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From Challenges to Triumphs: The Influences of Parenting Styles and Family Dynamics on the Social Development of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

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Abstract

This study explored how parenting styles and family dynamics influence the social development of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), recognizing the crucial role of parents in shaping their children's social behaviors. Conducted within the Filipino cultural context, the research aimed to provide insight into how different parenting approaches and family interactions impact the social skills of children with ASD. A mixed-methods design was employed, involving both quantitative and qualitative data collection. Fifty (50) parents of children enrolled in the Special Education (SPED) program at Julian Felipe Elementary School in Cavite City participated through purposive sampling. Quantitative data were obtained using structured surveys that assessed parenting styles and children's social development, while qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews exploring family communication, emotional support, and parenting challenges. The findings revealed that authoritative

parenting—marked by warmth, consistency, and responsiveness—positively affected children's social development, enhancing their communication, emotional regulation, and peer relationships. In contrast, authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles were linked to social withdrawal and increased behavioral difficulties. Strong family dynamics, characterized by open communication and emotional support, were also found to contribute positively to social outcomes. However, high levels of parental stress and burnout often led to inconsistent or harsh parenting, which hindered social progress in children with ASD. The study emphasized the need for family-centered support programs, including parenting education and stress management strategies. These findings offer valuable insights for educators and policymakers in creating supportive environments that promote the social development of children with ASD.

Keywords: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Parenting Styles, Family Dynamics, Social Development, Parental Stress, Mixed-Methods Research

Introduction

According to Autism Society Philippines (2024) as of 2024, there are 1 in 100 Filipinos has autism spectrum disorder, this is approximately 1.2 million of our citizens living with autism as of this day. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a group of neurodevelopmental conditions characterized by challenges in social interaction, communication difficulties, and patterns of restricted and repetitive behaviors (Hyman, *et al.*, 2020)^[46]. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is used to describe individuals with specific characteristics that can range from mild to severe, with interests or sensory behaviors beginning early in life. The worldwide prevalence of autism is just under 1%, but estimates are higher in high-income countries (Lord, *et al.*, 2020)^[64]. This study explores how parenting styles and family dynamics influence the social development of children with ASD. It examines the impact of different parenting styles—authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful—as well as family communication, emotional support, and cohesion. By understanding the challenges parents face, the study aims to provide insights and recommendations to improve support systems, promote effective parenting strategies, and enhance social skills development in children with ASD.

Family dynamics refers to how family members interact, communicate, and work together as a harmonious team. In today's society, these dynamics play an important role in shaping adolescents' psychological well-being, highlighting factors such as family environment, interpersonal relationships, family structure, and parenting styles. Studies indicated that positive family dynamics characterized by open communication, mutual respect, emotional support, and nurturing environments significantly contribute to adolescents' mental health and resilience. Conversely, strained or dysfunctional family dynamics, including conflict, neglect, or lack of communication, can negatively impact an adolescent's emotional and social development (Polysetty, *et al.*, 2024).

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) affects not only the individuals diagnosed with it but also their parents, both primary and secondary. Caring for someone with ASD is emotionally and physically demanding, often leading to stress, frustration, and burnout. These challenges can strain family dynamics, causing tension between family members and isolation from friends or the community. To support both individuals with ASD and their caregivers, it's important to provide resources like respite care, counseling, and education programs. A comprehensive approach is necessary to help caregivers manage stress and improve the well-being of the entire family (Amate, *et al.*, 2024)^[5].

Parenting a child with disabilities can be especially challenging when the child displays difficult behaviors. This is particularly true for children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) as their unique behavioral patterns may require additional care and attention. These challenges can take a toll on the mental health and emotional well-being of parents. Moreover, the presence of behavioral difficulties can influence the parents' approach to caregiving and affect their parenting styles. In many cases, parents may adopt more structured or supportive strategies to cope with their child's needs, but this can also strain family dynamics (Rahman, *et al.*, 2024)^[80].

It can influence how parents interact with their children, and can also be impacted by a child's ASD-related behaviors. Parenting styles fall into four categories: Authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. Research shows that parents of children with ASD tend to adopt more authoritarian styles, characterized by high demands but low responsiveness, compared to parents of typically developing children, who are more likely to use an authoritative approach (Critchley *et al.*, 2021)^[28]. While existing research highlights the importance of family dynamics and parenting styles in promoting mental health and resilience, studies predominantly focus on families in high-income settings or on general ASD caregiving challenges. However, the intersection of ASD-related behaviors, parenting styles, and family dynamics remains underexplored, particularly within the Filipino context. Furthermore, limited research addresses the role of co-parenting and its potential influence on fostering resilience within families managing ASD-related challenges (Portes *et al.*, 2020)^[79].

Addressing these gaps is essential to provide culturally relevant insights into how families adapt to the demands of caregiving for children with ASD. Such knowledge can inform interventions that promote effective parenting strategies, enhance social skills development in children, and support overall family well-being. Studies found a moderate correlation between higher parental stress and the

use of lower authoritative, higher authoritarian, and higher permissive parenting styles. Moreover, the quality of life for children with ASD was negatively correlated with authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. The findings highlight the importance of promoting more appropriate parenting styles and providing support to help parents manage stress, which could improve the overall well-being of both parents and children with ASD. To further improve outcomes, interventions targeting parenting education, stress management strategies, and emotional support for caregivers are crucial. These measures can help reduce the adverse effects of stress and facilitate a more balanced and supportive environment for both children with ASD and their families (Likhitweerawong, *et al.*, 2020)^[62].

Social development is a fundamental aspect of human growth, with its imbalance potential affecting academic performance, personal relationships, behavior, mental health, and overall life outcomes (Kim *et al.*, 2024)^[55]. For individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), social skills are often a significant area of difficulty, leading to challenges in communication, forming relationships, and navigating social contexts. Children with autism may struggle to develop social competence without support. This can manifest in difficulties at school, in the home environment, and within community settings, leading to isolation or misunderstandings.

However, research shows that with effective interventions, these children can acquire essential social skills, which can greatly reduce their challenges. These interventions help enhance their social competence and adaptive skills, allowing them to better engage with peers and adults in social situations. This study also presents a brief review of various theories of social development, aiming to clarify key concepts such as social competence, social skills, and adaptive skills (Silveira-Zaldivara *et al.*, 2021)^[94]. Having a supportive family plays an essential role in managing the challenges of caring for a person with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), especially in fostering their development and well-being. Families often face unique stressors, but their ability to build resilience is crucial in ensuring the positive growth of both the individual with ASD and the family unit as a whole.

According to Hashimoto (2020)^[41], resilience in families of children with ASD is significantly influenced by protective factors such as maintaining a positive outlook, fostering personal and family growth, nurturing strong family relationships, and finding meaning in their experiences. These elements help families to not only cope with challenges but also to thrive in their caregiving roles. The study highlights that a positive perspective allows families to reframe their experiences with autism, transforming challenges into opportunities for growth and learning. Furthermore, intentional adaptation, expectations, and coping strategies to suit the needs of the individual with ASD is crucial in fostering resilience. This process can lead to greater family cohesion, as everyone learns to adapt to and embrace the unique qualities of the individual with ASD.

The study revealed that the ASD diagnosis significantly impacted family dynamics, with a particular emphasis on work-life balance. Families expressed that it added extra challenges, but they also reported a sense of family cohesion and shared commitment. It suggests that both parents and siblings require additional support services to better cope

with the challenges posed by ASD. The study calls for the development of more targeted support services to address the unique challenges faced by families of individuals with ASD, particularly for neurotypical siblings who often feel overlooked in discussions about ASD care (Critchley, *et al.*, 2021)^[28].

