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 UC Davis MIND Institute ECHO Autism: Special Edition

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## UC Davis MIND Institute ECHO Autism: Special Edition

August 7, 2020

Project ECHO aims to disseminate evidence-based practices, build provider capacity and develop a community of practice for complex medical conditions such as autism. Using virtual learning networks of providers with access to interdisciplinary autism expertise, this model has been empirically tested and allows professionals and caregivers to increase their confidence in providing autism services.

In an effort to support educators during the recent transition to distance education, the UC Davis Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (CEDD), in partnership with the Autism Center for Excellence (ACE) and the California Autism Professional Training and Information Network (CAPTAIN) established the Special Edition: Autism Tele ECHO Series. The series aimed to equip school providers with tools, strategies and resources to use a distance coaching model to assist families in setting up new learning routines and supporting positive behaviors for students with autism during home-based instruction.



For this ECHO Autism series, the hub team was comprised of a multidisciplinary team who all have experience in public education. This team included the following: Behavior Analysts, Speech Language Pathologist, Education Specialist, Social Worker, Developmental Behavioral Pediatrician, School Psychologist and Clinical Psychologists. The series offered five sessions to two cohorts, each with didactic topics and student case presentations. The program and curriculum were developed based on (1) the ECHO Autism format, (2) evidence-based autism practices outlined in the AFIRM modules, and (3) evidence-based parent engagement strategies from AFIRM, and PACT as well as strategies learned from telehealth delivery of parent coaching interventions. Curriculum was designed to build collaboration with caregivers in order to improve learning readiness by using positive strategies, both increasing student engagement and reducing behavior challenges. Session topics included (1) best practices in distance coaching, strategies for partnering with parents, and specific strategies to build parent engagement; (2) use of visual schedules and an activity matrix for embedding instruction; (3) strategies to support new learning routines and positive behaviors; (4) using positive behavior support to address challenging behaviors; and (5) strategies for building self-regulation to reduce anxiety. Recordings of the didactic topics and resources can be found at <https://health.ucdavis.edu/mindinstitute/education/echo/echo-special-edition.html>

Based on the series feedback and reported outcomes from the case discussions, the ECHO Autism format seems to be a promising method for providing distance support to educators and other professionals. Two focus groups with ECHO special education participants were held on 6/4/20 and 6/8/20 in order to identify perceived benefits of participation and ongoing needs of participants. A total of 10 of the 40 Echo participants chose to participate in the focus group. Responses are currently being transcribed and coded for major themes. Information from these focus groups along with results from participant surveys will be used to guide future directions of this project with educators. The model's efficiency and ease of use make it ideal for additional future use in community training and information dissemination of other tools and resources.

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Maternal and Child Health Bureau	Administration on Developmental Disabilities
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