

Parents Taking Action

Latino families who have children with Autism Spectrum Disorders face many challenges accessing information and services for their children. They also need information about things they can do at home to help their children develop. This educational program is aimed at helping parents learn about autism, autism interventions and services, and how to access them. We also teach parents strategies for improving social and communication skills and reducing problem behaviors among their children with ASD.

The program is carried out by a *promotora de salud* (peer mentor) who is a parent of a child with ASD from the Latino community. Promotoras receive approximately 30 hours of specialized training on the educational information and how to deliver it. They are compensated for their time receiving training and serving as a promotora.

The promotoras engage other parents in the educational program through 14 weekly home visits that last about 2 hours each. Parents participating in the program receive a manual with all of the session content and a resource folder of programs and services in their area. The program can be implemented in group sessions, however barriers to participation such as transportation and child care will need to be considered.

The following are budget items to consider:

- FTE for staff member to provide overall coordination
- Compensation of promotoras
- For group model- snacks, transportation, space, and childcare
- Printing and copying of manuals and materials

The topics and goals for each session are presented on the following page.

TOPICS & GOALS

Session	Goals
Session 1 Introduction to the program	Meet the promotora and receive an overview of the program
Session 2 Understanding child development	discuss developmental milestones and recognizing signs
Session 3 Understanding the autism spectrum and your child's needs	Learn about how autism is diagnosed and what autism symptoms relate to your child
Session 4 What works to address symptoms of autism	Learn about evidenced-based practices and how to tell if a practice works for your child
Session 5 How to be an effective advocate	Learn about the importance of being an advocate for your child and advocacy strategies
Session 6 Advocacy in the school system	Learn about the IEP process and advocacy strategies to use in your child's school
Session 7 Play together, learn together	Learn about the importance of play and ways to engage your child in play
Session 8 Creating everyday opportunities to encourage communication	Learn strategies for enhancing communication through daily routines
Session 9 Helping your child make friends and interact with others	Explore activities parents can do to help their child interact with peers
Session 10 Challenging behavior is communication	Learn why children engage in challenging behaviors
Session 11 How to reduce challenging behaviors and respond appropriately when they occur	Explore strategies for preventing and reducing problem behaviors
Session 12 Reducing stress and recognizing signs of depression	Learn about risks to parental health and well-being and how to reduce stress
Session 13 Talking about autism to others and social support	Discuss how to share information with others about your child and the importance of social support
Session 14 Looking ahead	Set future goals and explore how to sustain growth. Celebrate completion!