Hickey *et al.* (2020)^[43] stated that family dynamics, including co-parenting and emotional support systems, play a crucial role in managing the challenges associated with ASD, especially in their style of parenting. Resilience within the family is essential for fostering positive development for both the child with ASD and the family unit as a whole. Effective parenting strategies, stress management techniques, and supportive interventions can help reduce the negative impact of parental stress, leading to better outcomes for both parents and children. Additionally, promoting social competence in children with ASD through targeted interventions can improve their social skills and reduce isolation.

In light of these findings, there is a clear need for comprehensive support for both parents and individuals with ASD. This includes fostering positive family dynamics, promoting appropriate parenting styles, and providing resources to manage stress. Moreover, recognizing the importance of co-parenting relationships and addressing the needs of siblings are essential for creating a supportive environment. Ultimately, a holistic approach to supporting families of children with ASD can help ensure better mental health, resilience, and social development for all members of the family.

Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to fill this gap by understanding and investigating the interplay between Parenting Styles and Family Dynamics, contributing to the Social Development of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This research sought to answer the following. (1) How do different parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful) influence the social development of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). (2) What role do family dynamics, including communication patterns, emotional support, conflict resolution styles, parental involvement, and sibling relationships play in shaping the social adjustment and behaviors of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). (3) How does the relationship between parenting styles and family dynamics contribute to the development of social skills and peer relationships for children with ASD. (4) In what ways do parenting styles and family dynamics such as communication patterns, emotional support, conflict resolution, and the roles of extended family and siblings influence the social, emotional, and behavioral development of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). And (5) Based on the findings of this research study, what kind of awareness and educational program can be developed that will help parents improve their parenting styles and family dynamics for their children with ASD.

Methods and Materials

This study uses a sequential explanatory mixed-method design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore how parenting styles and family dynamics influence the social development of children with

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Quantitative data will be collected first to identify patterns and relationships, followed by qualitative data to provide deeper insight and context (Creswell & Poth, 2022; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2020)^[27, 102]. The quantitative phase will use surveys to measure parenting styles, family dynamics, and children's social development, while the qualitative phase will involve interviews with parents to explore their experiences more deeply.

The study will use purposive sampling, targeting parents of children with ASD from Julian Felipe Elementary School, Cavite City. For the Quantitative Phase, thirty (30) parents will complete validated surveys, including tools like the Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS), Parenting Stress Index, and Family Environment Scale. Survey questions will be developed based on established instruments and validated by the Inquiries, Investigation, & Immersion Adviser. After validation and improvements, surveys will be distributed in person with proper consent. Responses will be collected, coded, and statistically analyzed. And, for Qualitative Phase Ten (10) parents from the same population will participate in interviews or focus groups. Questions will be structured and based on insights from the quantitative phase. These will also be validated and revised before use. Interviews will be conducted in person or online, with consent, recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically to identify key themes related to parenting experiences, coping strategies, and family interactions.

The population consists of parents of children professionally diagnosed with ASD in Cavite City. Inclusion criteria require parents to be actively involved in their child's care. Purposive sampling ensures participants reflect diverse parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, neglectful) and family dynamics (communication, cohesion, support). The sample includes 30 parents for the quantitative phase and 10 for the qualitative phase.

A mixed-method approach will be used to analyze the data: Quantitative data will be analyzed using correlational analysis with the help of Jamovi, focusing on relationships between parenting styles, family dynamics, and children's social development. Qualitative data will be examined using thematic analysis within a case study approach, drawing from transcribed interviews to understand parents' lived experiences. Both sets of findings will be integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of how family factors influence social development in children with ASD, producing meaningful, real-world insights (Kajamaa *et al.*, 2020)^[51].

Results and Discussion

This presents the results and discussion gathered from the study From Challenges to Triumphs: The Influences of Parenting Styles and Family Dynamics on the Social Development of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It will be divided into two-part analysis and discussion, wherein quantitative data will be collected and analyzed first, before gathering qualitative data that will be collected and undergo the thematic analysis process.

SOP 1: How do different parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful) influence the social development of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

Table 1: Parenting Styles and Reinforcement Behavior

Parenting Styles	Rules (Mean)	Positive Reinforcement (Mean)	Rank	Interpretation
Authoritarian	4.25	4.25	1	Extremely High
Authoritative	3.91	4.41	2	High
Permissive	4.00	4.00	4	High
Neglectful	3.57	4.14	3	High
General Average	3.93	4.2		High

The gathered data in Table 1 shows the relationship between parenting styles and reinforcement behaviors, focusing on rules and positive reinforcement. Among the four parenting styles given in the table, the authoritarian style ranks the highest mean score (M=4.25) for both rules and positive reinforcement. Meanwhile, the authoritative parenting style follows closely (M=3.91) rules and gets high positive reinforcement (M=4.41), suggesting a balanced approach with a high emphasis on reinforcement. The neglectful parenting, ranks third among the others having the lowest mean for rules (M=3.57) in comparison with positive reinforcement with a high mean score (M=4.14), indicating low rules but with still a positive reinforcement. On the other hand, permissive parenting ranks last among the four parenting styles, with both ruling the same mean score of M=4.00. Overall, the general average of the rules (M=3.93) and positive reinforcement (M=4.2) leads to High interpretation. This concludes that across parenting styles, authoritarian parenting enforces most rules and authoritative parenting utilizes the most positive reinforcement.

According to Camisasca, *et al.* (2020), the authoritarian parenting style revolves around strict rules, and limited communication, and focuses more on consequences than praises. This approach emphasizes authority more, often leading to children developing poor social skills and limited communication. For children with ASD, this kind of parenting style may hinder their social development, making it harder for them to communicate. The stricter a child is raised, the further away they will become from their parents. In contrast, Nie, *et al.* (2022) [70] stated that authoritative parenting styles balance the discipline yet encourage positive behaviors. Parenting style like this focuses more on open communication, allowing children to express their thoughts and emotions. With this approach, children with ASD can be beneficial as this provides the guidance they need to balance the emotional support, that can help them develop social skills. Combining authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles can help ASD children in a nurturing environment where children with ASD can feel both supported and aware of their limits.

Table 2: Do Parenting Styles influence the Social Development of children with ASD?

Parental Style Influence	Counts	Cumulative Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	34	100%	100%
No	0	0%	0%

The results above show that 34 respondents (100%) believe that parenting styles have a great influence on the social development of children with ASD, as everyone answered “Yes” to the question. No one chose “No”, meaning there was no disagreement. This strong agreement suggests that the participants share a common view on the impact of parental style. However, since no one disagreed, it’s possible that the group had similar experiences or

backgrounds.

According to Hsiao (2024), raising a child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a unique and often challenging experience for families. A key factor in supporting both parents and children is understanding parental resilience. Research highlights three important influences on resilience: Locus of Control, which refers to parents’ belief in their ability to positively impact their situation, helping them cope more effectively; Cognitive Appraisal, or how parents perceive and interpret their child’s condition, which affects their ability to manage stress and adapt; and Informal Support Systems, including emotional and practical support from family, friends, and the community, which strengthens parental resilience. These factors emphasize the importance of equipping parents with the right tools and resources to navigate challenges effectively. By fostering resilience, practitioners can help families build a supportive environment that promotes the positive development of children with ASD, guiding them from difficulties to success.

Theme 1: Influence of Parenting Styles on Social Development

This theme explores how different parenting styles shape children’s behavior, independence, and adaptability. Parenting styles play a crucial role in shaping child’s social development, influencing them how to interact and navigate social situations. According to Sanvistroes, *et al.* (2022), parent’s upbringing style can significantly affect the child’s behavior and actions as they grow up. However, as children grow up, other factors such as therapy, culture, and social society can further shape their development or alter their mindset.

