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Fortifying the Front Line: The Marcus Collaborative Coaching Project

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EMORY
UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF
MEDICINE



Learning Objectives:

- The participant will be able to identify early red flags for autism in the early childcare setting.
- The participant will learn universal strategies for promoting active engagement in the early childcare setting.
- The participant will learn evidence-based components of successful adult learning and collaboration.
- The participant will be given an account of collaborative coaching in action.

WHAT IS AUTISM???



DSM-5: Autism Spectrum Disorder

Delays and deviance in the development of social communication skills, with the presence of restricted interests and/or repetitive behaviors, present in the early developmental period.

Infants At-Risk for Autism/ASD

- Lack of, or attenuated joint attention skills
- Less interest in interactive games
- Less imitation
- Infrequency in looking at objects held by others
- Aversion to touch
- Decreased flexibility in play
- Decreased variety of toy choices & play themes
- Less appropriate play with objects
- Atypical patterns of social orienting
- Lower frequency of looking at others
- Contentedness when alone
- Poor response to name
- Reduced verbalizations/cooing
- Reduced use of gestures
- Disrupted affect regulation
- Less affection toward familiar people &/or Increased negative affect
- Reduced affective expressions



Toddlers At-Risk for Autism/ASD

Abnormalities in social relatedness...

- abnormal eye contact
- limited social smile
- limited interest in other children
- poor response to name



Limited competence with social communication...

- difficulty understanding communicative gestures from others
- difficulty using gestures
- decreased desire to share interests through pointing, giving and showing
- the child may use others as a “tool”
- A low frequency of verbal or nonverbal communication
- Atypical affect regulation such as limited sharing of affect or a range of facial expression
- Unusual vocalizations, body movements and sensory behaviors
- Limited functional play, an absence of pretend play and repetitive interests/play

Overview of RED FLAGS



Social Interaction:

- Lack of response to name by 12 months
- Lack of appropriate eye gaze
- Lack of sharing interest or enjoyment
- Lack of warm, joyful expressions
- Difficult to elicit a social smile

Communication: & Language

- Lack of showing gestures or meaningful gestures by 12 months
- Lack of pretend play by 18 months
- Lack of coordination of nonverbal communication
- Unusual prosody (little variation in pitch, odd intonation, irregular rhythm, unusual voice quality)

Repetitive Behaviors & Restricted Interests:

- Repetitive movements with objects
- Repetitive movements or posturing of body, arms, hands, or fingers



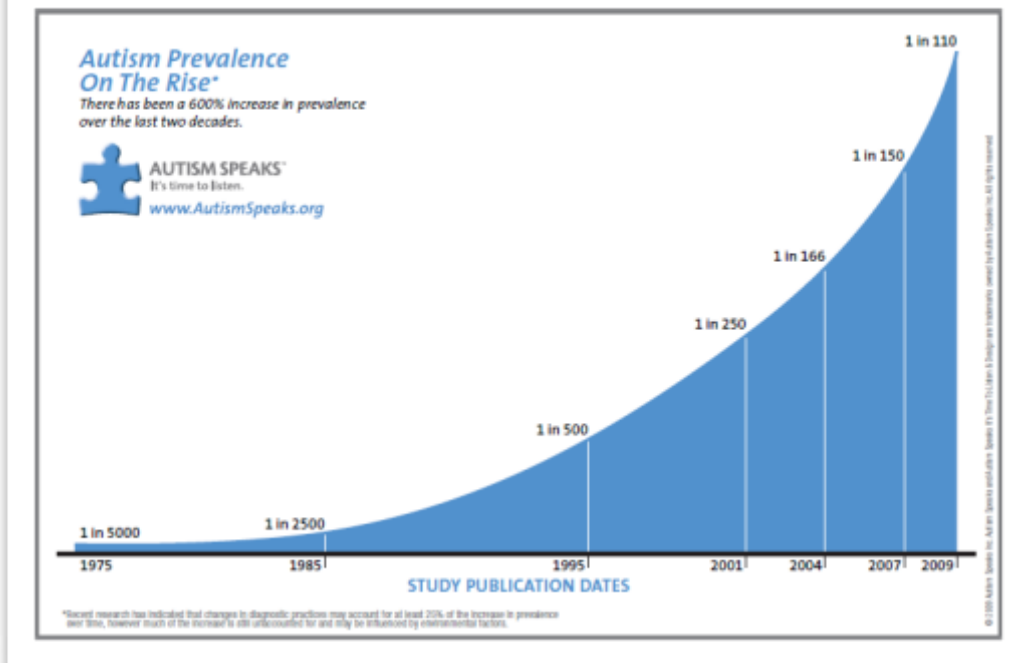
Prelinguistic Communication

Typical Development	Early Red Flags in Autism
Eye gaze, gaze shifting	Gaze aversion
Response to name	Lack of response to name
Orientation to speech	Limited response to adult speech
Pointing	Lack of pointing
Affect sharing	Object focused
Caregiver referencing	Lack of/limited caregiver referencing
Imitation	Lack of imitation
Joint attention, response and initiation	Lack of/limited skills across these areas
Symbolic play	Lack of symbolic play after 18 months

Looking beyond typical speech milestones, there is a basis for social communication *before* words come along!

