

**Online Curriculum
Evidence Based Training
for surrounding peers and
supporting adults with coordinating
lessons for students with diverse learning needs
Pre K-Elementary School**

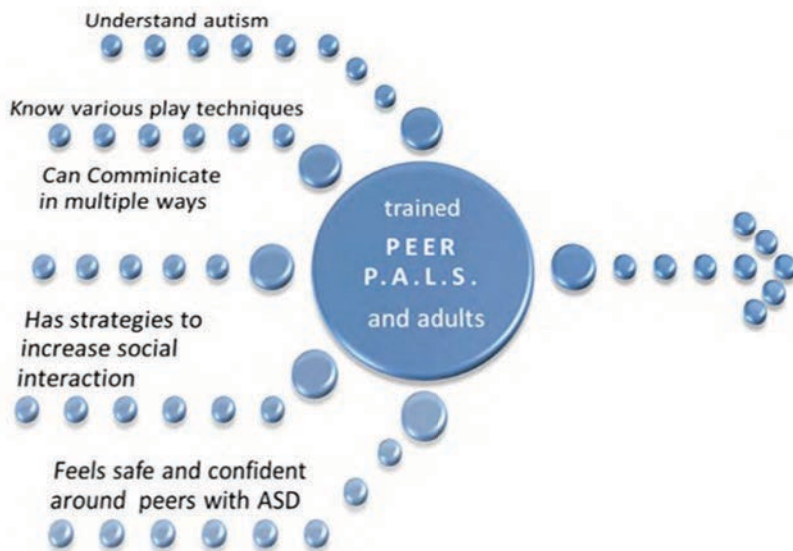
Identified Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder

Prevalence is the number of people in a population that have a condition relative to all of the people in the population

2000 (1:150) 2016 (1:54) 2018 (1:44) 2023 (1:36)

With 1:36 children being diagnosed with ASD, what are you doing to ensure successful classrooms?

Peer P.A.L.S.® is the answer.

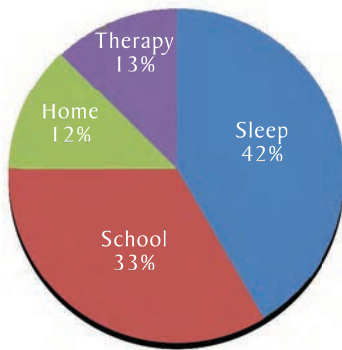


Peer P.A.L.S.® receive extensive training to understand and remain safe even in challenging situations. Being prepared and knowing what to do provides the confidence peers need to have successful social interactions. We address challenging behaviors that others don't. While maintaining safety is our number one goal, there is no way to be around young autistic children without addressing behaviors that commonly interfere or prevent developing and maintaining friendships with non autistic peers.



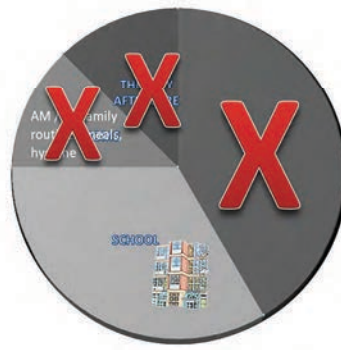
PEER P.A.L.S. WHERE WHEN WHY

Peers surrounding children with autism make the best and most natural social models and can provide support in the naturally occurring environment making the skills more sustainable.



WHERE

Being at school with friends is often the best part of a child's day. But for an autistic child, that is work. After school when most kids are being kids, autistic children are likely in therapy, tutoring, adult led activities, or home.



WHEN

Every child spends most of their waking day in a classroom with the same individuals for a school year. Yet, few general education nonautistic peers understand or know what to do to successfully interact with their autistic peers.



WHY

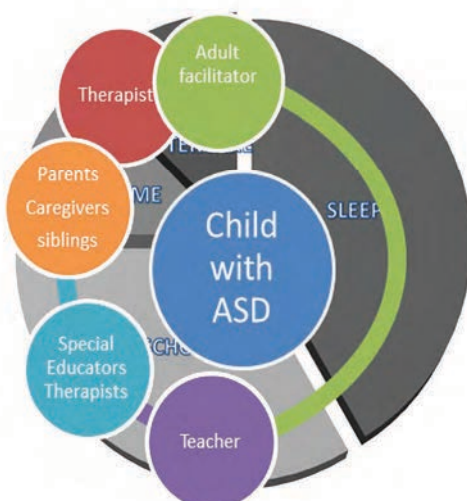
As a BCBA, working in school districts, I saw first hand the need for increased social opportunities; juxtaposed with a need for skill acquisition, adult support, pull out therapy and challenging behaviors forms a barrier to child to child interaction. As a result autistic children and their nonautistic peers continue to make the same mistakes.

Social Interactions

ASD

VS

Peer



“Real life doesn’t happen in a lab but few research studies reflect that.”

Director of NIMH

WHY CHOOSE US?

A 2011 National Institute of Health (NIH) - funded a study that shifts away from commonly used interventions that focus on the children with autism directly, and trained their typical developing peers how to interact with them. “Real life doesn’t happen in a lab, but few research studies reflect that. This study shows that taking into account a persons typical environment may improve treatment outcomes. T. Insel, Director of (NIMH), a part of NIH. Benefits from this and other studies varify the need to shift the focus of intervention to include and focus on peers.

