



**PARTNERS™ FOR
YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES**

Effective Mentoring for Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders

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Background on PEER program

- Studies in the general population have shown that mentoring is an effective way to promote positive youth development, including improved social outcomes.
- Mentoring for youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders has not been described.
- We developed a short-term program in which college students served as mentors for teenagers with Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism, and assessed its effect on their self-esteem, social anxiety and quality of life.



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Methods

- Nine youth, age 14-18, were each paired with a college-aged mentor to complete a 6-month program called Partners Exploring Education and Recreation (PEER).
- Mentoring pairs met once a week for two hours at a local Boys & Girls Club (BGC). They chose activities from six core areas: Art, Education, Leadership, Life Skills, Recreation and Technology.
- Program feasibility was evaluated by satisfaction reports from youth, parents, mentors, and BGC staff.
- Program efficacy was assessed by comparing baseline and outcome measures of quality of life, self-esteem, and social anxiety.



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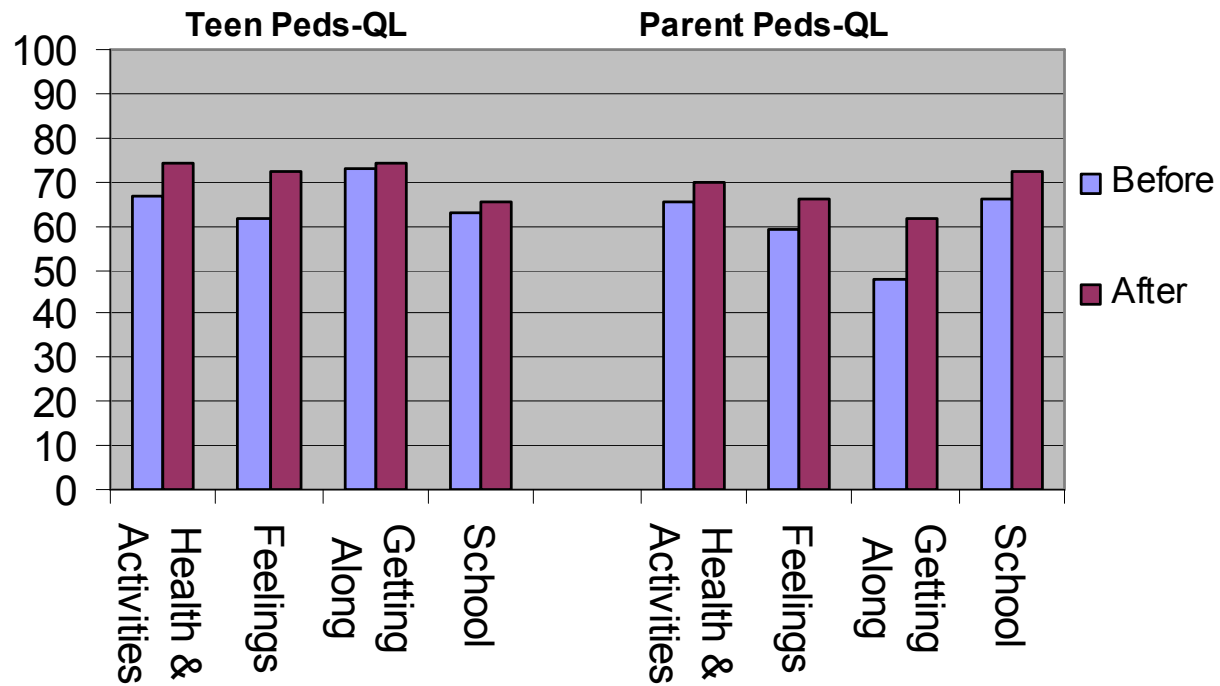