1 in 68

For every 68 children born in the US,
one of them has Autism



1 in 42 boys, 1 in 189 girls

Autism Compared to Other Common Pediatric Diseases/Conditions

Disease/Condition	Prevalence Rate
Autism Spectrum Disorders	1:68
Congenital Heart Defects	1:125
Childhood Cancer (all types)	1:330
Juvenile Diabetes	1:500
Cystic Fibrosis	1:5,000
Muscular Dystrophy	1:20,000

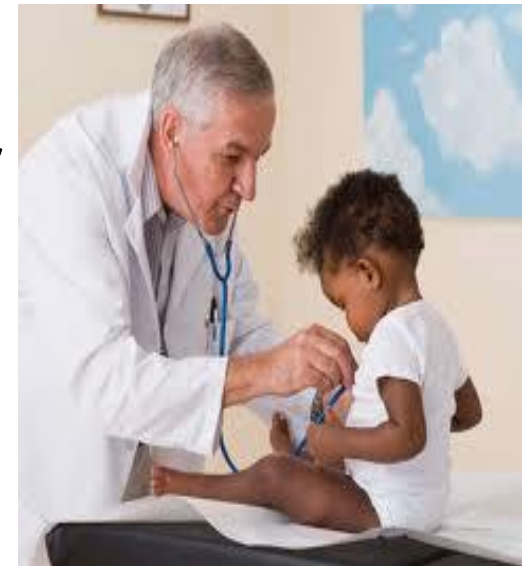
Risk Factors of Autism Spectrum Disorders

- ASDs are reported to occur in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups
- Brain disorder of genetic origins: the risk of an ASD for subsequent siblings of children with ASD is 20%
- The median age of diagnosis is 5 years.
- *The median age of diagnosis is higher in underprivileged populations.*
- *CDC 2012: Largest increases in prevalence among Hispanic children (110%) and black children (91%) since 2009 CDC report*

Missed opportunity for attenuating or maybe even preventing autism¹⁰

Screening for Autism Spectrum Disorders

- American Academy of Pediatrics: screening at 18 and 24 months
- Studies have shown that 1/3 to 1/2 of parents of children with ASDs notice a developmental problem before their child's first birthday.
- 80% of parents express concerns by 24 months of age



