



Co-funded by
the European Union



MODULE 5

BUILDING BRIDGES: COLLABORATING WITH PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS

Upskilling Preservice Teachers to Support Young Children with Autism
Spectrum Disorder through Digital Social Stories

2024-1-PL01-KA220-HED-000246304

Prepared by
Joanna Madalińska-Michalak, The University of Warsaw



6. MODULE 5 - Building Bridges: Collaborating with Parents and Professionals

6.1. Module objectives & prerequisites

- By the end of this module, students will be able to:
- Explain the importance of collaboration by describing why collaboration with families and interdisciplinary teams is essential for supporting the social-emotional development of young children with ASD.
 - Recognize the roles of team members by identifying the roles and contributions of professionals such as therapists, special educators, and family members within a support team.
 - Practice communication strategies by using respectful, family-centered communication approaches through guided activities and simulations.
 - Create sample tools for family engagement by developing simple resources such as newsletters, meeting plans, or digital stories to practice communicating with and involving families.
 - Reflect on collaborative practices by analyzing case studies to explore how strong partnerships support learning and emotional development, and by reflecting on their own future roles in such partnerships.

- Before starting this module, students are expected to have:
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of ASD by recognizing how it affects communication, social interaction, and family dynamics.
 - Apply inclusive teaching strategies by using simple approaches that support children with diverse needs, including visual supports.
 - Describe Social Stories and explain how they can be used to support children’s emotional understanding and behaviour.
 - Use effective communication and collaboration skills to interact respectfully and clearly with peers and professionals.
 - Utilize simple digital tools such as PowerPoint or Canva to create and share learning materials.

Modul 5	Contact hours		Self-study
	Lectures	Workshops/Seminars	
	2	3	2

6.2. Module learning outcomes

Knowledge	K16 - Understand the principles and importance of collaboration between families, educators, and therapists in supporting children with ASD.
	K17 - Identify the roles and responsibilities of different team members involved in the child’s learning and development.
	K18 - Recognize communication strategies that promote family engagement and interdisciplinary cooperation.
Skills	S14 - Practice respectful and family-centered communication techniques through role-plays or simulations.
	S15 - Develop simple tools and resources (e.g., newsletters, meeting plans, digital stories) to facilitate family involvement and home-school connection.
	S16 - Analyse case studies to evaluate collaborative practices and identify areas for improvement.
Competence	C14 - Apply foundational collaboration principles to plan for effective family and professional partnerships.
	C15 - Demonstrate readiness to engage families and team members constructively in supporting children’s social-emotional development.
	C16 - Reflect critically on the role of collaboration in holistic support systems and adapt approaches accordingly.

6.3. Syllabus & topics

Type	Topic	Self-study Activity	Resources	Hours
Lecture	Unified Support Systems and Collaboration	Review slide deck and case vignette	Epstein, J. L. (2018). School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools (2nd ed.). Routledge. Friend, M., & Cook, L. (2020). Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals (9th ed.). Pearson. Turnbull, A., Turnbull, R., Erwin, E., Soodak, L., & Shogren, K. (2015). Families, professionals, and exceptionality: Positive outcomes through partnerships and trust (7th ed.). Pearson. King, G., Strachan, D., Tucker, M. A., Duwyn, B., Desserud, S., & Shillington, M. (2009). The application of a transdisciplinary model for early intervention services. <i>Infants & Young Children</i> , 22(3), 211–223. https://doi.org/10.1097/IYC.0b013e3181abelc2	1
Lecture	Fostering Interdisciplinary Collaboration	Reflective journaling	Friend, M., & Cook, L. (2020). Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals (9th ed.). Pearson. Turnbull, A., Turnbull, R., Erwin, E., Soodak, L., & Shogren, K. (2015). Families, professionals, and exceptionality: Positive outcomes through partnerships and trust (7th ed.). Pearson. King, G., Strachan, D., Tucker, M. A., Duwyn, B., Desserud, S., & Shillington, M. (2009). The application of a transdisciplinary model for early intervention services. <i>Infants & Young Children</i> , 22(3), 211–223. https://doi.org/10.1097/IYC.0b013e3181abelc2	1
Workshop	Family Communication Strategies and Role-Play	Practice role-play, draft newsletter	Turnbull, A., Turnbull, R., Erwin, E., Soodak, L., & Shogren, K. (2015). Families, professionals, and exceptionality: Positive outcomes through partnerships and trust (7th ed.). Pearson. Raver, S. A., & Childress, D. C. (2015). Family-centered practices in early childhood intervention. Pearson. Robin, B. R. (2008). Digital storytelling: A powerful technology tool for the 21st-century classroom. <i>Theory Into Practice</i> , 47(3), 220–228. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405840802153916 Blue-Banning, M., Summers, J. A., Frankland, H. C., Nelson, L. L., & Beegle, G. (2004). Dimensions of family and professional partnerships: Constructive guidelines for collaboration. <i>Exceptional Children</i> , 70(2), 167–184. https://doi.org/10.1177/001440290407000203	1