Balanced Parenting Influence: Parenting plays a vital role in shaping a child’s emotional and social development, parenting styles significantly influence the outcome of children’s social development (Doepke, *et al.*, 2023). Parental knowledge and mindset are also important as they contribute to and improve the children’s skills. Furthermore, parental beliefs can shape their children’s development which can directly affect their engagement levels (Alin, 2024) [4]. Respondent 1 stated that,

“Oo, kasi kahit papaano sa social development nya sa other people nababalance yung pagpapalaki, nagkakaroon ng improvement. Kase kung hindi ko naman sya napalaki ng ayos, hindi sya magkakaroon ng maayos na pag-iinteract.”

This shows that she is balancing her child’s upbringing, and at least she is showing some improvement. She also stated here that because of her upbringing, has a big impact on how the child interacts, if this is not paid attention to, the child will not have proper development (Viana *et al.*, 2021) [108]. While respondent 2 said,

“Yes, our parenting influenced greatly towards our child's socially ability because we, as parents, often let our child interact with other individuals para mawala ang pagiging shy type.”

This shows the important role that parenting plays in shaping a child's social development. They recognize the approach on what way they can raise their child, and in fact that this has a direct influence on the child's ability to interact with others. This aligns with the idea of parental influence in fostering the child's confidence and improving communication skills. This aligns with the importance of parenting influence in children's engagement with others, which is essential for overall growth and development (Ren *et al.*, 2024).

“Yes, with the balance of strict and affectionate parenting styles makes my children can interact with other people.”

This shows the parenting influence of balancing strictness and affection in nurturing child's development. This approach combines both discipline and warmth for children so that they can develop respect for rules and confidence in socialization. Strictness provides structure and teachings while affection ensure the emotional support given by the parents. Making them both comfortable and knowing their limits (Higgins *et al.*, 2022)^[44]. Respondent 13, stated.

“Yes, I do believe that parenting style has influenced and greatly impacted the child's ability to interact.”

This statement emphasizes the significant role of parenting influence in shaping a child's social skills and ability to interact with others. A nurturing and supportive parenting style, for example, can encourage confidence and social engagement, while a highly strict or uninvolved approach may hinder a child's ability to connect with others. The influence of parenting extends beyond the home, affecting how children adapt to various social situations, interact with peers, and develop essential communication skills (Enea & Rusu, 2020)^[30].

Encourage Social Interaction: According to Autism Speaks (2022), social interaction in ASD is characterized by challenges in communication and interaction. Individuals often struggle with initiating, and maintaining conversation or contact such as eye contact and gestures are the social challenges they face. However, many individuals on the spectrum have a desire to connect with others but may require continuous guidance and support to navigate social situations effectively. Respondent 5 stated,

“Oo kasi kapag nasa labas kami natututo siyang makipag laro at makipag communicate sa iba.”

This statement said the importance of children with ASD's exposure to social environments in developing a child's communication and social skills. By parents allowing their child to interact with their other peers, they can have more exposure to the social environment. These interactions can help children with ASD to develop their communication skills, cooperation with peers, and relationship-building that can help them grow (Scheeren *et al.*, 2020)^[90]. While, respondent 10 said,

“Naniniwala dahil sa nakikita ko naman ung resulta sa mga anak ko kung paano sila makihalubilo sa mga tao sa paligid.”

This statement shows the confidence parent has in the impact of their parenting on their children's social development. The parent observes how the children engage with others, which serves as proof that their good guidance positively influences their ability to socialize. In conclusion, parenting styles, and guidance play an important role in shaping the child's skills and ability to interact with their peers (Avni *et al.*, 2020)^[9].

“Opo dahil tinuturuan namin siya makipag-ugnayan sa ibang tao at hindi i-isolate ang kanyang sarili sa mga taong nakapaligid sakanya.”

This highlights the role of parents in encouraging their child's social development. By teaching their child to engage or socialize with others, they help them build communication, confidence, and adaptability that can help them improve. Avoiding isolation is a must, especially with children with ASD, children like them need more interaction to develop friends, understand the social world, and build relationships (Morrison *et al.*, 2020)^[68].

Equal Treatment among ASD: Ensuring fairness for individuals with ASD involves recognizing and addressing the unique challenges they face in their aspects of life, including education, healthcare, and community participation. But also, the equal treatment they should receive in their family. Children with ASD are no different from normal children, treat them normally on how you treat others. Respondent 15, stated.

“Yes, kasi hindi ko sya itinuturing as special..kung paano ako magdisiplina sa mga kapatid nya same din sa kanya.”

The statement emphasizes fairness and consistency in discipline within a family. The respondent is making it clear that they do not give special treatment to one child over the others. It also says here that the way the parents treat their children normally is the same way how they treat their child with ASD (Kitchin & Karlin, 2021)^[56].

SOP 2: *What role do family dynamics, including communication patterns, emotional support, conflict resolution styles, parental involvement, and sibling relationships play in shaping the social adjustment and behaviors of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?*

Table 3: Role of Family Dynamics in Social Adjustment

Questions	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
How often do family members engage in open communication about emotions and daily experiences?	4.18	1	High
How involved are family members in the child's daily routines and social activities?	4.06	2	High
General Average	4.12		High

The gathered data in Table 2 shows family involvement in the emotional and social development of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Major focus was paid on

two things: Open communication about emotions and the daily experiences, and active participation of family members in the child's daily routine and in their social activities. With a mean score of 4.18, ranked first, the statement about open communication indicated that families usually participate in productive conversations that care for the emotional well-being of the child.

On the other hand, that of family involvement in a child's routine and social activities got a slightly lower mean score of 4.06 but still high in the interpretation. This means that although families are quite actively participating in the routines of the child, perhaps their emotional involvement is more consistent than either social or physical aspects through which the child would be able to interact well with a peer group. The overall mean score of 4.12 refers to the overall family involvement in both emotional and social dimensions of their child's development.

The findings hereby project family support as a primary influence in modifying the emotional and social experiences of children with ASD. "Family involvement", informs Alhuzimi (2021) ^[3], particularly in open emotional communication, positively contributes to a child's social and adaptive behavior, even as it helps the child to adapt to multiple challenges in daily life. In the same sense, Bouzid *et al.* (2023) ^[13] revealed that consistently involved parents greatly impacted emotional regulation and better social functioning in children with ASD. These touch upon the area that the family's communication and inclusion not only would have been resilient but flexibly conducive to a developing atmosphere.

After all, such data underscores the value of family-centered interventions and open communications to advance harness growth for children with ASD. All domains of involvement are significant, but emotional involvement seems particularly pivotal for the child in making strides toward realizing development.

Theme 2: Role of Family Dynamics in Social Adjustment

This theme explores the role of family dynamics in shaping an individual's social adjustment, influencing behaviors, emotional well-being, and the ability to interact in social settings. This also examines how family relationships, discipline, and household structures affect a child's ability to adjust socially. Parenting plays a significant role in the development of children with ASD. Sibling relationships can also contribute to social skills, where a supportive bond can encourage children with ASD to interact with other peers (Tulshyan, 2024) ^[104].

Behavioral Guidance: Within the family dynamics shapes the children's skills, emotions, and adaptability. Positive parenting, such as authoritative guidance, fosters confidence and abilities. On the other hand, harsh parenting such as neglectful parenting styles can lead to social difficulties (Pastore *et al.*, 2023) ^[75]. Respondent 15, stated.