<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html>

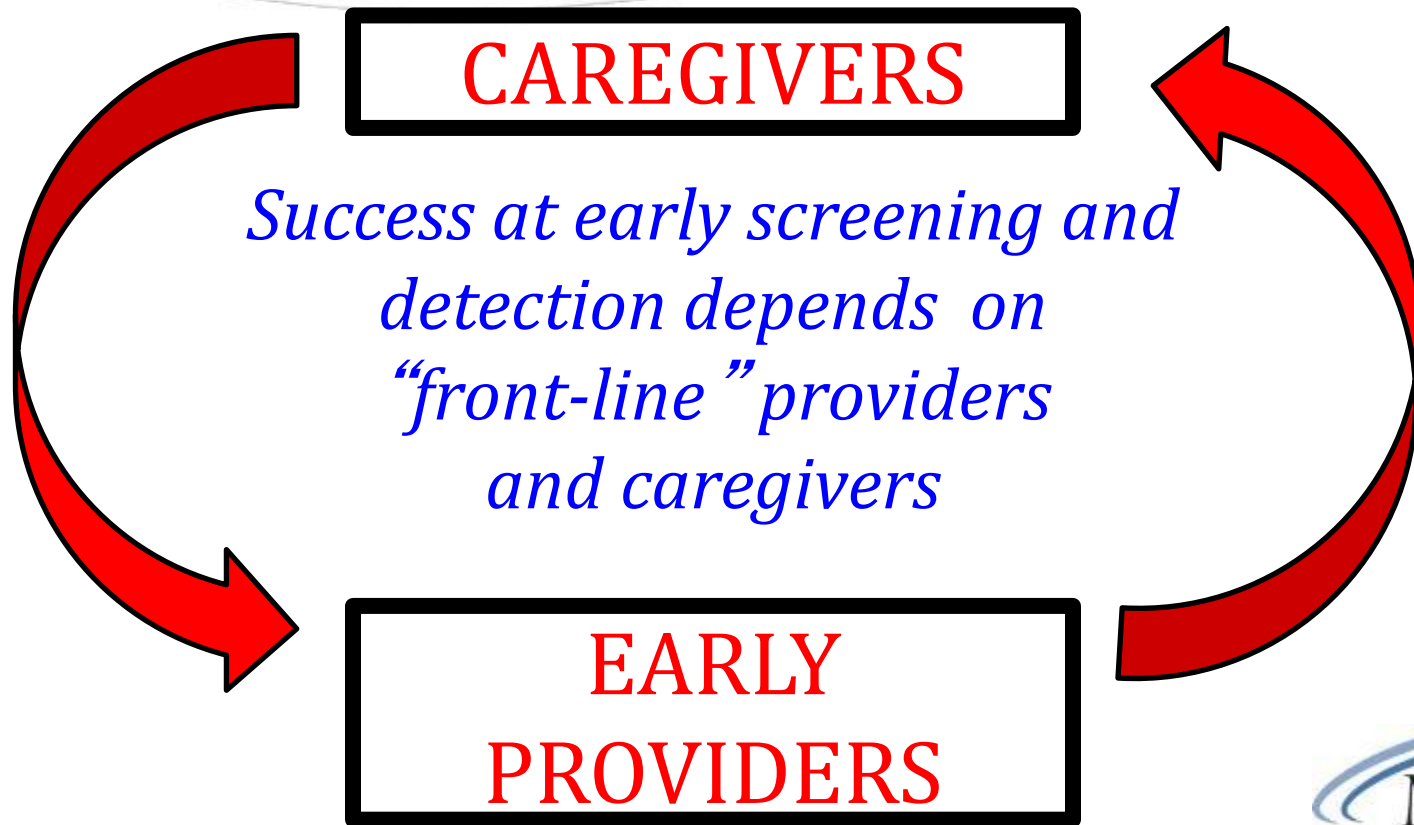
Challenges of Autism Spectrum Disorders

Intervention has the greatest impact on autism if....
it begins before 3 years of age

80% of children who need early intervention are missed.

(CDC, 2009; Filipek, Accardo, Baranek et al., 1999; NRC, 2001; USDOE, 2011)

Screening and Detection



The National Research Council (2001) recommends that children with ASD should be actively engaged in activities and interactions for at least 25 hours per week.

How do we achieve that in the childcare setting?

Everyday Activities



Supports

- Environmental supports
 - Sufficient and developmentally-appropriate materials
 - Defined play centers
 - Balanced schedule (large and small group)
 - Structured transitions
 - Individualized support for children when needed
 - Engaging and motivating activities
 - Clear directions

Supports

Child Behaviors

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

1. Emotional Regulation
2. Productivity
3. Social Connectedness
4. Gaze to Face
5. Response to Verbal Bids
6. Directed Communication
7. Flexibility
8. Generative Ideas

Caregiver Behaviors

TRANSACTIONAL SUPPORTS

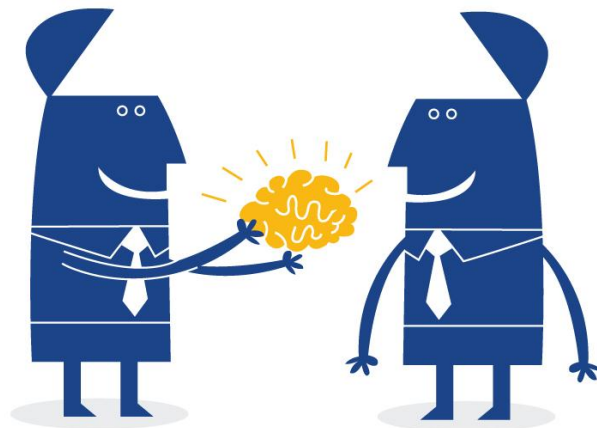
1. Participation & Role
2. Make Activity Predictable
3. Follow Child's Attention
4. Promote Initiations
5. Balance of Turns
6. Support Comprehension
7. Modeling
8. Expectations & Demands

Adult Learning and Collaboration

- Dunst and Trivette (2011) meta-analysis study:
 - Active-learner participation
 - Largest effect sizes found were related to the use of evaluation strategies i.e. thinking about impact of new knowledge, reflection (engaging in self-assessment about the application of their knowledge and practice)
 - Multiple adult-learning strategies result in the greatest effect sizes.
 - Offer information, have multiple opportunities to practice and opportunities to evaluate and reflect on their use of strategies.

Coaching

Coaching is a method of transferring skills and expertise from a more experienced and knowledgeable practitioner to a less experienced one.



Coaching

- Several studies (Hemmeter, Snyder, Kinder, & Artman, 2010; Salisbury et al., 2010) have shown challenge of implementing coaching.
- Need for clear understanding of what coaching is.
- We have moved from one-day workshops and trainings in the realm of professional development, but work still needs to be done on effective frameworks (Synder, Hemmeter, & McLaughlin, 2011).