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Results

Mean Scores Before and After Intervention

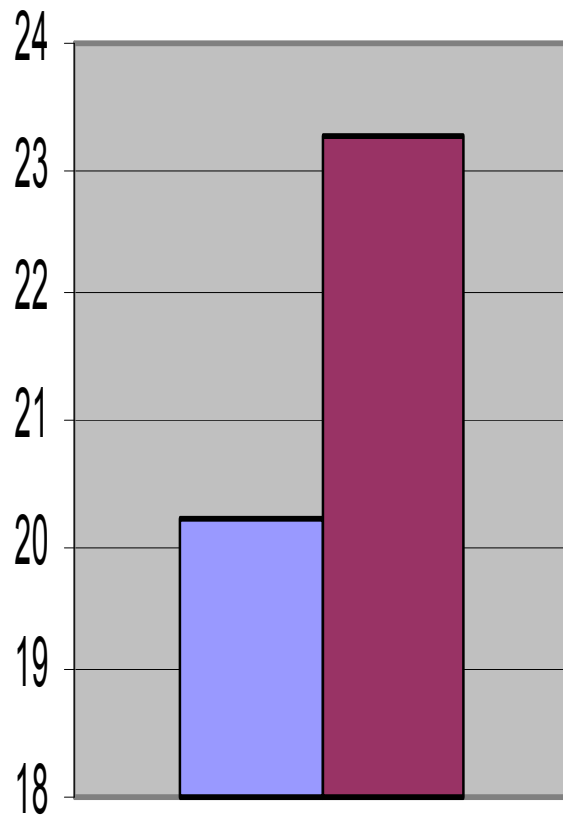




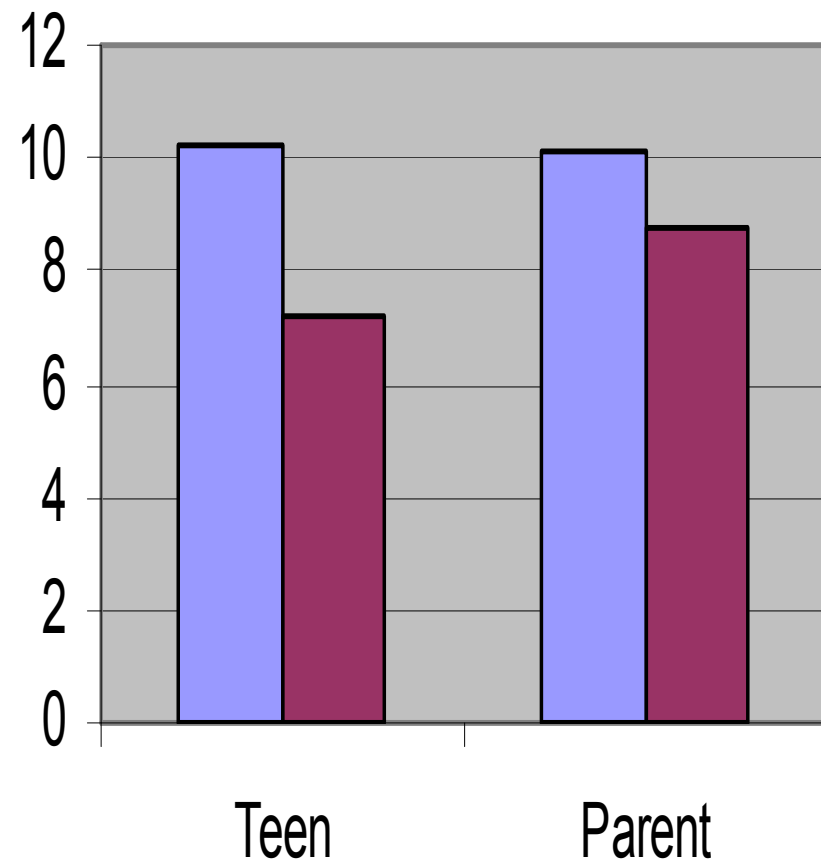
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Results

Self Esteem:



Social Worries Scale:





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Results

PARENTS: All parents described the mentoring relationship as very positive. 75% of them reported their child's progress on set goals was *somewhat or very successful*.

Parents on average reported increased quality of life in all domains, and somewhat fewer signs of social anxiety (see Figure).

YOUTH: 89% of teens reported that it was “very true” that they felt happy around their mentor, while 11% reported that this was “sort of true”.

Their reported self-esteem, social anxiety, and quality of life in all domains improved over the 6 months of the program (see Figure).

MENTORS: All mentors reported that the PEER program was a good experience.

7 **BGC STAFF:** Staff of the Boys and Girls Club rated the program as “very successful” and reported positive changes in mentees' behavior.



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The Autism Awareness Ribbon

The puzzle pattern of this ribbon reflects the mystery and complexity of autism.