Workshop	Digital Storytelling Tools and Creation	Create a digital story, peer feedback	Raver, S. A., & Childress, D. C. (2015). Family-centered practices in early childhood intervention. Pearson. Robin, B. R. (2008). Digital storytelling: A powerful technology tool for the 21st-century classroom. <i>Theory Into Practice</i> , 47(3), 220–228. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405840802153916 Ohler, J. (2013). <i>Digital storytelling in the classroom: New media pathways to literacy, learning, and creativity</i> . Corwin Press.	1
Workshop	Case Study Reading and Guided Reflection Case Study – Strengthening Home–School Partnerships Peer Discussion and Reflective Journaling	Read case and answer reflection questions Participate in forum and journal	Epstein, J. L. (2018). School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools (2nd ed.). Routledge. Dunst, C. J., & Trivette, C. M. (2009). Capacity-building family-systems intervention practices. <i>Journal of Family Social Work</i> , 12(2), 119–143. https://doi.org/10.1080/10522150902874894	1

6.4. Teaching & learning methods

- Lecture
- Interactive Q&A
- Case-Based Teaching
- Cooperative Learning
- Reflective Journaling
- Simulations

6.5. Proposed assessment methods

Method	Description	Weight
Case Study Reflection	Written analysis of a case on school-home collaboration using guided questions to demonstrate understanding of collaboration principles and challenges. (1–2 pages)	40%
Active Participation	Self-assessment and instructor observation of engagement in group discussions, role-plays, and workshops focused on family and interdisciplinary collaboration.	30%
Self-Reflection	Short written reflection (max 300 words) on personal learning from collaborative simulation activities and communication practice.	30%

6.6. List of materials

*All materials are included in APPENDIX E

1. PowerPoint presentations:

- Unified Support Systems and Collaboration (Appendix E.1.1)
- Fostering Interdisciplinary Collaboration (Appendix E.2.1)
- Family Communication Strategies (Appendix E.3.1)
- Digital Stories for Home-School Learning (Appendix E.4.1)

1. Worksheets

- Collaborative Model Diagram (Sample) (Appendix E.1.3)
- Team Member Role Cards (Appendix E.2.2)
- Reflective Journal Template (Appendix E.2.4)
- Exit Slip Prompts (Appendix E.2.5)
- Workshop Agendas (Appendix E.3.2, E.4.2)
- Family Engagement Checklist (Appendix E.3.3)
- Role-Play Scenario Cards and Instructions (Appendix E.3.4, E.3.5)
- Parent Newsletter Templates and Examples (Appendix E.3.6)
- Feedback Form Template (Appendix E.3.7)
- Story Planning Template (Appendix E.4.4)
- Peer Feedback Checklist (Appendix E.4.6)
- Home-School Digital Strategies Tips Handout (Appendix E.4.7)

2. Others:

- Case Vignette: “Lena, age 4, recently diagnosed with ASD” (Appendix E.1.2)
- Case Scenario: “Jasper, age 5, peer interaction difficulties” (Appendix E.2.3)
- Self-Study Case Summary: Digital Storytelling in Practice (Appendix E.5.1)
- Guided Reflection Template (Appendix E.5.2)
- Reflection Prompts Handouts (Appendix E.3.8, E.4.8)

3. Resources:

- Short instructional videos on collaboration and communication (Appendices E.2.3, E.3.4)
- Recommended digital storytelling platforms and example websites (Appendix E.4.5)
- Optional Sharing Link for peer discussion (Padlet or group forum) (Appendix E.5.3)

6.7. Detailed Class Plan

Lecture - Collaboration with Families and Interdisciplinary Teams

Segment	Learning Activity	Materials & Resources
Introduction to Unified Support Systems	Short lecture introducing wraparound care and unified systems of support. Brainstorm examples from early childhood settings.	Slide Deck: Unified Support Systems and Collaboration (Appendix E.1.1, Slides 1–3) Whiteboard or Padlet for brainstorming Case Vignette: Lena, Age 4 with ASD (Appendix E.1.2)
Visual Mapping of Collaborative Systems	Review and analyse a sample collaborative model diagram linking home, school, and therapy. In small groups, sketch own model for Lena’s case.	Collaborative Model Diagram (Appendix E.1.3) Flipchart paper or digital tool (Jamboard/Canva) Markers or digital pens
Identifying Collaboration Barriers	Guided class discussion on systemic, communication, and logistical barriers in collaboration.	Slide Deck: Barriers in Collaboration (Appendix E.1.1, Slides 4–6)
Reflection & Self-study	Instructor introduces self-study task analysing collaboration gaps and improvements.	Self-Study Instructions Document (Appendix E.1.4) Online forum or LMS submission portal