Key Components of Professional Development (NPDCI, 2008)

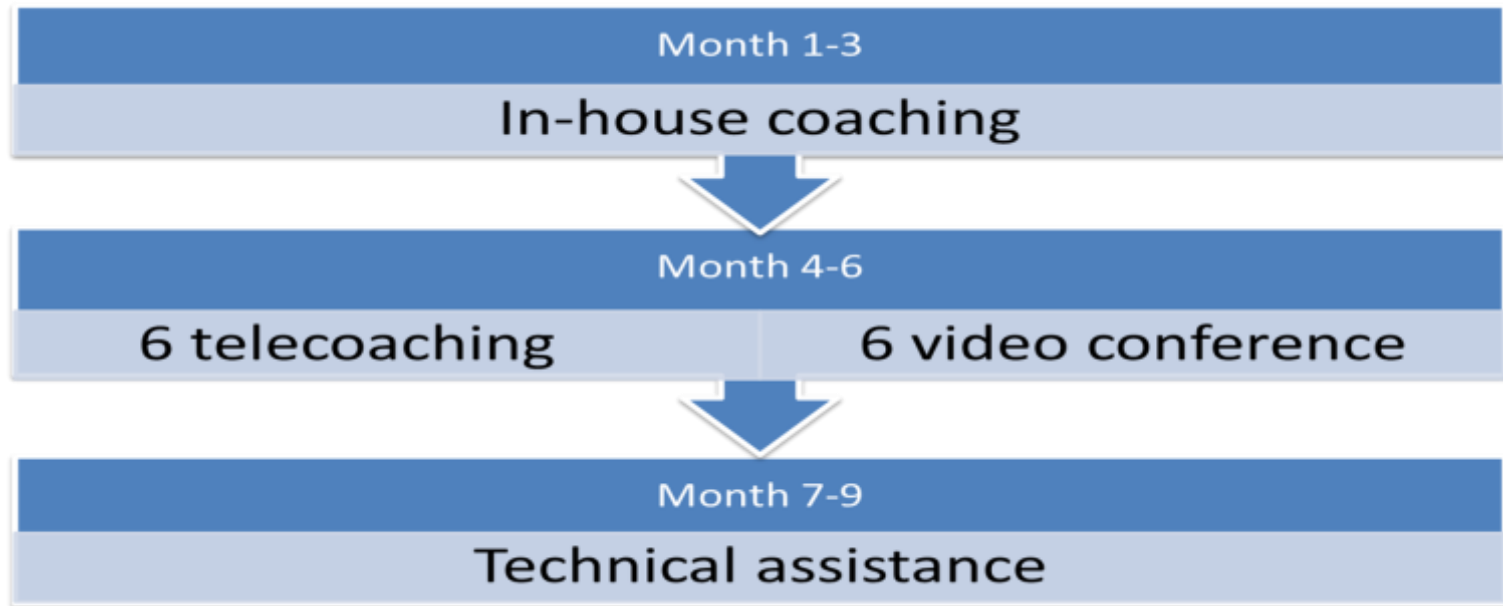
- The “who” of professional development
- The “what” of professional development
- The “how” of professional development

Marcus Coaching

- Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
 - Inclusion Coordinators
 - Infant-Toddler Specialists



From Theory to Reality



Qualities that Distinguish

What is present in classrooms with a high prevalence of emotional regulation, active engagement, and expanded learning ?

Teachers who are **aware** of each child's level of emotional regulation and are **willing and able to provide stabilizing supports** needed for active engagement and learning.

Reflective Functioning – Peter Fonagy

What is Reflective Functioning?

The ability to recognize and understand one's own mental states, such as emotions, intentions, and wishes, as well as those of others, through symbolism and abstract thought processes, and to consequently show an appropriate reaction to those mental states (Fonagy, 1999).

Reflective Functioning in Action

- The simplest and most important expression of reflective functioning can be seen in the sensibility of an attachment figure within affective communication. Blehar et al. (1977) describe four vital aspects of this sensibility in an interaction:
- **Attention to an infant's state of well-being.** The attachment figure should keep the infant in view, and be mentally present, but refrain from fixation.
- **The correct interpretation of the infant's communication.** This interpretation should reflect the infant's needs from his or her point of view, and not be tainted by the attachment figure's own emotional needs.
- **The attachment figure's reaction should be prompt.** This enables the infant to make an association between their behavior and the attachment figure's reaction. This association gives the infant an intense feeling of effectiveness, rather than a feeling of hopelessness.
- **The reaction is appropriate and gives the infant what it needs.** This correct, prompt and appropriate response to an infant's affective communication is a definitive example of reflective ability.

