



Including Preschoolers with Autism (IPA)

A Curriculum Model for Preschool Teachers

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Introduction

One of every 36 children in the United States is diagnosed with ASD. Young children with ASD present with deficits in communication and social skills and excesses in restrictive/repetitive behaviors and interests. As a result, autistic children often require intensive, individualized support. Previous research has shown that early intervention is key to promoting positive life outcomes for autistic children. Yet, preschool teachers are often untrained and under supported in accessing and implementing ASD evidence-based practices. When early childhood centers and preschools lack the resources to support children with exceptional or behavioral needs, preschool children are three times more likely to be expelled as children in kindergarten through 12th grade. To adequately address the needs of children with ASD, preschool teachers must be skilled in the implementation of recommended practices. Without ongoing support in the classroom, changes in teacher practices and positive child outcomes fail to maintain over time.

Objectives

1. Develop the IPA professional development program aligned with evidence-based practices for promoting communication and social skills and preventing challenging behavior for children with ASD
2. Pilot the program with Virginia preschool teachers of children with ASD
3. Evaluate the impact of the program on targeted outcomes for participating teachers and children.

Method

We will be conducting one multiple baseline single case research design study across practices with groups of 3 to 4 teachers.

Program Structure

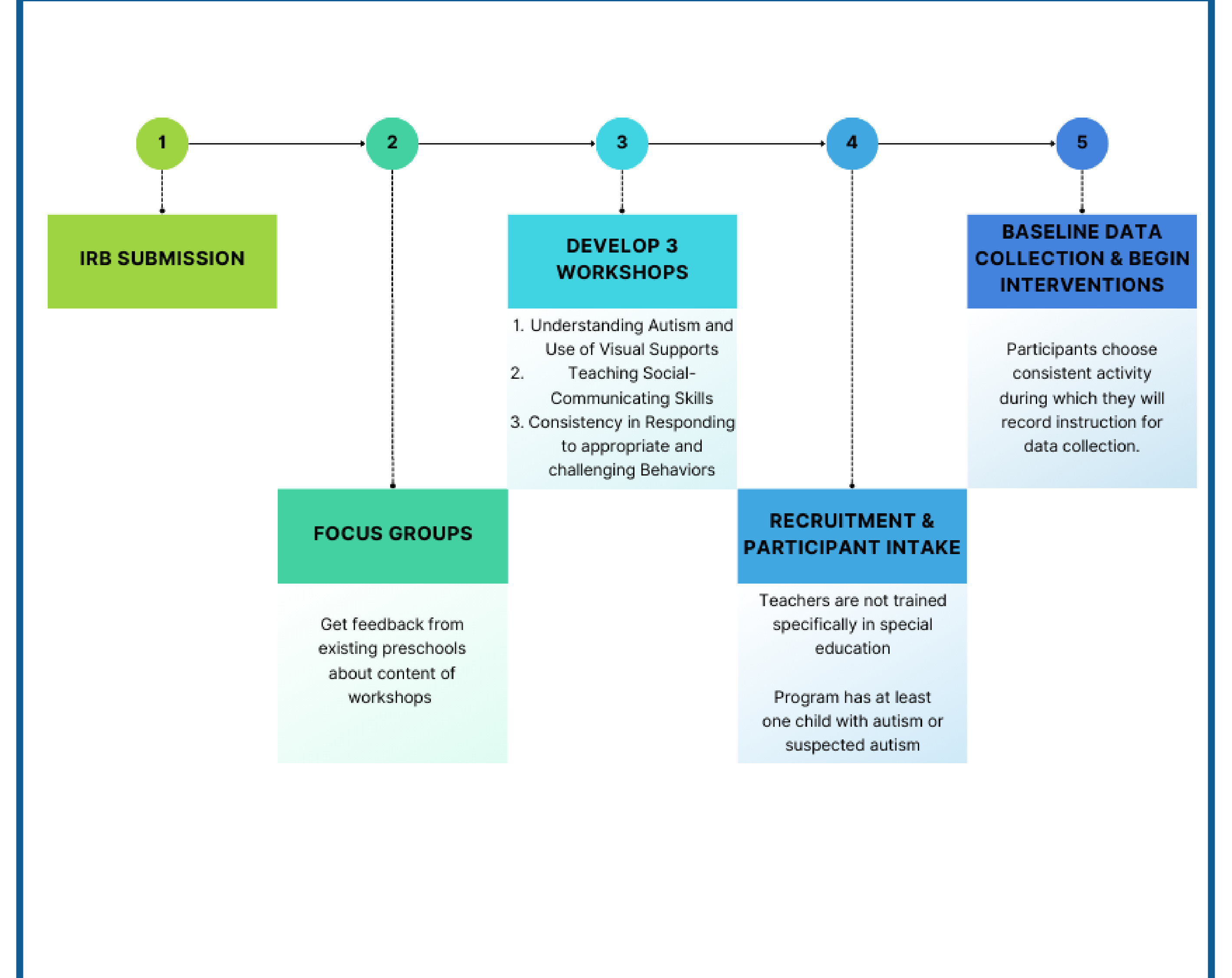
- Monthly 3 hour workshops with 9 to 10 teachers implemented by a leader and an assistant
- Weekly virtual sessions with 3 to 4 teachers participating in group practice-based coaching framework
- Twice weekly video recordings of teacher use of practices uploaded to TORSH Talent

• **Month 1: Understanding Autism and Preventing Challenging Behavior and Promoting Engagement through Visual supports.**

• **Month 2: Teaching social-communication skills to improve communication and decrease challenging behavior.**

• **Month 3: Responding to child behavior consistently- responding to appropriate behaviors and to challenging behaviors**

Next Steps



References

- Centers for Disease Control, 2023.
- Debnam, Pas, & Bradshaw, 2012.
- Sugai et al., 2000.
- Kasari, Gulsrud, Freeman, Paparella, & Helleman, 2012.
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- Gilliam, 2005.
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- Truscott, Kreskey, Bolling, & Psimas, 2012.

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