“Oo, kasi po dati may lack of interaction siya Pero ngayon po sa pag gabay ko sa kanya nababawasan po at isa pa po nakakatulong din po ang therapy sa bata.”

It states that in the past, the child lacked interaction, but with the guidance of parents and therapy, the child's development, especially in social skills, has been enhanced and supported. This means that parents play a significant

role in disciplining and shaping their children (Chung *et al.*, 2024) ^[23]. In addition, a nurturing home environment, effective communication, and emotional support from family members contribute to a child's confidence and ability to interact with others. Without proper guidance, children may struggle with social interactions, affecting their relationships and emotional well-being. Therefore, a strong parental foundation, combined with professional interventions when needed, helps ensure a child's healthy social adjustment and overall development. Meanwhile, Respondent 8, stated.

“Yes, my daughter is fairly independent and can take care of herself with minimal supervision.”

This means that even if a child becomes independent and can take care of themselves, guidance and supervision should still not be neglected. It implies that even if a child can stand on their own, they still need monitoring, especially in situations where they tend to explore new things in their surroundings, particularly when they encounter something unfamiliar. Even as children grow older, they continue to face new experiences and challenges that may require parental advice and support. Constant supervision does not mean restricting their freedom but rather providing a secure foundation where they can learn, make mistakes, and grow responsibly. (Manopetchkasem *et al.*, 2023) ^[65]. Additionally, Respondent 11 stated.

“Talking to him and clearing out things.”

Through proper conversation, they understand each other better. Communication is one of the most important things a parent must practice, especially if their child has ASD. There are times when the child may struggle to understand, so patience and clear communication are essential (Buckley *et al.*, 2020) ^[17]. By fostering an open and understanding environment, parents can help their child express their thoughts and emotions more effectively. Consistent communication also strengthens their bond, builds trust, and supports the child's overall social and emotional development.

Conflict Management: Children with ASD require a specialized approach due to their unique communication styles. Individuals with ASD may struggle to control their emotional regulations, such as interpreting or relaying what they want to say, which can lead to conflict and miscommunication. One key strategy in conflict management is clear and structured communication. Since individuals with ASD may find it challenging to follow meanings or emotional expressions, using direct and simple language can help them understand and respond appropriately. Additionally, parents and educators can model positive conflict resolution behaviors and use reinforcement techniques to encourage appropriate responses (Hyman *et al.*, 2020) ^[46].

“Hindi pinakikita sa bata pag may problema.”

To maintain a calm situation, some parents choose not to show problems or arguments in front of their children, as witnessing conflicts can negatively impact their behavior and emotional well-being. By shielding children from disputes, parents aim to create a more stable and secure

environment, helping them feel safe and reducing potential stress or anxiety. This is one of the strategies they use to manage conflicts within the family while prioritizing the child's mental and emotional development (Brondino *et al.*, 2020)^[15]. Respondents 9 and 16, added.

“Kadalasan ay pinag-uusapan namin ito ng hindi naririnig ng aming anak”

“Pinag-uusapan namin yung problema para maiwasan na lumala pa.”

These statements reflect a thoughtful and mindful approach to a conflict within the family or parents. The first statement, highlights how parents should handle conflicts privately to protect their children from potential fear and anxiety. This said, that parents should be mindful about how they should act in front of children, especially children with ASD (Coughlan *et al.*, 2020)^[26]. Additionally, the second statement stated that the family should utilize open communication as a strategy to prevent conflict from arising. Rather than avoiding it, parents should discuss it calmly. This not only promotes a more peaceful household but also sets an example for the child, teaching them the value of communication and compromise in resolving disagreements (Ibrahimagic *et al.*, 2021)^[47].

Family Support System: Plays a crucial role in the development and well-being of individuals with ASD. Emotional support from both parents and siblings helps create a safe and nurturing environment, that fosters confidence. Parents act as a primary support system, while siblings act as a secondary support system, both of these help children with ASD to develop their social interaction and communication skills. By providing emotional security, structured support, and access to professional help, families play a vital role in ensuring the social and emotional development of individuals with ASD (Garrido *et al.*, 2020)^[37].

“Yes, I do believe that parenting style has influenced and greatly impacted the child's ability to interact.”

Respondent 5, highlights how parenting styles can make a significant impact on shaping a child's social skills. The authoritative parenting style fosters confidence and strong interactions with peers. Authoritarian parenting which is strict and controlling, may lead to social anxiety or difficulty in forming relationships. Meanwhile, permissive parenting can cause struggles with boundaries, such as self-discipline. Lastly, neglectful can cause doubts and anxiety. The way parents guide, discipline, and communicate directly impacts a child's ability to engage, resolve conflicts, and build relationships (Clauser *et al.*, 2020)^[25]. Respondent 15, stated.

“Opo, dahil tinuturuan ko siyang makipag-ugnayan sa mga taong nakapaligid sakanya.”

This emphasizes the importance of parental guidance in teaching social interaction skills. Encouraging a child to engage with other, parents help to develop their communication and social skills. Through consistent support, children will eventually learn how to express themselves not just to their peers but also to their families.

This highlights the crucial role of parents in shaping their child's social development and fostering meaningful connections with others (Lei & Kantor, 2021)^[60].

Emotional Well-Being: Individuals with ASD are crucial for their overall development, as they often experience challenges in emotions and social interactions. Many individuals with ASD struggle to express and manage their own emotions which often leads to frustration or tantrums. Providing a supportive and structured environment, along with strategies like clear communication, sensory, and therapy helps to improve their emotional well-being. Encouraging self-expression through activities like art, music, or physical movement further promotes emotional well-being. By fostering a safe, understanding, and predictable environment, individuals with ASD can develop emotional resilience and improve their overall quality of life (Cai *et al.*, 2020)^[18]. Respondent 17, stated.

“Unawain ang sitwasyon, Pag-usapan Communication”

This statement emphasizes the importance of communication in resolving conflicts. This highlights the importance of understanding the situation to ensure clear communication between the two. It also highlights the need for communication to understand and resolve the conflict. Together, these principles promote mutual respect, emotional support, and problem-solving, which are essential in maintaining harmony in relationships, particularly when guiding children or supporting individuals with special needs like ASD (Simacek *et al.*, 2020)^[95]. Meanwhile, Respondent 13, added.

“Maging mahinahon at mag-isip ng maayos sa bawat sitwasyon.”

This statement emphasizes the importance of staying calm in all situations, especially when discussing and resolving problems. Clear and rational thinking should always be maintained when addressing and fixing any situation to avoid misunderstandings and unnecessary conflicts. Approaching discussions with patience and an open mind fosters effective communication, allowing for better problem-solving and stronger relationships. Staying composed also helps create a positive and respectful environment, making it easier to find solutions and promote harmony in any situation (Sappok *et al.*, 2020)^[89].

Physical and Behavioral Impact: Affects both the body and behavior in the physical some individuals may be sensitive to sounds, and have trouble with movement and interactions. Meanwhile, behavior may find it hard to understand the social settings, follow routines, or repeat actions. Some may also struggle with emotions, leading to meltdowns or frustration. With the right support, therapy, and guidance, individuals with ASD can learn to manage these challenges and improve their daily lives (Sala *et al.*, 2020)^[85]. Respondent 6, stated that.

“Hindi magandang epekto sa mga bata ang hindi pagkakaintindihan sa bawat pamilya”

The statement emphasizes that misunderstandings, disagreements, or constant arguments in a family can harm a child's emotional and mental well-being. It can cause stress,

fear, or sadness, affecting their behavior, academic performance, and ability to form healthy relationships. Growing up in a tense environment may lead children to develop negative coping mechanisms or replicate unhealthy relationship patterns in the future. Therefore, maintaining harmony and open communication within the family is essential to ensure a child's overall well-being and development (Iliadis & Apteslis, 2020) [48].