Reflective Functioning in the Classroom

Teachers **who are able to reflect** upon each child's level of emotional regulation can then internally reflect, plan, and communicate accordingly to **provide stabilizing supports needed for active engagement and learning.**

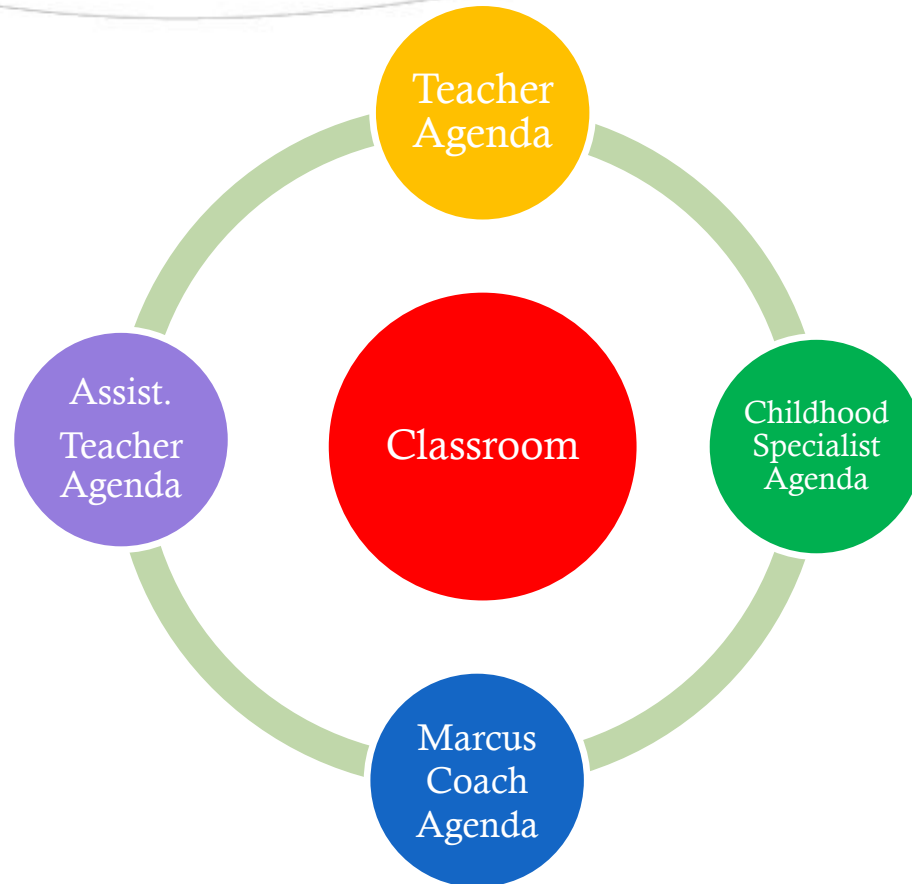
Reflective Functioning in the Classroom

This reflective ability facilitates the achievement of 25 hours of active engagement needed by children at risk of an ASD to significantly develop their social communication skills.

Reflective Functioning in the Classroom

Early Childhood Specialists **who are able to reflect** upon each teacher's level of emotional regulation can then internally reflect, plan, and communicate accordingly to **provide the most effective learning experience through their coaching.**

Agenda Awareness



Agenda as a Working Memory Model

Central
Executive

```
graph TD; CE[Central Executive] --- PL[Phonological Loop]; CE --- EB[Episodic Buffer]; CE --- VSSP[Visual-Spatial Sketch Pad];
```

Phonological
Loop

- Baddeley, Alan D.; Hitch, Graham (1974).
- Baddeley, Alan D. (2000).

Episodic Buffer

Visual- Spatial
Sketch Pad

Agenda as a Working Memory Model



Agenda Awareness

Teacher Agenda

Asst. Teacher
Agenda

Marcus Coach Agenda

Childhood Specialist
Agenda

Awareness Refined



Awareness

Reflection

Meeting of the Minds

- Meeting a team member where they are
 - Emotionally
 - Intellectually
 - Emotional Regulation – Upon beginning a session, at any given moment within a session.
- Meeting a child where they are:
 - Developmentally (Cognitively, Emotionally)
 - Emotional Regulation- Can change from minute to minute.

Beginning Coaching

- MUST begin with a period of engagement.
 - Process by which parties establish a helpful connection and a working relationship (Motivational Interviewing*)
 - Without engagement, coaching cannot go forward.
 - Key concepts: comfort level, understand each others' perspectives, collaboration
- Next, you must have a joint focus
 - Establishing goals together.
 - Key concepts: goals, working towards common focus, clear sense of end game.

Motivational Interviewing



Directing

Guiding

Following

Motivational interviewing
falls under guiding style.
Good listening combined
with expertise when needed.

*Miller & Rollnick, 2013

Motivational Interviewing

Motivational interviewing is about discovering what is already in place, not installing what is missing.

**** You have what you need and together we will find it!****

Learning Through Success

The first step in positive change is not starting from nothing, but rather starting from a place of familiarity. The teacher must believe that they already have the tools, they simply need to utilize them more or in different ways.

Collaborative Coaching Toolbox

- Supportive Modeling
 - Always tied to child behavior.
- Positive Reinforcement of the Teacher
 - Always tied to child behavior.
- Decoding of Child Behavior
 - “So after you finished the book, you told the class that its time to go outside and everyone is at the door. I see Timmy is still standing next to the carpet. I wonder if he knows exactly what he needs to do next?”

