  - discrete trial teaching,
  - incidental teaching,
  - errorless learning,
  - behavioral momentum,
  - and shaping

Video of ABA

- http://starautismsupport.com/video/star-program-instructional-strategies



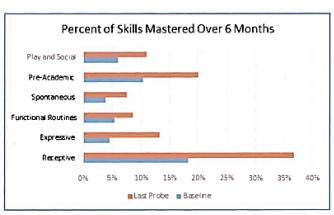
AzSAP Project Participating Elementary School Districts

Northeast Arizona
Tuba City Unified School District
Window Rock Unified School District
Holbrook Unified School District
Flagstaff Unified School District
St. Johns Unified School District
East Central
Miami Unified School District
Florence Unified School District
Southern Arizona
Douglas Unified School District
Amphitheater Unified School District
Flowing Wells Unified School District
Continental Elementary School District
Vail Unified School District
Maricopa County
Deer Valley Unified School District
Isaac Elementary School District
Peoria Unified School District
Mesa Unified School District
Liberty Elementary School District
Chandler Unified School District
Washington Elementary School District
Pendergast Elementary School District
Dysart Unified School District
Avondale Elementary School District
Union Elementary School District
Agua Fria Elementary School District
Littleton Elementary School District
Desert Mirage Elementary School District
Gilbert Unified School District
Paradise Valley Unified School District
Madison Elementary School District
Cave Creek Unified School District
Tolleson Elementary School District
West Central
Kingman Unified School District
Parker Unified School District
Bullhead City Unified School District
Yuma Elementary School District
Castalian Elementary School District
Humboldt Unified School District
Mohave Elementary School District

https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=zGpFoL8DqyaY.kMuHfEluQr8c

STAR Early Childhood Results

Preschool/Elementary Progress Data



- Substantial positive outcomes were seen in all developmental areas in a 6 month instructional period of time
- All students started instruction with less than 20% of all language and academic skills
- Represents 10 students across 2 implementation sites

- Three Years 2012-2016
- 38 Districts
- ~380 Educators

- Links Program for Middle High School

- One Year (2015-16)
- 11 Districts
- ~ 100 Educators

After Initial Training Teams Can Become Training Sites

- **Pre-K / Elementary Implementation Teams** – Designed for districts looking to support initial implementers of evidence-based strategies at the Preschool and Elementary levels.
- **Pre-K / Elementary Training Site Teams** – Designed for districts that have previously participated in the AzSAP Project and are looking to build capacity to train and support others on implementation of evidence-based strategies at the Preschool and Elementary levels.
- **Secondary Implementation Teams** – Designed for districts looking to support initial implementers of evidence-based strategies at the Secondary level.
- **Secondary Training Site Teams** – Designed for districts that have previously participated in the AzSAP Project with a Secondary Implementation Team and are looking to build capacity to train and support others on implementation of evidence-based strategies at the Secondary level.

Sustainability

To protect the investment:

1. ESS is partnering with AZ Ed Cadre and SARRC to continue to provide PD opportunities
2. Has developed a web site- http://www.azed.gov/special-education/pls/autism-resources/
3. Building a plan to support training sites within an ASD Community of Practice model

Next Challenge: Scaling Up

How do we go from "pockets of success to broad impact?"

Issues, variables

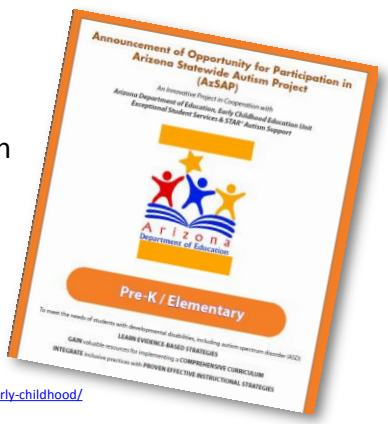
- If your district had a few classrooms that had developed some capacity teaching students with autism, what might be some next steps to spread that capacity among other educators?

Publish your Thoughts/Solutions/Ideas Here:

- http://bit.ly/1RyY1yj

…"widespread, effective, and sustained implementation across a wide range of contexts."
A. Fixen , 2009

AzSAP Autism Grant Application coming soon!



http://www.azed.gov/early-childhood/

Thank you for your participation!

Contact:
Suzanne Perry
Director, Early Childhood Special Education
Suzanne.Perry@azed.gov