

## OPTION METHOD

### CHARACTERISTICS OVERVIEW CHART

Verbal Skills	Grade Levels	Cognitive Level	Areas Addressed
<input type="checkbox"/> Nonverbal	<input type="checkbox"/> PK	<input type="checkbox"/> Classic	<input type="checkbox"/> (Pre)Academic/Cognitive/Academic
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptive Behavior/Daily Living
<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle/High	Functioning	<input type="checkbox"/> Behavior
			<input type="checkbox"/> Communication/Speech
			<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Emotional

### BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Students with autism (AU) demonstrate core features of social impairment, repetitive/stereotyped behaviors, communication difficulties, and/or cognitive difficulties. The Option Method addresses these characteristics directly by working on the psychological levels of attitude, trust, motivation, and development through intense adult engagement.

### DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the Option Method is to assist parents and the child with autism in acknowledging their situation, in being motivated to make possible changes, and in doing the best they can. The Option Method places heavy demands on parents'/adults' participation over a long period of time by having them serve as active interventionists using rewards and positive attitudes to reinforce desired behaviors.

Typically, the child with autism receives one-on-one intervention with an adult because one of the tenets of this method is that parents imitate their child's behaviors with enthusiasm and energy. In this sense, the psychological levels of motivation and attitude play an important role in increasing social responsiveness and relationship development.

Different from an educational intervention, the Option Method uses parent/adult involvement as the primary means to increase the social responsiveness of children with autism. Thus,

parents are viewed as the most appropriate intervention providers to reinforce positive changes (Jordan, 1990).

## BRIEF EXAMPLE

Tommy is a 5-year-old boy with autism who goes to preschool for half the day. When he is at home, he usually plays with toys by himself with little interaction with other family members. Tommy's parents decided to increase his responsive behaviors by imitating him. In the beginning, the parents imitated the way Tommy played with his toys. When Tommy picked up a toy car, his parents would pick up one also and said, "See! Tommy, I found a little blue train. Do you like it?" If Tommy responded in any manner, his parents would reward the behavior with great enthusiasm and energy.

## TIPS FOR MODIFICATIONS

Child-adult activity depends on the child's interaction style, intellectual functioning, and learning levels. Since the Option Method may take place at home, activities may be modified according to available materials and family schedules.

## SUMMARY

The Option Method is a positive intervention focusing on parent/adult involvement as intervention providers. This one-on-one intervention uses imitation to motivate the child to interact with others.

## RESEARCH TABLE

Number of Studies	Ages (year)	Sample Size	Area(s) Addressed	Outcome
0				

## REFERENCES

Jordan, R. R. (1990). *The option approach to autism: Observer project report*. London: National Autistic Society.

Lynch, S. (1998). Intensive behavioural intervention with a 7-year-old girl with autism. *Autism*, 2, 181-197.

## RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

- Kaufman, B. N. (1976). *Son rise*. New York: Warner Books.  
This is Kaufman's story of his son with autism and the intervention he developed.