Collaborative Coaching Toolbox

- Open- Ended Questions
 - How do you feel...What do you think...How do you think they...Would you agree that...?
- Reflection on Child Behavior
 - What is a child telling us with their non- verbal and / or verbal communication.
- Teaching moment + Opening Ended Question-
 - “Knowing that our 1.5 year-olds have a need to move around a lot, how do you think you could structure their morning routine to make sure they get that opportunity?”

Marcus Coaching Model

Interactive
Learning

Guided
Practice

Self-Directed
Practice

Guided Practice Coaching the Coach

Sharing
information

Supportive
modeling

Practice
with
coaching

Practice
with guided
reflection



Guided Practice

- Process is loosely based on “technical coaching,” defined by Garmston in his 1987 paper.
 - Technical coaching focuses on “the learning and transfer of new skills and strategies into the existing repertoires of teachers.”
- Also based on the four components of effective training that Joyce and Showers (1982) recommend including: presentation of theory, modeling, practice and feedback.

Guided Practice

- Sharing information
 - Providing focus for the day's session.
- Supportive Modeling
 - Process by which desired behavior is modeled while providing thorough explanation of purpose to promote generalization.
 - Should be used when verbal recommendations are not understood.

Guided Practice

- Practice with coaching
 - ECP is interacting directly with parent/teacher and is actively coaching.
 - ECP is coached by CI throughout most interactions with teacher.
- Practice with guided reflection
 - ECP will “check in” with CI periodically to maintain focus on desired outcomes.
 - Moving towards ECP’s independence in coaching teacher. CI is only needed for quick consultations.
 - Guided reflection will also occur in video review
 - Based on concepts of reflective practice
 - Because it can be difficult to develop a critical perspective of our own behavior, it is more likely to lead to greater learning if reflection occurs in a collaborative and cooperative environment (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993).

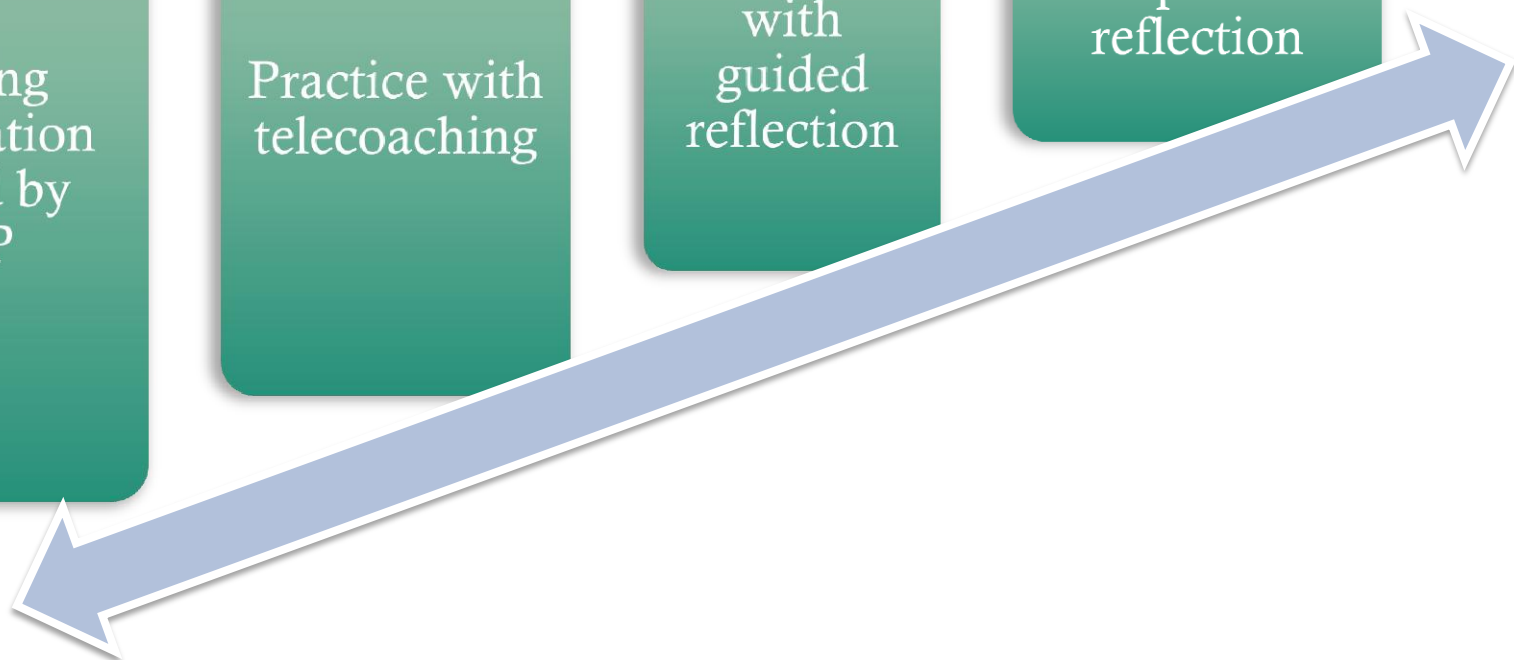
Self-Directed Practice Coaching the Coach

Sharing
information
guided by
ECP

Practice with
telecoaching

Practice
with
guided
reflection

Practice with
independent
reflection



Self-Directed Practice

In “Self-Directed Practice,” we are working towards “mastery,” defined by Dunst & Trivette (2009) as, “engag[ing] the learner in a process of assessing his or her experiences in the context of some conceptual or practical model or framework or some external set of standards or criteria.”