SOP 3: *How does the relationship between parenting styles and family dynamics contribute to the development of social skills and peer relationships for children with ASD?*

Table 4: Impact of Parenting and Family Dynamics on Social Skills

Questions	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
How comfortable is your child in engaging with peers in social settings?	3.47	2	Average
How frequently does your child participate in structured social activities (e.g., therapy sessions, social skills groups)?	4.00	1	High
General Average	3.74		Average

The data gathered in Table 3 shows the social engagement of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) based on how comfortable the child is in peer interactions and participation in structured social activities. This result indicates that children are more likely to engage in structured social activities, such as therapy sessions or social skills groups with the highest mean score of 4.00. This suggests that guided and organized social settings provide a supportive environment that encourages participation and enhances social development.

On the other hand, children's comfort in engaging with peers in general social settings received a slightly lower mean score of 3.47, suggesting that while the child can interact socially, it may face some challenges in unstructured environments. The general average of 3.74, indicates a moderate level of social engagement overall.

These results align with the study emphasizing the role of structured interventions in improving social skills. This suggests that children who regularly participate in structured social activities demonstrate better communication skills, emotional regulation, and peer relationships. According to Hosokawa *et al.* (2023) [45] structured activities helped preschoolers develop better self-control, confidence, and cooperation, leading to significant improvements compared to those who did not participate. This suggests that structured social activities can play a crucial role in enhancing children's resilience, emotional regulation, and social interactions, preparing them for future challenges in school and life.

Overall, the results emphasize the importance of providing children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with guided social opportunities to foster their ability to interact and build relationships effectively. The findings suggest that while children can engage socially, structured activities play a key role in helping them develop essential social skills and confidence in peer interactions.

Theme 3: Impact of Parenting and Family Dynamics on Social Skills

This theme aims to show the impact of Parenting and Family Dynamics on the Social Skills of children with

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Parenting and Family Dynamics have an impact on a child's social skills. A loving home helps children communicate, share, and express emotions with confidence, while a stressful environment can make it harder for children to socialize (Li *et al.*, 2024) [61]. A supportive family builds strong social skills, while challenges at home may require extra help.

Parental Conflict Management: Parental conflict occurs where parents argue or disagree with each other, and how they manage it affects the family. If conflicts are handled calmly, amicably and respectfully, children will learn good problem-solving skills. But if parents often fight, it can make children feel anxious, afraid, or insecure. Effective conflict management, such as listening, compromising, and staying calm, helps create a peaceful home and teaches children healthy ways to handle conflicts in their own lives. Also high conflict between parents decreases emotional warmth and increases negative communication with children. This can cause children to have trouble with friends and show less kind behavior. The way parents handle conflicts directly shapes their children's social skills (Hess, 2021) [42]. As Respondent 5 stated,

“Malaki ang magiging epekto nito dahil sa isang batang may autism...”

“Ito ay makakapagpabago sa behavior ng bata.”

Based on respondent 5 when parents argue, it can greatly affect a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It may affect their emotions and behaviors. According to Piro-Gambetti *et al.* (2021) [76] 188 families for a year found that when parents argued more, children with autism had more emotional and behavioral problems. At the same time, when children with autism had more behavioral difficulties, parents argued more. This created a cycle where the parents' conflicts and the children's struggles made each other worse over time. However, Respondent 22 stated,

“Yes, she obeys us and will behave if we tell them to”

Respondent 22, pointed out that the child obeys the parents but the child shows good behavior and follows instructions when parents communicate clearly and provide firm but gentle guidance. Authoritative parenting characterized by clear guidance, warmth, and responsiveness positively influences children's behavior and development. This approach emphasizes setting clear expectations and providing consistent guidance, which fosters self-discipline and social competence in children (Sanvictores & Mendez, 2022) [88]. While Respondent 8 stated that,

“Oo, kasi kung ano ung nakikita ng bata ay syang tutularan nya so if sinabi mo na masama yung isang bagay matatanim sa kanya yun”

Children learn by watching their parents. If parents set a good example and teach them what is right or wrong, the child will remember and follow those lessons. In managing conflicts, if parents handle disagreements calmly and respectfully, the child will learn to do the same. To put it simply, children might imitate parents by observing or watching their parents. Example of this is when parents solve problems in a calm and respectful way, their children

develop better social and emotional skills. This means that kids learn how to handle disagreements and emotions by watching how their parents deal with conflicts (Lee *et al.*, 2021).

Effective Communication: Sharing thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly and respectfully. It involves speaking honestly, listening carefully, and understanding others. Parents should listen carefully, observe nonverbal cues, and create a supportive environment where the child feels safe to express themselves. Good communication helps reduce frustration, improve social skills, and strengthen the parent-child bond. It is essential for building trust, understanding emotions, and supporting the child's overall development. Using clear praise and descriptions helps children with autism speak more, showing that parents' communication strategies support language development (Ross & Stokes, 2024) ^[84]. As Respondent 15 stated,

“Speech and communication” “Nakikipag-usap ng maayos”

Based on the participant's effective communication it can express their thoughts and feelings clearly. It's not just about talking but also about understanding and being understood by others. Using specific parenting techniques, like praising children clearly and describing their actions, helps kids with autism and speech delays speak more. This shows that when parents adjust how they communicate, it can greatly support their child's language development (Ross & Stokes, 2024) ^[84]. Also Respondent 20 stated that,

“Deep communication and conversation”

Having meaningful discussions where people openly share their thoughts, feelings, and ideas. It involves active listening, understanding, and emotional connection to strengthen relationships. When parents actively help with communication, their child's social skills improve. This works because parents understand their child's needs and abilities, making it easier to support their communication in everyday situations (Im-Bolter & De La Roche, 2023). As Respondent 18 stated,

“Oo kasi kapag nasa labas kami natututo siyang makipag laro at makipag communicate sa iba”

“Socializing in big groups”

Outdoor interactions help children with autism practice social cues, improve verbal and non-verbal communication, and adapt to new environments. Play-based learning fosters cooperation, problem-solving, and emotional regulation. Real-world experiences support communication growth and help children generalize these skills beyond the home. Being in this kind of environment helped autistic children improve their social skills by giving them more chances to play with others, make choices on their own, and interact comfortably. As a result, the children became more confident and better at communicating with others (Friedman *et al.*, 2022) ^[33]. While Respondent 30 stated,

“Laging nakikipagusap at nagpapaliwanag”

Consistently talking to others, sharing thoughts, and

clarifying things to ensure understanding. It helps build strong relationships and prevents misunderstandings. When parents have good, meaningful conversations with their children, they feel less worried about their child's education. This means that clear and open communication helps parents feel more confident and less stressed about their child's learning and future (Gao *et al.*, 2024) ^[36].

Understanding and Discussion: Being patient, listening carefully, and using clear communication to connect with the child. Parents need to understand their child's needs, feelings, and ways of expressing themselves, which may include words, gestures, or visual aids. By having open and supportive discussions, parents can help their child feel safe, understood, and encouraged to express themselves in their own way. This shows that when parents understand their child's unique way of communicating and have meaningful conversations, it can greatly support their child's ability to interact with others (Im-Bolter & De La Roche, 2023b) ^[49]. As Respondent 27 stated,

“Talk about the problem with an open mind”

Discussing issues without judgment, being willing to listen to different perspectives, and considering possible solutions. It involves staying calm, understanding others' feelings, and being open to new ideas to solve the problem effectively. When people listen carefully, communicate respectfully, and stay open-minded during conflicts, they can find the best solutions. This approach helps everyone share their thoughts and work together to solve problems fairly and peacefully (Ronquillo *et al.*, 2023). As Respondent 13 stated,

“Kinakausap ng mahinahon at pinagpapaliwanag”

Talking to someone gently and respectfully while helping them understand the situation. It involves patience, clarity, and making sure the other person feels heard and understood. Practicing mindfulness helps people control their feelings, thoughts, and reactions. This makes it easier to understand conflicts and stay calm while discussing problems. As a result, people can solve disagreements in a peaceful and positive way (Assi *et al.*, 2022) ^[7].

