

Project ImPACT

- 1) **Nature of the intervention:** Project ImPACT (Improving Parents As Communication Teachers) is a parent-mediated intervention for young children with ASD and related social-communication deficits. It is most appropriate for children up to 6 years who exhibit moderate to severe language delays. This program uses a blend of developmental and naturalistic behavioral intervention techniques to teach four core social-communication skills (social engagement, language, social imitation, and play) during play and daily routines. The curriculum provides intervention providers with the option of teaching the intervention strategies to parents in either an individual or group format, and can be conducted in the home, clinic, or school setting. Although designed as a parent-mediated intervention, the intervention techniques can also be used as a direct intervention with children with ASD in home, clinic, or school settings.

- 2) **Training details:** Initial training in the intervention involves web-based training plus a two-day workshop. The first day (Introductory Workshop) prepares providers to use the intervention techniques with young children with ASD. The second day (Parent Training Workshop) prepares providers to coach parents in the intervention. Longer workshops are available to provide hands-on feedback and fidelity checks.
 - a. **Trainer:** Project ImPACT trainers have advanced degrees, have received extensive training in Project ImPACT, and work directly with the program developers.

 - b. **Trainees:** The introductory workshop provides training in the theoretical framework of the intervention, selecting appropriate social communication goals, and intervention techniques. It is open to professionals, as well as parents and paraprofessionals who work directly with young children with ASD. The parent training workshop is designed for professionals who work with young children with autism and their families, and plan to coach parents in the intervention. Workshops can accommodate up to 75 participants. We recommend follow-up, consultation to ensure that trainees achieve fidelity in their use of the intervention with children and parent coaching.

 - c. **Frequency and location of training:** Training workshops are offered at least once per year at Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI, USA. A limited number of on-site workshops can be provided to community agencies throughout the year.

 - d. **Train the trainer:** Professionals who achieve fidelity in the intervention model through follow-up consultation can provide training and supervision to other professionals and paraprofessionals in their organization with whom they have frequent contact.

 - e. **Manual:** The practitioner and parent manuals are published by Guilford Press: *Teaching Social Communication to Children with Autism: A Practitioner's Guide to Parent Training and A Manual for Parents*.

- Evidence-base for the intervention:** The intervention techniques that are used in the program have been shown to be efficacious for teaching social-communication skills to young children with ASD and related developmental concerns, and have been identified as evidence-based by the National Professional Development Center for ASD. The developers have also conducted a series of studies evaluating the efficacy of Project ImPACT, both as implemented by trained therapists and by parents who were trained using the parent training model.

- 3) **Provisions for cultural adaptation:** The trainer manual highlights the importance of understanding the family framework/rules when implementing the intervention. The manual has been translated into Dutch and Chinese. Program developers are happy to work with local partners to make adaptations to the program structure and training materials for parents to better meet local needs.

- 4) **Contact information:** For information on training, please contact Brooke Ingersoll, PhD at ingers10@msu.edu or Anna Dvortcsak, MS, CCC-SLP at anna@dslsi.com.

<http://psychology.msu.edu/autismlab/projectimpact.html>

Workshops conducted at MSU cost \$150 per day per registrant (Total cost of \$300 for Introductory and Parent Training Workshops). On-site trainings cost \$2500 per day plus travel and accommodations for the trainer (Total cost of \$5,000 for Introductory and Parent Training Workshops). Follow-up consultation costs \$2,000 a day for onsite coaching and fidelity checks and \$100 per hour for video-based fidelity checks with feedback.