



## The SCERTS Model and Evidence-Based Practice (Prizant, Laurent & Rubin, 2020)

The SCERTS Model provides a framework to directly address the core challenges of ASD and meets accepted criteria for evidence-based practice (EBP) based on current definitions provided by the American Psychological Association (2005) and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (2005). According to these organizations, EBP should be determined by published research, but also takes into account the expertise of the clinician and family/patient preferences and values. Thus, the evidence base for the effectiveness of the SCERTS Model practices is based on evidence from multiple sources.

**First**, efficacy of practices in the SCERTS Model is supported by empirical evidence from treatment research in ASD and related disabilities. Selected studies are summarized below.

**Second**, priority goals and objectives in the SCERTS curriculum are derived from decades of research on 1) child development, 2) the core challenges of ASD, as well as 3) reports by autistic self-advocates.

**Third**, meaningful progress is documented through clinical and educational data and caregiver report. Programmatic decisions are team-based and made on objective measurement of change.

**Fourth**, given that it is not an exclusive model, evidence-based practices (i.e., focused intervention strategies) from other approaches may be infused in a program plan for an individual.

**Empirical Research:** Peer-reviewed published research documents the efficacy of The SCERTS Model.

Two large sample randomized controlled trials (RCT) have been published demonstrating the efficacy of the SCERTS Model for preschool and school-age autistic children

- in home-based intervention (N=82), outcomes for social communication, receptive language, and adaptive behavior reached statistical significance (Wetherby et al., 2014).
- in classroom settings (N=197) students in the classroom SCERTS condition showed significantly better outcomes on measures of adaptive communication, social skills and executive functioning than control students (Morgan et al., 2018).

**International research-** Research in Hong Kong showed that autistic children improved significantly in their social communication and emotional behavior after intervention (Yu & Zhu, 2018). Research in the UK using a multiple case study design, found that children made progress in joint attention, symbol use, mutual regulation, and self-regulation (O'Neill et al., 2010). In Japan, Fukuzawa (2019) demonstrated that SCERTS increased students' active participation, attesting to the efficacy of using the SCERTS model in the classroom.

Research on Implementing SCERTS - Research in the UK on implementation of SCERTS in an independent residential school found that 89% of the team members felt comfortable using SCERTS and 78% said the framework improved teamwork and collaboration (Molteni et al, 2013). In New Zealand, Ministry of Education research on implementation found that the use of the SCERTS Framework for the Early Intervention (0-6 yrs) ASD project developed and supported practitioner knowledge and skills, and provided a collaborative model for professional learning and development (Disley et al., 2011).

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