The different colors and shapes represents the diversity of people and families living with this disorder.

The brightness of this ribbon signals hope - hope through research and increasing awareness in people like you.



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“If you have met one person with
Autism, you’ve met **ONE** person
with Autism.”



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Demographics

- 1 in 88 children have an ASD; some report as high as 1 in 50 (CDC, 2013)
- Boys are nearly five times more likely than girls to have an ASD
- ASDs across all ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses



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Triad

-
- Language and Communication
 - Social Interaction
 - Repetitive Behaviors or limited interests



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Common Strengths of individuals with ASD

- Good visual memory and long term memory
- Attention to detail
- Ability to learn rote material easily
- Tendency to be logical
- Perfectionism, eagerness to please.
- Taking things apart and putting them back together.
- Ability to learn routines, adherence to rules and schedules.
- Knowledge of specific subjects of interest.
- For some, exceptional abilities in art, music, technology etc.



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Hidden Curriculum

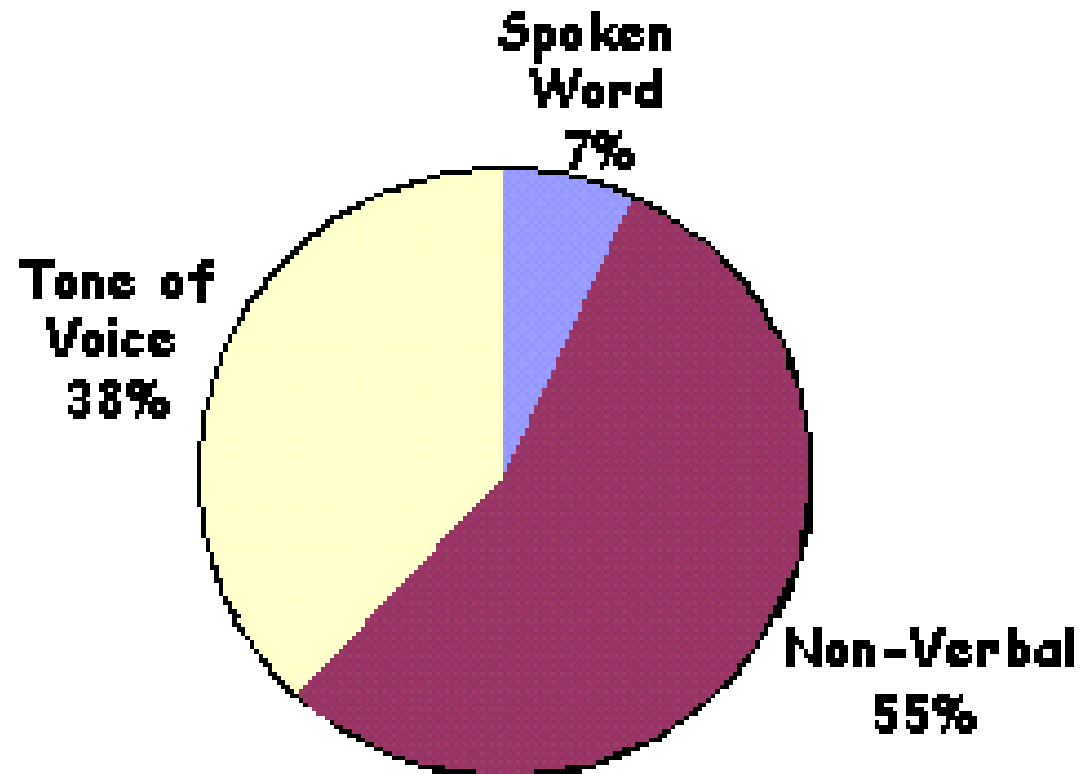
The ***Hidden Curriculum*** is skills we are all expected to know in order to function in society, such as:

- non-verbal communication
- conversational skills
- interpersonal skills



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NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION





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Pragmatics Exercise

Try saying the word “Really” five times in a row, but change the meaning each time as follows:

How cool is that?!

I don't believe you.

I'm shocked.

I'm delighted.

I'm telling the truth.

