

# Effective Support for Students with Autism: Course-Track Options for Paraprofessionals



# Welcome

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This guide provides multiple, easy to follow professional development course-tracks for paraprofessionals working with students with autism. Paraprofessionals who complete these courses will be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively support students with autism through evidence-based practices and strategies, as well as earn digital badges that provide evidence of completed training.

This guide provides recommendations to individualize training for each paraprofessional, whether they just began working with students with autism or have years of experience. For those with more experience or specialization in some areas, individual courses from the collection can be chosen or assigned by an administrator. For a more formulated series of courses, this guide contains two suggested sequences within each course-track. The first sequence in these course-tracks includes courses considered to be an introduction to the topic and is designed to provide an overview of each topic. The second sequence in these course-tracks includes courses that are labeled as “extended” and provide additional training for comprehensive learning opportunities on each topic.

A participant may choose to take all courses in sequence in each course-track, take courses in any order, or decide to take a single course. A variety of courses are outlined in this guide, from those that can be completed quickly (30 minutes or less) to longer courses that can be completed over multiple sessions. The course-tracks also include links to related resources such as videos, websites, and brief documents.

Through the application of the knowledge gained from these courses and tools, all students will benefit, not simply those with autism.

# How to Use This Guide

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The information in the professional development guide is intended to be used by working through the course-tracks individually, either self-directed or in a pre-set sequence, or for educators who train paraprofessionals (i.e., campus, district, or regional personnel) to assign certain courses.

Training in each track can be taken in the recommended sequences or as stand-alone courses based on the paraprofessional's needs and experience or as directed by the person who assigned the track. Each suggested course-track has a short overview description to assist in appropriate course selection.

The following pages include several descriptions of possible courses for paraprofessionals. Even though each course lists cumulative hours, a participant may take portions of the course instead of the entire course. Course progress is saved and can be resumed at any time. There is a [scope and sequence at-a-glance table](#) that conveniently lists each track and their courses.

## Course-Track Topics

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### Foundational

Courses that provide introductions, overviews, and background information on essential instructional practices.

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### Behavior

Courses that provide effective behavior management techniques in classroom and non-classroom environments (e.g., cafeteria, hallway).

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### Social Communication

Courses that provide strategies for the development of communication skills, including non-linguistic modes, such as sign language, visual supports including Picture Exchange Communication (PECs), or speech-generating devices or applications.

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### Instructional Support

Courses that support students' active participation in their learning by delivering appropriate instructional strategies.

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# Tracking Progress

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To track progress, all individual courses in this guide award certificates and/or digital badges upon completion. Administrators can use these badges and certificates to validate a paraprofessional's training on supporting students with autism.

To provide interest and incentive, a paraprofessional completing the entire professional development collection will earn a digital "mastery-badge" to recognize their extensive learning experience.

# Technology Considerations

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## General Technical Requirements

- All the training detailed in this document is online.
- The paraprofessional will need to have a computer or laptop and access to the internet.
- Most courses use video and audio, so the paraprofessional may need speakers or headphones.

Descriptions and links to these free courses can be found on the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) [Texas Sped Support \(TSS\) website](#). These free courses are housed and provided through TEA's [TEA Learn](#) site and can be taken in short segments so that the participant does not have to complete the entire course in one sitting. However, registration for courses will expire annually on August 31st; and, in cases where certain courses require more time, exceptions can be requested. More information about each course can be found on the TEA Learn site at the registration links provided in each course description.

## Scope and Sequence at-a-glance

Foundational Course-Track		25.5 Hours
<b>Foundational</b>		
<a href="#">Autism 101: Top Ten Pieces to the Puzzle</a>	6 Hours	7.5 Hours
<a href="#">Understanding Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Tip #1</a>	30 Mins	
<a href="#">Introduction to Evidence Based Practices</a>	30 Mins	
<a href="#">Applied Behavior Analysis for Everyone</a>	30 Mins	
<b>Foundational Extended</b>		
<a href="#">Classroom Organization: The Power of Structure for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders</a>	6 Hours	18 Hours
<a href="#">Strategies for Working with Students with Autism in General Education Settings (12 part series)</a>	6 Hours	
<a href="#">Communication: The Power of Communication for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder</a>	6 Hours	
Behavioral Course-Track		11 Hours
<b>Behavior</b>		
<a href="#">Functional Communication Training</a>	30 Mins	2.5 Hours
<a href="#">Use Behavioral Strategies That Promote Successful Learning: Tip #9</a>	30 Mins	
<a href="#">Antecedent Based Intervention</a>	30 Mins	
<a href="#">Reinforcement</a>	30 Mins	
<a href="#">Differential Reinforcement</a>	30 Mins	
<b>Behavior Extended</b>		
<a href="#">Solving the Behavior Puzzle: Making Connections for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders</a>	6 Hours	8.5 Hours
<a href="#">Behavioral Momentum Intervention</a>	2 Hours	
<a href="#">Self-Management</a>	30 Mins	