Respectful Communication: Helps parents having children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) by having understanding and building trust with each other. Parents should use clear and simple words, and give their child time to respond. Paying attention to the children's words, actions, and feelings which helps understand the needs of the child. It is important to respect the child's emotions to avoid misunderstanding and conflict between the parents. Offering choices, staying calm, and avoiding harsh words makes communication easier. Also, parents stay involved in their child's life, create a structured home, and talk openly, it helps children do better in school and feel happier. This also helps parents and children understand each other better and build trust (Cerero *et al.*, 2024) ^[19]. Every child is different, so parents should be patient and try different ways to connect to the child. As Respondent 28 stated,

“Pakikipagusap ng ayos”

Communicating and talking to the child calmly, clearly, and understanding each other. This kind of communication helps avoid misunderstandings, builds trust, and strengthens

relationships. It also means being patient, using polite words, and expressing thoughts and feelings in a way that is easy for others to understand. According to the same research study, it fosters better understanding and trust within the parent-child relationship. While Respondent 10 stated,

“Yes, kasi hindi ko sya itinuturing as special..kung paano ako magdisiplina sa mga kapatid nya same din sa kanya”

Parents treat their child with autism fairly and equally, just like their siblings. This approach shows respect by setting the same rules and expectations for all children, promoting inclusion and independence. It emphasizes that the child is not treated differently but is given the same guidance, discipline, and opportunities as others in the family. Siblings of autistic children develop normal empathy and kindness, showing that having an autistic sibling doesn't negatively affect their social growth. This connects to the statement, as treating all children fairly and equally fosters understanding, respect, and positive family relationships (Orm *et al.*, 2021) [74].

Emotional Regulation Before Discussion: Helps parents stay calm before discussing something with their child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Taking deep breaths, using a gentle tone, calm way, and choosing the right moment can prevent frustration and make communication smoother. Staying patient and using visual aids if needed helps the child feel safe and understood. When parents manage their emotions, they set a positive example and create a more supportive environment for their child. When parents stay calm and control their emotions, they feel less stressed and can take better care of their child. This means that emotional regulation is very important for parents because it helps them handle challenges and support their child's well-being (Shnitzer-Meirovich *et al.*, 2024) [92]. As Respondent 26 stated,

“Kapag malungkot o may problema”

When parents feel sad or face problems, it can affect how they communicate with their child diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). According to the same research study, when parents remain calm and manage their emotions, they experience lower stress levels and are better able to care for their child and easier for them to communicate. This highlights the importance of emotional regulation, as it enables parents to navigate difficulties while fostering their child's overall well-being and avoid misunderstandings.

Patience and Rational Thinking: Parents of children need patience to stay calm especially with child diagnosed of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) when their child takes time to respond or struggles with communication. Rational thinking helps parents make decisions based on understanding rather than frustration, especially during challenges like meltdowns or routine changes. By practicing patience and thinking calmly, parents can create a supportive environment that reduces stress, improves communication, and strengthens their bond with their child. Parents of children with autism learn to be more patient, understanding, and caring as time goes on. They face daily challenges, they become better at handling stress and finding

ways to support their child especially those who diagnosed of ASD. By staying calm and thinking carefully before reacting, parents can create a happier and more peaceful home. This helps both the parents and the child feel less stressed and more connected as a family (Tyszkiewicz-Gromisz *et al.*, 2024) [105]. As Respondent 24 stated,

“Communication, understanding, patience, and socialization”

It helps parents build a strong connection with their child, especially if the child is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Patience allows parents to stay calm when their child struggles to express themselves, while rational thinking helps them respond in a thoughtful and supportive way. By understanding their child's needs and using clear communication, parents can guide them in social situations and create a positive environment for their growth and development. According to the same article, strong parent-child bonds in autism rely on communication, understanding, patience, and socialization. Patience helps parents stay calm, while rational thinking allows them to respond supportively.

Structured Discussion: Planning and organizing a way of communicating with a child with autism to make conversations clear and easy to understand. It helps them express their thoughts by using simple language, giving choices, and allowing enough time to respond. By following a step-by-step approach, structured discussions reduce confusion and frustration, making communication more effective and supportive. Autistic children have different ways of sharing their thoughts in group discussions. Understanding and supporting their unique communication styles can help them feel more comfortable and included in school activities (Ferreira & Bottema-Beutel, 2023) [32]. As participants stated,

“Sensory issues”

“Difficulty in expressing oneself”

“Having blackouts and distractions”

“Preferring solitary play”

“Lack of focus and easily getting bored”

Children with autism may experience challenges like sensory issues, difficulty in expressing themselves, blackouts and distractions, preferring to play alone, and lack of focus or boredom. A structured discussion helps by providing a clear, organized way to talk about these challenges, using simple language, visual aids, and step-by-step guidance. This approach makes communication easier, reduces frustration, and helps the child feel understood and supported. According to the same study, children with autism express their thoughts in group discussions in various ways. Recognizing and accommodating their unique communication methods can help them feel more at ease and engaged in school activities.

SOP 4: *In what ways do parenting styles and family dynamics such as communication patterns, emotional support, conflict resolution, and the roles of extended family and siblings, influence the social, emotional, and behavioral*

development of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

Table 5: Special Needs and Learning Considerations

Parenting Styles	Household Structure	Social Activities (Mean)	Engaging with Peers (Mean)	Rank	Interpretation
Authoritarian	Extended	4.00	3.00	5	Average
	Nuclear	4.33	4.33	1	Extremely High
Authoritative	Extended	4.18	3.45	3	Extremely High
	Nuclear	4.09	3.36	4	High
Permissive	Extended	3.50	2.50	6	Average
	Nuclear	3.40	3.60	5	Average
Neglectful	Single	4.00	4.00	2	High
General Average		3.93	3.46		Average

The gathered data in Table 4 underscores the influence of parenting styles and the influence of family dynamics on the social activities and peer engagement of children with ASD. Children who live in authoritarian nuclear households show the highest score of social interaction with a mean score of 4.33 for both social activities and peer engagement. This result indicates that the household structure and environment discipline in the family may affect social engagement. On the other side, authoritarians in extended households show lower engagement, uncovering that while discipline is present, the structure of an extended family may affect a child's social interactions differently.

Children raised under an authoritative parenting style also display high levels of social engagement, with those in extended households scoring slightly higher (4.18 for social activities, 3.45 for peer engagement) compared to their nuclear counterparts. This finding is further reinforced by the study of Awizsus *et al.* (2025), which confirms that authoritative parenting is strongly linked to positive behavioral outcomes and improved mental health in children and adolescents. This suggests that authoritative parenting, characterized by comfort and clear expectations, promotes social development, and with the presence of extended families possibly offering additional support, the presence of extended family members may enhance this effect by providing additional emotional and social support, further nurturing a child's ability to interact and build meaningful relationships within the family and with others.