Literal Interpretation

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Visual Communication

TAX INCLUDED

TRAYS
Includes Cole Slaw & Hush Puppies
Chopped BBQ..... 5.75 Sliced or Coarse BBQ..... 6.00

DINNERS
Served with Choice of two vegetables & Hush Puppies

BARBECUE
Chopped BBQ..... 6.50
Sliced or Coarse BBQ..... 6.75
Baby Back Ribs..... 7.50

CHICKEN
BBQ Chicken..... 6.50 / 7.75 (SM / LG)
Fried Chicken..... 6.50 / 7.75
Chopped Boneless Chicken..... 7.50
LARGE ALL WHITE: ADD \$.50

COMBINATIONS
Served with Choice of two vegetables & Hush Puppies
Chopped BBQ and Chicken..... 8.00
Chicken & Baby Back Ribs..... 8.50
Baby Back Ribs & Chopped BBQ..... 8.50
COARSE OR SLICED - ADD \$.25

DESSERT
Lemon Pie or Carrot Cake..... 1.75
Banana Pudding..... 1.75

BRUNSWICK STEW **TAX INCLUDED**
Made fresh daily with Vegetables & Chicken
Includes Hush Puppies
Bowl..... 3.00 Pint..... 3.75

SANDWICHES
Chopped BBQ..... 3.25
Chopped Chicken..... 3.25
Sliced..... 3.50
Coarse..... 3.50

SANDWICH SPECIAL
(Chopped BBQ or Chicken, Fries, Tea or Lemonade) 5.50

VEGETABLES/PLATE **\$5.75**
Choice of 4 Vegetables
Served with Hush Puppies
Collard Greens Boiled Potatoes Cole Slaw
Steamed Cabbage Potato Salad French Fries
Corn & Butter Beans Brunswick Stew

SIDE ORDERS
Any Vegetable..... 1.75 French Fries..... 1.75
Brunswick Stew Cup..... 1.75 6 Hush Puppies..... 1.00
Bag of Skins..... 1.75 12 Hush Puppies..... 1.75

BEVERAGES
Iced Tea..... Reg. 1.25...Lg. 2.00
Lemonade..... Reg. 1.25...Lg. 2.00
Can Drink..... 1.50

MENU & PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE



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Visual Checklist





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Helpful Strategies

Structure & routines

Clear, Consistent expectations

Preview and review

Visual Supports

- Schedule (transitions)

- Rules

- Timers, Clocks

Reinforcers

Curtin, Carol. PEER Mentor Training.



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Five Roots of a Behavior

Attention

Tangible Demand

Avoidance

Escape

Stimulation



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Role Modeling Proper Social Etiquette

- Practice set phrases
- Role-play difference scenarios
- Practice conversation skills
- Observe



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Prosocial Behaviors to be Encouraged

Initiate a greeting, small talk, or conversation.

Respond to comments or questions from others.

Reduce interruptions

Stay on topic

Make eye-contact and use nonverbal communication integrated with his or her words.

22 Taking turn at the appropriate time.



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Making Social Opportunities Enjoyable

- Ensuring that the social demands aren't too high and don't require too much effort.
- Using a lot of humor, games and fun activities
- Incorporating youth's special interests.
- Including people he/she likes



Tips for Encouraging Active Participation

- Meeting before youth enters activity
- Debriefing after activity
- Providing Covert Cues.



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Nurtured Heart Approach

Relentlessly look for and reflect back the positive behaviors, qualities and success in the **moment** they are happening.

Consistently set limits on negative behaviors or broken rules with mild and brief consequences. (Example: taking a break).

Refuse to get drawn into, and **feed negativity** with attention and relationship.





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Positive Reinforcement

Positive Reinforcement:

Following a behavior, a consequence that increases the likelihood that the behavior will happen again in the future

- ✓ When you use your store discount card, you pay less for the stuff you need, and you'll be more likely to use the card in the future.
- ✓ If a co-worker compliments your new hairstyle, you may wear it that way more often.
- ✓ When you wake up early to get to the gym before work, you feel energized and healthy all day. You may do early morning workouts more regularly.