**Scope and Sequence at-a-glance** *cont.*

Social Communication Course-Track		17 Hours
<b>Social Communication</b>		
<a href="#">Communication: The Power of Communication for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder</a>	6 Hours	9.5 Hours
<a href="#">Picture Exchange Communication System</a>	30 Mins	
<a href="#">Augmentative and Alternative Communication and the Autism Spectrum</a>	3 Hours	
<b>Social Communication Extended</b>		
<a href="#">Fostering Friendships</a>	30 Mins	8.5 Hours
<a href="#">Navigating the Social Maze: Support &amp; Interventions for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders</a>	6 Hours	
<a href="#">Developing Social and Behavioral Expectations: Tip #4</a>	30 Mins	
<a href="#">Promote Positive Peer Interactions: Tip #7</a>	30 Mins	

Instructional Strategies Course-Track		12 Hours
<b>Instructional Strategies</b>		
<a href="#">Discrete Trial Training</a>	30 Mins	3 Hours
<a href="#">Naturalistic Intervention</a>	30 Mins	
<a href="#">Prompting</a>	30 Mins	
<a href="#">Task Analysis</a>	30 Mins	
<a href="#">Visual Supports</a>	30 Mins	
<a href="#">Video Modeling</a>	30 Mins	
<b>Instructional Strategies Extended</b>		
<a href="#">Simple Strategies to Implement Evidence Based Practices</a>	6 Hours	9 Hours
<a href="#">Collecting and Analyzing Data for Data-Based Individualization (External Link)</a>	3 Hours	

# Foundational Course-Track | Total 25.5 Hours

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This series of courses will help the participant meet the wide range of needs of students with autism. These foundational courses include topics to ensure participants understand the basics of understanding students with autism, evidence-based practices, classroom organization, and the power of communication. If the participant chooses to complete all foundational (7.5 hours) and extended foundational courses (18 hours) it will take **25.5 hours**.

## Foundational Courses | 7.5 Hours

These courses provide a comprehensive overview of topics such as educational terminology, types of programming, instructional strategies, as well as classroom set-up, and organization. If the participant chooses to complete all courses in this foundational course-track, it will take **7.5 hours**.

### Scope and Sequence

- [Autism 101: Top Ten Pieces to the Puzzle](#) (6 hours).
- [Understanding Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Tip #1](#) (30 minutes)
- [Introduction to Evidence Based Practices](#) (30 minutes)
- [Applied Behavior Analysis for Everyone](#) (30 minutes)

## Foundational Courses Extended | 18 Hours

The trainings in the extended track delve deeper into each topic. They include information on developing relationships with students, as well as supporting students in the general education classroom. If the participant chooses to complete all courses in this extended course-track it will take **18 hours**.

### Scope and Sequence

- [Classroom Organization: The Power of Structure for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders](#) (6 hours)
- [Strategies for Working with Students with Autism in General Education Settings](#) (12 part series; 6 hours)
- [Communication: The Power of Communication for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder](#) (6 hours)



# Behavior Course-Track | Total 25.5 Hours

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Behavior is an area where students with autism often need additional support to develop skills. If the participant chooses to complete all foundational behavior courses (2.5 hours) and extended behavior courses (8.5 hours) it will take **11 hours**.

## Behavior | 2.5 Hours

Behavior is defined for this guide as what a person says or does. Due to deficits in communication, students with autism often use interfering behavior to communicate their needs and wants. This track focuses on understanding the function of any interfering behaviors and how to reinforce appropriate replacement behaviors, support student success, and diminish teacher stress. If the participant chooses to take all courses in the behavior course-track it will take **2.5 hours**. They include information on behavioral principles and implementation of planned reinforcement.

### Scope and Sequence

- [Functional Communication Training](#) (30 minutes)
- [Use Behavioral Strategies That Promote Successful Learning: Tip #9](#) (30 minutes)
- [Antecedent Based Intervention](#) (30 minutes)
- [Reinforcement](#) (30 minutes)
- [Differential Reinforcement](#) (30 minutes)

## Behavior Extended | 8.5 Hours

The courses in the extended track provide additional interventions to support students with autism. For some students, problem behavior serves the purpose of communicating a want or need. Interventions that help students gain skills in the areas of communication and toleration focus on building skills such as requesting, tolerating waiting, and being told “no.” The extended track will strengthen the participant’s ability to support behaviors conducive to student success. If the participant chooses to complete all courses in this extended track it will take **8.5 hours**.

### Scope and Sequence

- [Solving the Behavior Puzzle: Making Connections for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders](#) (6 hours)
- [Behavioral Momentum Intervention](#) (2 hours)
- [Self-Management](#) (30 minutes)



## Social Communication Course-Track | Total 17 Hours

Communication is a social act, and skill deficits in communication and social skills can significantly impact communicative exchanges for students with autism. Even students with autism who are fluently verbal may have communication or social challenges. If the participant chooses to complete the foundational social communication courses (9.5 hours) and the extended social communication courses (7.5 hours) it will take **17 hours**.

