
SCERTS® MODEL: SOCIAL COMMUNICATION (SC), EMOTIONAL REGULATION (ER), AND TRANSACTIONAL SUPPORT (TS)

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

Most students with autism (AU) have challenges in social interaction, repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, and verbal and/or nonverbal communication. The SCERTS® model is designed to enhance communication and social-emotional development in children with autism.

DESCRIPTION

SCERTS® is a comprehensive approach for children with AU targeting communication and social-emotional functioning. The acronym refers to Social Communication (SC), Emotional Regulation (ER), and Transactional Support (TS) – the core components of the model. The following figure identifies target areas, briefly describes them, and lists component parts.

SCERTS® Areas	Brief Description	Components
Social Communication	Enhances the ability to engage in reciprocal interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint attention • Symbolic behavior • Sharing emotions • Expressing intentions
Emotional Regulation	Teaches children with AU coping skills and how to regulate their emotional state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-regulation • Mutual regulation • Recovery from dysregulation
Transactional Support	Provides necessary learning, education, social, and family supports within various social contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning support • Interpersonal supports • Family support • Support from professionals

Goals, objectives, and activities may be identified under each developmental domain according to individual needs. Learning activities are related to the child’s life experiences and reflect the child’s interests and family expectations.

The curriculum components are drawn from research. The SCERTS® model has three major characteristics:

1. It is systematic, semistructured, and flexible.
2. It addresses underlying capacities in the development of functional skills.
3. It incorporates practices from various approaches and teaching strategies, such as augmentative communication, relaxation techniques, and sensory supports.

The following are core values/guiding principles that appear in the training manual, *The SCERTS® Model: A Comprehensive Educational Approach for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders* (Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent, & Rydell, 2006):

1. The development of spontaneous, functional communication abilities and emotional regulatory capacities are of the highest priority in educational and treatment efforts.
2. Principles and research on child development frame assessment and educational efforts. Goals and activities are developmentally appropriate and functional, relative to a child’s

adaptive abilities and the necessary skills for maximizing enjoyment, success and independence in daily experiences.

3. All domains of a child's development (e.g., communicative, socioemotional, cognitive, and motor) are interrelated and interdependent. Assessment and educational efforts must address these relationships.
4. All behavior is viewed as purposeful. Functions of behavior may include communication, emotional regulation and engagement in adaptive skills. For children who display unconventional or problem behaviors, there is an emphasis on determining the function of the behavior and supporting the development of more appropriate ways to accomplish those functions.
5. A child's unique learning profile of strengths and weaknesses plays a critical role in determining appropriate accommodations for facilitating competence in the domains of social-communication and emotional regulation.
6. Natural routines across home, school, and community environments provide the educational and treatment contexts for learning, and for the development of positive relationships. Progress is measured in reference to increasing competence and active participation in daily experiences and routines.
7. It is the primary responsibility of professionals to establish positive relationships with children and with family members. All children and family members are treated with dignity and respect.
8. Family members are considered experts about their child. Assessment and educational efforts are viewed as collaborative processes with family members, and principles of family-centered practice are advocated to build consensus with the family and enhance the collaborative process. (p. 18)

BRIEF EXAMPLE

John is a first-grade student with autism enrolled in an inclusive classroom. After reviewing the developmental domains of social communication, the teacher decided to improve John's joint attention with a conversational partner. One objective was to monitor the attentional focus of a

social partner. The teacher provided visual explanation of how to be aware of the focus/interests of a social partner. For instance, John can monitor the attentional focus by asking questions or paying attention to facial expression and body movement.

TIPS FOR MODIFICATION

In order to design individualized objectives and learning activities, the SCERTS® curriculum allows modification for individual needs (Prizant et al., 2006).

SUMMARY

SCERTS® is a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach designed to improve communication and social-emotional functioning of young children with autism. The areas emphasized include Social Communication (SC), Emotional Regulation (ER), and Transactional Support (TS).

RESEARCH TABLE

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

Prizant, B. M., Wetherby, A. M., Rubin, E., Laurent, A. C., & Rydell, P. J. (2006). *The SCERTS Model: A comprehensive educational approach for children with autism spectrum disorders*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

- The SCERTS® Model. (2006). Introduction to the SCERTS® Model: <http://scerts.com/>
This is the official site of the SCERTS model. Specific areas are dedicated to professionals and families.
- Prizant, B. M., Wetherby, A. M., Rubin, E., & Laurent, A. C. (2003). The SCERTS® Model: A transactional, family-centered approach to enhancing communication and socioemotional abilities of children with autism spectrum disorder. *Infants and Young Children, 16*, 296-316.
- Prizant, B. M., Wetherby, A. M., Rubin, E., Laurent, A. C., & Rydell, P. J. (2002). The SCERTS® Model: Enhancing communication and socioemotional abilities of children with autism spectrum disorder. *Jenison Autism Journal, 14*, 2-19.
- Walworth, D. D. (2007). The use of music therapy within the SCERTS® model for children with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Music Therapy, 44*, 2-22.
These materials describe the SCERTS model in detail.