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Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcer: the consequence after a behavior
(sometimes called “reward” or “incentive”)

Individualized

Some are intrinsic, some are extrinsic

General examples:

Feelings of pride/ accomplishment

Thank you note

Compliment

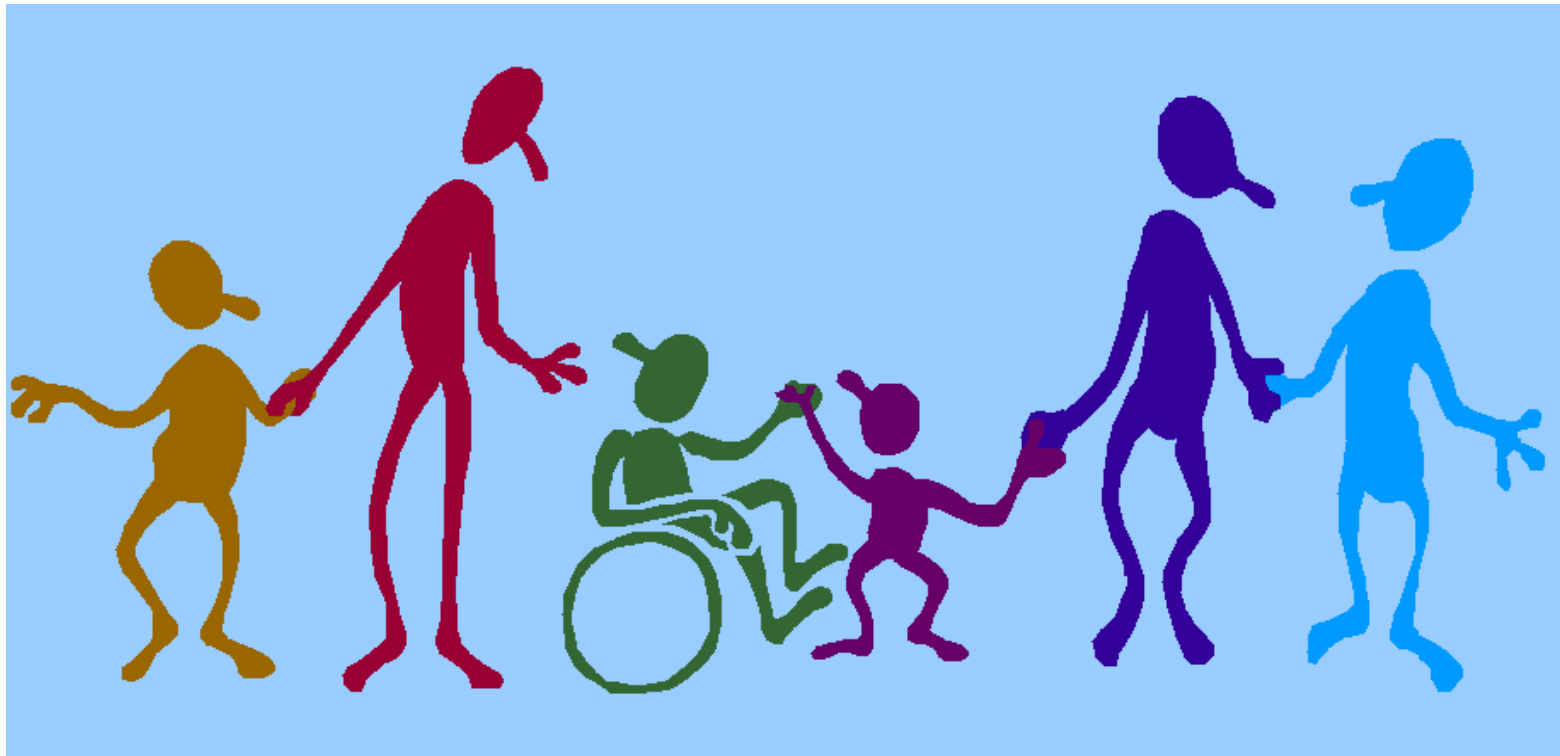
Credit card rewards programs

Anything that serves to **INCREASE BEHAVIOR.**



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Activity





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Helping Children Understand their Peers with Autism

Examples for Explaining Differences in:

- Behaviors
- Sensory Experiences
- Communication



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Tips for Facilitating Friendship

- Plan cooperative games and activities that build a team.
- Model an open and accepting attitude.
- Highlight the capacity of all children to “give”.
- Teach children to slow down.
- Establish your program as a “No Teasing Zone”



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ANY QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU!!