In contrast, permissive parenting shows the lowest levels of peer engagement, particularly in extended households (2.50 mean score), emphasizing that over-tolerance may hinder in development of social skills, especially in peer interaction. Meanwhile, Children in neglectful single-parent households score relatively high (4.00 for both measures), ranking second overall. This could indicate that children in such households develop independence and social adaptability, possibly seeking external validation on social connection for a lack of parental involvement. According to Sia *et al.*, (2024) [93] resilience, social skills, and emotion control are linked to well-being in adolescents from single-parent homes. Resilience improves well-being both directly and through positive social behavior and thinking. This study supports the result that parenting styles and family dynamics can affect the social engagement and development of children.

Theme 4: Special Needs and Learning Considerations

This theme focuses on the unique educational and developmental challenges experienced by children with special needs, particularly those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It emphasizes the importance of addressing individual differences through tailored interventions, inclusive practices, and collaborative support. These considerations include aspects such as language, behavior, attention, sensory needs, and emotional development. Understanding and accommodating these factors are essential in fostering holistic growth and academic success for these children.

Holistic Development: Holistic development refers to the nurturing of all aspects of a child's growth — physical, emotional, cognitive, and social. For children with ASD, this development must be intentional, inclusive, and supported by structured programs and parental involvement. It emphasizes that learning should not only be academic but also include behavioral and social skills, independence, and self-regulation.

“Oo, kasi kahit papaano sa social development nya sa other people nababalance yung pagpapalaki, nagkakaroon ng improvement. Kase kung hindi ko naman sya napalaki ng ayos, hindi sya magkakaroon ng maayos na pag-iinteract.”

This parent highlights how their balanced parenting approach contributes to their child's social development. The emphasis on interaction suggests the importance of holistic development, particularly in social skills. The respondent acknowledges that parenting directly influences whether the child learns to interact well with others — a crucial developmental milestone for children with ASD.

“Yes, our parenting influenced greatly towards our child's socially ability because we, as parents, often let our child interact with other the individual(s) para mawala ang pagiging shy type.”

The response underscores the role of deliberate exposure and social interaction in enhancing the child's abilities. It reflects an understanding that encouraging social interaction helps build confidence and reduce shyness, which supports holistic growth, especially in the area of communication and emotional regulation.

“Pinapadama namin sakanya na lagi lang kami nakasuporta sa kanya. Na kahit anong mangyari, proud kami sakanya. So parang ganun, pinapakita namin sakanya yun kaya siguro ganun din siya sa ibang tao.”

This response conveys the emotional support given to the child, which contributes to the development of self-confidence and emotional resilience. These emotional aspects are key components of holistic development that positively influence a child's ability to engage socially and emotionally.

Holistic development is supported when parents intentionally nurture social, emotional, and communication skills. These responses highlight the role of family

involvement, structured interaction, and emotional reinforcement in building a well-rounded developmental foundation for children with ASD (Rao & Gagie, 2020).

Language Development: Language development involves the ability of a child to understand, process, and use verbal and non-verbal communication. For children with ASD, this area can be delayed or present uniquely, requiring targeted strategies and support from both parents and educators.

“Nagfofocus kami sa verbal communication, ini-encourage namin siya magsalita at magpahayag. Hindi lang naming sya sinasagot kapag gestures lang ang ginagawa niya.”

This strategy reveals the parents' efforts to reinforce verbal communication instead of non-verbal cues alone. Their consistent encouragement helps build expressive language skills and reduces reliance on gestures, which is vital in ASD support.

“Kapag nagsasalita siya, inuulit namin yung sinabi niya ng tama. Halimbawa kung mali yung pagkakabigkas, gentle naming kinokorek para matuto siya ng tama.”

This response demonstrates a corrective but supportive technique that helps develop accurate language use. Gentle repetition and modeling correct pronunciation are crucial practices for encouraging clearer expression among children with speech challenges.

“Binibigyan namin siya ng maraming pagkakataon makipag-usap. Halimbawa kapag may kausap kami, isinasama siya para masanay siya makihalubilo at magsalita.”

The response emphasizes social exposure as a medium for language learning. By involving the child in conversations, the family fosters a natural learning environment for improving both receptive and expressive language.

Language development among children with ASD thrives in consistent and supportive environments. Family interaction, correction through modeling, and opportunities for communication are shown to be effective strategies (Tager-Flusberg & Kasari, 2021).

Social Integration: Social integration refers to how well a child can interact, communicate, and form relationships with peers and adults in various settings. For children with ASD, this can be a significant challenge, and parents often need to provide support and opportunities for exposure to social environments.

“Gusto namin na maranasan nya makisalamuha sa ibang bata kasi mahalaga rin ang may kalaro siya. Parang part yun ng normal na bata.”

This parent values the role of play and peer interaction in supporting their child's social growth. They emphasize how having playmates is not just a social activity but a developmental necessity, especially for children with ASD who benefit from structured interaction.

“Kahit medyo nahihirapan kami na ipasok sya sa mga group activities, tinutulungan namin siya unti-

unti para matutong makihalubilo.”

This statement highlights a gradual and patient approach to socialization. It reflects the parent's awareness of the importance of social integration and their active role in encouraging interaction.

“Sinasama namin sya sa family gatherings para matuto makihalubilo kahit sa simpleng paraan lang.”

This interviewee points out how informal social settings like family gatherings can serve as opportunities for building social integration skills in a low-pressure environment.

Social integration is essential in improving the child's communication and emotional regulation. Parents play a key role in exposing their child to safe and supportive social settings that build confidence and promote inclusion (Smith *et al.*, 2021).

Sensory Sensitivity: Sensory sensitivity involves heightened or reduced reactions to sensory input such as sound, touch, light, or smell. Children with ASD may experience sensory overload or discomfort, which can affect their behavior and learning.

“Minsan hindi niya kaya ang sobrang ingay, umiyyak na lang siya bigla.”

The parent's observation of sensory overload due to noise reflects a common challenge among children with ASD. Their child's reaction to auditory stimuli showcases how environmental factors must be considered in learning setups.

“Ayaw nya ng damit na makati o masikip, nagiging irritable siya.”

This response highlights tactile sensitivity, which impacts the child's comfort and mood. Such sensitivities must be acknowledged to foster better engagement and emotional regulation.

“Kapag may mali sa amoy, nagagalit siya at hindi mapakali.”

The parent describes a sensory aversion to smell, indicating how even minor stimuli can disrupt the child's focus and emotional state. This showcases the importance of sensory-friendly environments.

Understanding and adjusting for sensory sensitivity is vital in supporting a child's learning and behavior. Sensory accommodations can reduce distress and improve focus and participation (Brown & Dunn, 2020).

Expressive Difficulties: Expressive difficulties refer to challenges in expressing oneself using speech, gestures, or writing. This is common in children with ASD and can affect communication, learning, and social interaction.

“Kahit gusto nyang magsabi, hindi agad niya masabi. Naiiyak na lang siya minsan.”

The child's frustration in expressing needs shows the emotional impact of expressive difficulties. It emphasizes the need for supportive communication strategies.

“Gumagamit lang siya ng gestures or turo kasi hindi pa sya masyado nagsasalita.”

The reliance on non-verbal cues demonstrates adaptive behavior but also indicates the need for targeted language development.

“Nahirapan syang sabihin ang nararamdaman nya, kaya minsan nagagalit na lang siya bigla.”

This response reveals how expressive delays can lead to emotional outbursts due to an inability to communicate effectively.

Expressive difficulties require a supportive environment that includes speech therapy and alternative communication methods. Enhancing expressive skills helps children reduce frustration and improve social relationships (Paul *et al.*, 2022).

Attention Difficulties: Attention difficulties involve struggles in maintaining focus on tasks or instructions. Children with ASD may be easily distracted or find it hard to follow multi-step directions.

