



Helping Extended Family Build a Relationship with Your Child

Positive family relationships and interactions can help all of us by adding to life's joy, providing a source of support, and strengthening our resilience. But often, extended family are unsure how to connect or build a positive relationship with an autistic child.

A few thoughts below for extended family and close friends.

Be willing to learn. Autism looks different for every child and family. Learn more about what it means for your loved one by asking parents and caregivers:

- What are the child's favorite activities and toys or snacks? Show up prepared
- How does the child communicate- what do certain behaviors mean?
- What are things that bother the child? Maybe it's loud laughter or being too close to him/her. Knowing beforehand what to avoid can help the interaction stay positive.
- What's the best time to visit? And be understanding for last minute change of plans
- What do you need? Extended family and friends can be a huge source of support for parents and caregivers, be specific when you can, "When can I babysit?"

Be patient and understanding. A child may not yet have the communication and social skills for extended play or conversations but simply sharing a favorite snack or activity together can be a great place to start. Over time, small successes can help build a positive, meaningful relationship.

Manage your expectations. Asking questions and learning about a child's strengths, interests, and difficulties can help you interact in a way that shows the child your love for them. Understand that a child with autism may show their affection for you in unexpected ways.

Get involved in the child's ABA treatment. Talk with parents and caregivers about participating and learning more about ABA. Extended family members are welcome to attend our group meetings with parents.

Resist passing judgement and giving parenting advice. A child with autism that does not look at or listen to someone when they are talking is not being "rude." Suggesting a "swat on the bottom" will not help the child learn beneficial skills. Raising children with autism often requires very different parenting skills than raising typically developing children. Be willing to learn new ways to enjoy your loved one. *Janice* jhuber@tc-aba.com

THIS MONTH'S FAMILY MEETINGS

Hammond 9/22 Group Meeting at 8:30am in person.
Please note our Spanish translator is not available.

Thibodaux 9/20 Group Meeting at 8:45am in person

Houma 9/21 Group Meeting at 8:45 in person

Baton Rouge SLA 9/29 Group Meeting at 8:45am in person and online via TEAMS

Baton Rouge Pre-K 9/15 Group Meeting drop off to 9:30, Donuts with Grownups, in person

Lafayette 9/23 Group Meeting at 8:30 in person and online via TEAMS

All New Orleans/Houma/ Thibodaux Online Meeting 9/22 at 9:00am and 6:00pm – online only via TEAMS

Group sessions are open to any Touchstone parent or other legal guardian. Other caregivers may attend *with* parents/guardians. Please refrain from bringing children to the group meetings. Individual sessions can be conducted at the centers, in the home, or in the community, and address your child's specific needs.

Join Us! If you are unable to attend the monthly meetings, please contact Angie Lanoux at: alanoux@tc-aba.com to set up individual meetings.

Parent Collaboration Support:

Houma/Thibodaux/NOLA- Paula White at pgwhite@tc-aba.com

Baton Rouge/Lafayette/Hammond- Mary Johnson at mjohnson@tc-aba.com

A Few References and Resources for Families

[A Grandparents Guide to Autism](#), [Positive Relationships in Families with Autistic Children](#), [Keeping Kids Connected via Zoom and Facetime](#)