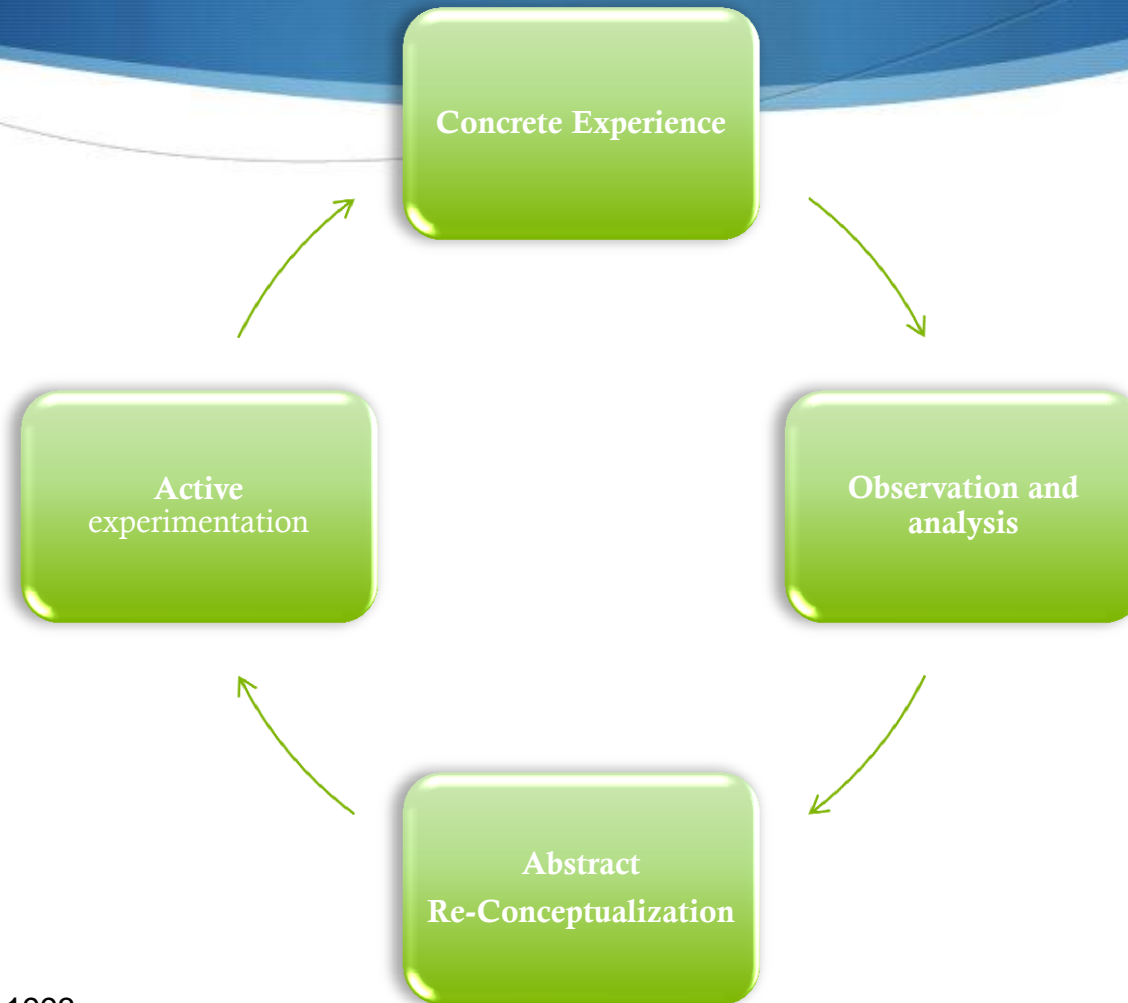
Self-Directed Practice

- Sharing information guided by ECP
 - ECP will be guiding conversation and focus of the day's telecoaching session.
- Practice with telecoaching
 - ECP will coach in the classroom with CI available via web conference for consultation.