Lecture - Fostering Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Roles, Routines, Respect

Segment	Learning Activity	Materials & Resources
Overview of Interdisciplinary Collaboration	Instructor-led introduction on definitions, benefits, and challenges of interdisciplinary collaboration in ASD support specific to ASD, role descriptions of typical team members (therapists, special educators, family) and collaborative routines and engagement points.	Slide Deck: Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Practice (Appendix E.2.1, Slides 1–5) Team Member Role Cards (Appendix E.2.2)
Role Identification Exercise	Students receive brief role profiles (e.g., speech therapist, educator) and match them to contributions in a child’s development.	Team Member Role Cards (Appendix E.2.2) Case Scenario: Jasper, Age 5 (Appendix E.2.3)
Collaborative Routines Mapping	In groups, create a visual of a weekly team-family routine.	Slide Deck: Sample Routines (Appendix E.2.1, Slides 6–8) Routine Template or Exit Slips (Appendix E.2.5)

Reflection & Closing	Use journal prompt to reflect on an experience with team collaboration.	Reflective Journal Template (Appendix 2.4) and Exit Slip Prompts (Appendix 2.5)
----------------------	---	---

Workshop - Communication Strategies with Families

Segment	Learning Activity	Materials & Resources
Workshop Introduction	Recap key lecture concepts emphasizing communication’s role in family collaboration.	Slide Deck: Family Communication Strategies (Appendix E.3.1, Slides 1–3) Workshop Agenda Handout (Appendix E.3.2)
Overview of Family Engagement Techniques	Interactive mini-lecture on active listening, empathy, open-ended questions, cultural sensitivity.	Slide Deck: Communication Strategies (Appendix E.3.1, Slides 4–8) Family Engagement Checklist (Appendix E.3.3)
Role-Playing: Parent-Teacher Meeting	Students role-play parent-teacher meeting conversations with given scenarios.	Scenario Cards (Appendix E.3.4) Role-Play Instructions & Observation Checklist (Appendix E.3.5)
Drafting a Parent Newsletter	Students create a simple newsletter to inform and engage families about social-emotional learning.	Newsletter Template (Appendix E.3.6) Examples of Newsletters (Appendix E.3.6)
Group Feedback & Wrap-Up	Share drafts and role-play reflections; receive peer and instructor feedback.	Feedback Form Template (Appendix E.3.7) Flipchart or Padlet for sharing
Self-Reflection	Write brief reflection on communication strategies learned and future use.	Reflection Prompts (Appendix E.3.8)

Workshop- Sharing Digital Tools and Stories

Segment	Learning Activity	Materials & Resources
Workshop Introduction	Introduce goals and recap lecture about digital stories as a home-school bridge.	Slide Deck: Digital Stories for Home-School Learning (Appendix E.4.1, Slides 1–3) Workshop Agenda (Appendix E.4.2)
Tool Demonstration	Demo 2–3 user-friendly digital storytelling platforms (Book Creator, Story Creator, PowerPoint).	Devices with Internet Access Tool Comparison Matrix (Appendix E.4.3)

Hands-On Activity: Create a Digital Story	Students create a simple story about a daily routine or emotion regulation.	Story Planning Template (Appendix E.4.4) Access to example sites (Appendix E.4.5)
Peer Sharing & Feedback	Small groups present stories; peers provide constructive feedback.	Peer Feedback Checklist (Appendix E.4.6) Group Discussion Guide
Discussion: Home-School Reinforcement	Discuss barriers and strategies for sharing digital stories at home.	Home-School Digital Strategies Handout (Appendix E.4.7)
Wrap-Up & Reflection	Write short reflection on applying digital stories to engage families.	Reflection Prompts (Appendix E.4.8)

Workshop: Case Study – Strengthening Home–School Partnerships

Segment	Learning Activity	Materials & Resources
Case Reading	Read 1–2-pages case about a teacher using digital stories to enhance family collaboration.	Case Summary: Digital Storytelling in Practice (Appendix E.5.1)
Guided Reflection	Answer 3 questions about collaboration techniques and applicability in own practice.	Fillable Reflection Template (Appendix E.5.2)
Optional Peer Sharing	Post one key takeaway on Padlet or LMS forum to encourage discussion.	Optional Sharing Link (Padlet or Group Forum) (Appendix E.5.3)

Digital Resources in addition to literature resources

- IRIS Center, Vanderbilt University: <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu>
- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA): <https://ectacenter.org>
- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL): <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu>
- Tools: Book Creator, Canva, PowerPoint, Story Creator