“Kailangan paulit-ulit kami bago nya sundin ang isang utos.”

The parent’s repetition highlights attention challenges. Reinforcement and consistency are needed for the child to stay on task.

“Sandali lang ang focus nya, tapos bigla na lang siyang lalayo sa ginagawa niya.”

This statement reflects a short attention span, common in children with ASD. It impacts academic and behavioral goals.

“Hindi nya agad maintindihan kapag mahaba ang sinasabi, kaya hinihimay himay namin ang instruction.”

Breaking down instructions into smaller parts is an adaptive strategy that acknowledges the child’s limited attention span.

Addressing attention difficulties involves structuring the learning environment and using visual aids or step-by-step guidance. These approaches help maintain engagement and understanding (Keen *et al.*, 2020).

Attention Span Issues: Attention span issues are characterized by a child’s difficulty in sustaining attention over time, especially during learning or tasks requiring focus.

“Mabilis siyang magsawa sa isang activity kaya iba’t-ibang paraan ang ginagawa namin.”

The child’s short attention span necessitates varied activities. It shows how parents must adapt to keep their child engaged.

“Hindi siya makaupo ng matagal, kailangan may break.”

Incorporating breaks acknowledges the need for pacing.

This helps prevent frustration and keeps the child attentive.

“Kapag masyadong matagal ang lesson, nawawala na sya sa focus.”

This response points to cognitive fatigue, reinforcing the importance of shorter, focused sessions in education.

Supporting children with attention span issues involves using brief, engaging activities and routine breaks. These strategies help maintain focus and reduce behavioral disruptions (White *et al.*, 2021).

Child’s Condition: The child’s condition refers to their specific diagnosis or developmental profile, including challenges, strengths, and needs. Understanding this helps tailor interventions appropriately.

“Ang bata ay may autism kaya may mga bagay na hindi niya agad natutunan.”

This acknowledges the developmental delays associated with ASD and the need for specialized support.

“May sariling mundo ang anak ko minsan, kaya kailangan talaga ng gabay.”

The metaphor of being in their world reflects social and communication barriers, emphasizing the need for parental involvement.

“Hindi siya katulad ng ibang bata, pero may mga bagay din siyang kayang gawin.”

The parent recognizes both the challenges and strengths of their child, which is key to a balanced, supportive approach. Understanding each child’s unique condition allows for tailored learning strategies that promote growth and success. Emphasizing both challenges and abilities supports inclusive development (Odom *et al.*, 2020).

SOP 5: Based on the findings of this research study, what kind of awareness and educational program can be developed that will help parents improve their parenting styles and family dynamics for their children with ASD?

Theme 5: Development of Awareness and Educational Programs

Highlights efforts to improve parenting, child development, and community awareness through education and support. Refers to initiatives aimed at enhancing parenting skills, promoting child development, and increasing community awareness through education and support systems. These programs focus on Parenting Education, Early Childhood Development, Community Awareness, and Support Systems.

According to Awofala *et al.* 2024 Parental health education plays a crucial role in shaping early childhood learning by influencing children’s physical, emotional, and cognitive development. Educated parents are better equipped to make informed decisions regarding nutrition, health, and emotional well-being, thereby fostering an environment conducive to early learning.

Public Awareness: Public awareness about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is essential to fostering a more inclusive and supportive society. Understanding the challenges faced by children with ASD is not only crucial

for their development but also for easing the burden on parents who work tirelessly to meet their child's needs. The study by Nermend *et al.* (2024) ^[69] highlights the urgent need for greater awareness among parents, teachers, and peers, emphasizing that increased understanding can significantly improve inclusivity and support for affected children.

“A lot of people still don't understand special needs children”

This statement underscores the persistent lack of public awareness regarding the needs of children with special needs, particularly those with ASD. Without proper knowledge and understanding, misconceptions and social barriers continue to hinder these children's access to education, resources, and acceptance. Raising awareness is, therefore, a critical step in ensuring that children with ASD receive the support and respect they deserve in all aspects of life (Karni-Visel *et al.*, 2024) ^[53].

Therapeutic Interventions: Family therapy, or systemic therapy, is a therapeutic approach that emphasizes the interconnectedness of family members and the impact of their relationships on individual mental health and overall well-being. Unlike traditional individual therapy, which focuses on personal experiences, family therapy examines individuals within the broader context of familial interactions (Girdhar *et al.*, 2024) ^[38].

“More therapy and bonding sessions would be most beneficial in improving family dynamics for your child”

Based on the statement to improve family dynamics and support your child's development, prioritizing more therapy and bonding sessions would be highly beneficial. These sessions provide structured opportunities for open communication, emotional connection, and conflict resolution. A deeper understanding of their challenges would significantly enhance their engagement in decision-making and active involvement in therapeutic frameworks (Nermend, *et al.*, 2024) ^[69].

“Therapy and socialization”

The statement also highlights the need for therapy and socialization for the development of the child with ASD.

“Exploring opportunities for therapy”

These statements show the critical need for therapy and socialization in the development of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Targeted therapies, such as speech, occupational, and behavioral interventions, play a vital role in enhancing communication, social skills, and overall development. This statement is supported by the study of Zhang *et al.*, 2022 ^[112] that state that Peer-mediated intervention (PMI) therapy helps children with mild to moderate ASD by boosting their social motivation, reducing unwanted behaviors, improving overall social skills, and enhancing their ability to communicate effectively with others.

Peer and Community Support: Peer advice provides practical and effective guidance because it comes from

individuals with shared experiences. Families of children with ASD often find support groups helpful in coping, as they offer understanding, encouragement, and real-life strategies from others facing similar challenges.

“Payo galing sa ibang may experience”
-Participant 1

“Pagpapayo para sa mga magulang na tulad ko”
-Participant 2

“Support groups”
-Participant 3

These participants highlight their coping mechanisms and learning opportunities with the help of support groups and by seeking and giving advice to those who have the same experience. This type of advice encourages open communication in a judgment-free space, fostering personal growth and problem-solving skills. Individuals who join support groups have positive experiences with peer support, finding it valuable for both emotional and informational support. Szu-Ping *et al.*, 2024. Additionally, it promotes a sense of belonging and motivation, empowering individuals to make informed decisions.

Family Support System: A child's emotional development is not only shaped by individual parenting styles but also by the overall family environment. A harmonious family, characterized by strong emotional support and healthy communication, plays a crucial role in fostering a child's sense of security and acceptance. (Syakhran *et al.*, 2024).

“Family support in therapy and school”

The statement highlighted the importance of family support and school practices for a child's development. Another participant also stated,

“Family is the backbone of a child's well-being additionally”

The statement underscores the critical role of the family and school environment in shaping a child's development and overall well-being. A nurturing and supportive family setting fosters emotional security, helping children feel valued and accepted. By cultivating a positive environment with strong emotional support and open communication, families can enhance a child's resilience, allowing them to better navigate challenges while promoting healthy emotional and cognitive development.

Conclusion

The findings emphasize that parenting approaches, family involvement, and structured social opportunities significantly impact the emotional, social, and behavioral development of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Authoritative parenting, characterized by a balance of discipline and support, proves to be the most effective style, while authoritarian parenting enforces strict rules. Moreover, emotional involvement from family members, especially open communication, fosters emotional stability, and structured social activities enhance peer interactions. This reinforces the need for open communication and active participation in a child's development. Lastly, structured

activities significantly enhance social engagement, suggesting that interventions focused on guided socialization can help children with ASD develop the necessary skills for future interactions. Overall, a supportive family environment and structured guidance are crucial in helping children with ASD build social skills, resilience, and emotional well-being.

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