### Social Communication | 9.5 Hours

This series of courses is designed to assist the participant in addressing the diverse needs of students with autism. A paraprofessional's knowledge of communication strategies can positively affect a student's social integration and success in and outside of the classroom. The social communication courses take a total of **9.5** hours to complete, if the participant chooses to complete all courses in this track. These topics address social, emotional, academic, and overall communication development.

#### Scope and Sequence

- [Communication: The Power of Communication for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder](#) (6 hours)
- [Picture Exchange Communication System](#) (30 minutes)
- [Augmentative and Alternative Communication and the Autism Spectrum](#) (3 hours)

### Social Communication Extended | 7.5 Hours

Students with autism are just as likely as their peers to enjoy engaging with others in activities that interest them. However, a student with autism may display several social communication deficits. The extended social communication track will provide the participant with additional resources for supporting the development of social communication skills. Learning about topics such as developing positive friendships, recognizing emotional responses in others, and resolving conflict appropriately are excellent ways to help students with autism increase social communication. If a participant chooses to complete all courses in this track it will take **7.5 hours**.

#### Scope and Sequence

- [Fostering Friendships](#) (30 minutes)
- [Navigating the Social Maze: Support & Interventions for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders](#) (6 hours)
- [Developing Social and Behavioral Expectations: Tip #4](#) (30 minutes)
- [Promote Positive Peer Interactions: Tip #7](#) (30 minutes)

# Instructional Support Course-Track | Total 12 Hours

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Learning in the least restrictive environment is best for all students. For students with autism, learning in the general education setting can be both rewarding and challenging. If the participant chooses to complete all foundational (3 hours) and extended foundational courses (9 hours) it will take **12 hours**.

## Instructional Support | 3 Hours

These courses provide a comprehensive overview of topics such as educational terminology, types of programming, instructional strategies, and classroom set-up and organization. The Instructional Support course-track takes **3 hours**, if the participant chooses to complete all courses in this track.

### Scope and Sequence

- [Discrete Trial Training](#) (30 minutes)
- [Naturalistic Intervention](#) (30 minutes)
- [Prompting](#) (30 minutes)
- [Task Analysis](#) (30 minutes)
- [Visual Supports](#) (30 minutes)
- [Video Modeling](#) (30 minutes)

## Instructional Support Extended | 9 Hours

The trainings in the extended track delve deeper into each topic. The full extended track covers the implementation of evidence-based practices. Understanding and implementing evidence-based practices can enhance the participant's professional growth and equip them with valuable skills and knowledge to support the students they work with. The extended track increases the training time by **9 hours** if the participant chooses to complete all courses in this track.

### Scope and Sequence

- [Simple Strategies to Implement Evidence Based Practices](#) (6 hours)
- [Collecting and Analyzing Data for Data-Based Individualization \(External Link\)](#) (3 hours)

# Tools and Resources

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The tools and resources in each course-track are intended to provide additional support and equip the participant with clear explanations and practical templates that can be applied in a variety of educational settings. Many of these free tools include an explanation of how and when to use the tool, printable templates and resources, and videos.

## COURSE-TRACK TOOLS AND RESOURCES

### Foundational

- [TSS Resource Library - Classroom Organization: The Power of Structure for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders](#) Videos that illustrate some classroom strategies.
- [Working with Paraeducators Field User Guide \(External Link\)](#) (Infographic)

### Behavior

- [Autism Circuit Toolkit - Behavior](#)
- [TSS Resource Library - Strategies in Action](#) Videos that illustrate some classroom strategies

### Social Communication

- [Autism Circuit Toolkit - Communication](#)

### Instructional Support

- [Autism Circuit Toolkit - Classroom Organization](#)

## COURSE REGISTRATION DETAILS

### Step 1. Locate Courses and Register

1. Registration for each course is not automatic. The participant must locate the course in TEALearn catalog at <https://register.tealearn.com/> and click the **Enroll** button.
2. Choose to complete the **User Registration** form or **Sign In** if the participant already has an account. A participant must have or create an account to register for these courses. The participant will need a 10-digit unique ID. Visit the [TEALearn Support Portal](#) for assistance locating the 10-digit unique ID.
3. Complete all form fields and click the **Register** button.
4. When the participant sees the complete registration window, click the **Continue** button.

### Step 2. Confirm TEALearn Registration.

1. Check email inbox for a confirmation registration message from TEALearn/Canvas.
2. Click the link in the email to finish the registration process.
3. A welcome window will open and the participant will be prompted to create a password for TEALearn/Canvas. Type the new password and click **Register**.
4. The TEALearn dashboard will now appear in the window.

### Step 3. Become Familiar with the TEALearn Dashboard

1. To return to a course a participant has previously enrolled in, visit [www.tealearn.com](http://www.tealearn.com) and log in.
2. The student dashboard displays courses by status and displays the participant's transcript.
3. Participants must register for each course. Links to all individual training registrations are provided.

Have questions or need assistance? Visit the [TEALearn Support Portal](#).