Self-Directed Practice

- Practice with guided reflection
 - Again, working towards ECP's independence in coaching teacher. CI is only needed for quick consultations.
 - During video review, CI and ECP will have equal input in discussion.
- Practice with independent reflection
 - ECP will have improved in self-awareness skills needed to determine effectiveness of their coaching in reaching end goals.
 - Will also include components of reflective practice
 - During video review, ECP will guide discussion (independent reflection on coaching skills)

Independent Reflection Experiential Learning Cycle



Independent Reflection

Goal: to coach early childhood professionals to generalize knowledge and engage in reflective practice.

Reflection

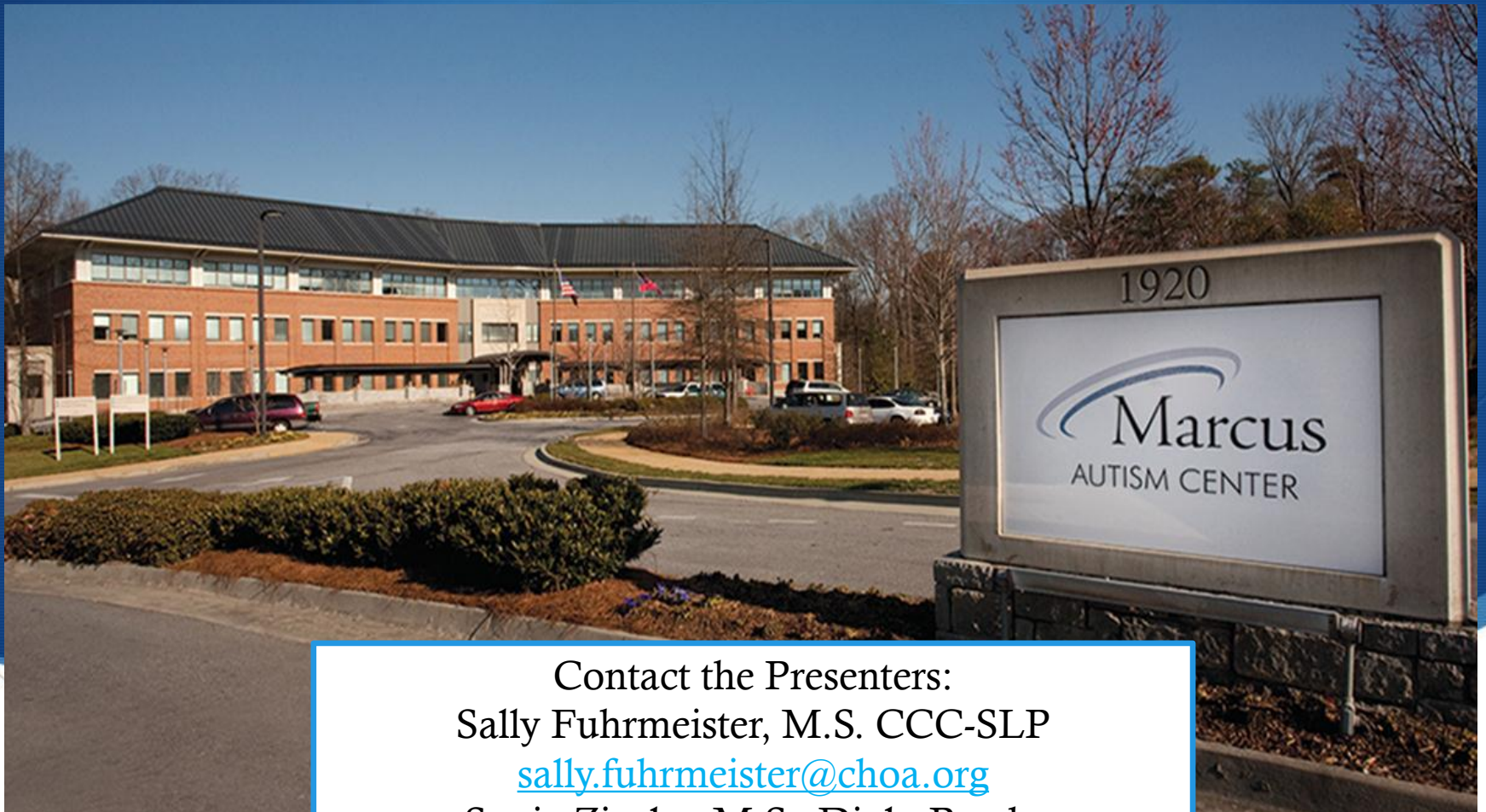
Using definition from Dunst & Trivette (2009), reflection is defined as “engag[ing] the learner in self-assessment of his or her acquisition of knowledge and skills as a basis for identifying ‘next steps’ in the learning process.”

Reflective Practice

- Defined by Osterman & Kottkamp (1993) as the “means by which practitioners can develop greater self-awareness about the nature and impact of their performance, and awareness that creates opportunities for professional growth and development.”
 - Similar to concepts of motivational interviewing.
- Aligned with experiential learning
 - Learning is most effective and most likely to lead to changes in behavior when it begins with experience.

Thank you!

Any Questions???



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