Federal law mandates schools use evidence-based practices (EBP). Peer Pals is an EBP being replicated , resulting from the pilot program in 1998 and data based revisions from over 16 years of implementation with hundreds of children with autism and their Peer P.A.L S. ®



**Alanna Apap
MS, BCBA**

Peer P.A.L S. ® is the creation of a board certified behavior analyst and teacher with a master’s degree in education and over 30 years experience and partnership with school districts and working with children with ASD in schools, community and home.

EXPERTISE



Visit the Website to View Our Research, Development and Evidence Based Practices



It all started one summer, years ago while working as a Consulting Behavior Analyst with a student who was nonspeaking with no functional form of communication. She used hitting as a form of communication on average 200 times a day. Every time someone came near, she hit at them, mostly in an effort to escape demands. Sometimes, she also hit to seek attention. Due to her behavior, she was surrounded by supportive, adults, unintentionally but further isolating her from other social interactions.

It’s no wonder she had no friends. I went home and asked my daughter to volunteer as a peer pal. I pulled my daughter’s hair into a ponytail, dressed her in a long sleeve shirt for arm protection and said, OK, you’re coming to work with me. Together we’ll teach a girl how to play and communicate appropriately. She’s going to try to hit you when you get close. So, we practiced strategies as I taught her what to do. The result was the girl had a 90% decrease in hitting that summer. I saw the full impact of having a trained typical peer to befriend and mentor a child with special needs. But that was just half of it. Overhearing my daughter say her prayers one night, I heard her say she wished all kids could talk. Apparently we think alike. Thus, like the student, I experienced a 90% decrease in my spare time as I formally developed the Peer P.A.L S. ® Program.

OUR VALUE

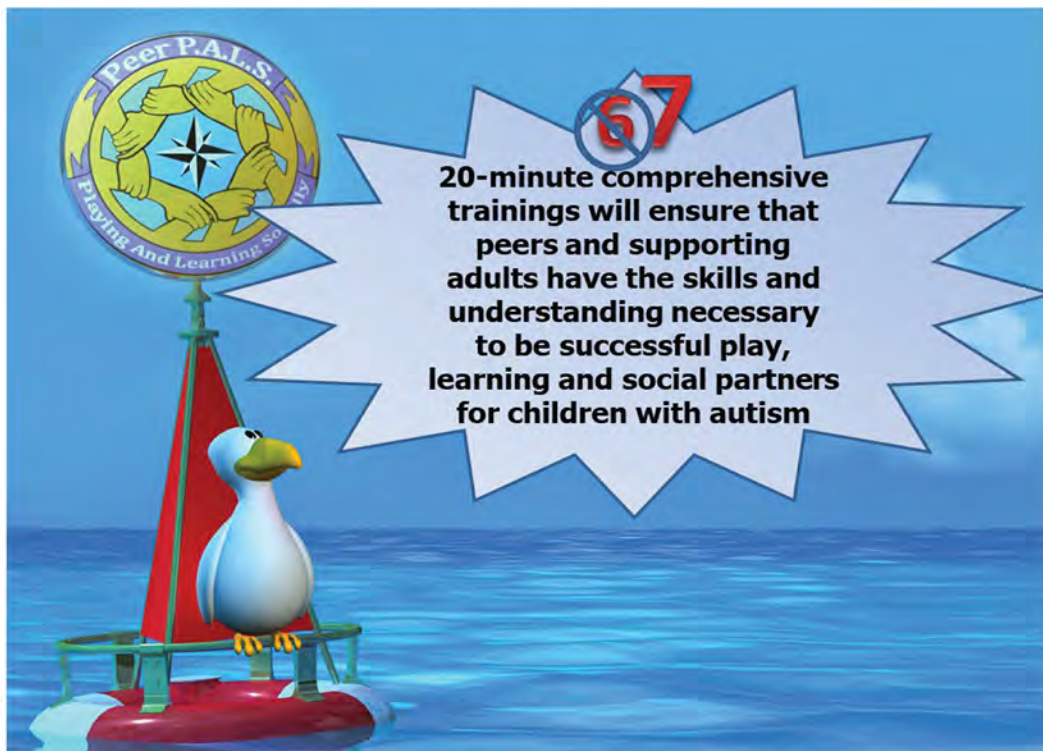
It takes specialized knowledge, a lot of work and formal training to support autistic students. The Peer P.A.L.S.® program provides extensive training helping surrounding peers and supporting adults to understand:

1. the basics of a disability
2. the core features of autism (communication, reciprocal interaction, and restrictive repetitive patterns of behavior or interests),
3. and behavioral challenges across the autism spectrum.

The program focuses on providing a variety of interventions to address the core features. By developing key skills and attitudes autistic students and surrounding peers are able to be successful forming positive and lasting relationships. Autistic students are supported and understood by peers and adults in a caring, inclusive learning environment. Peers become a valuable resource.

Our engaging animated modules were designed to fit into a school day without loss of academic time. This is accomplished through a series of 20-minute “lunch and learn” presentations. Bring your lunch to the classroom, the teacher turns on the video, then as everyone eats, I do all the work.

You get all the training your school needs. Instead of expensive consultants, just flip me on and I do all the training. Studies show you forget 80% of what you learn within one month; I'm there as many times as you need me !



THE NEED THE OUTCOMES

SOCIAL VALIDITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORTED CHALLENGES



SCHOOLS/AGENCIES	ADULTS	PEERS	AUTISTIC CHILDREN	PARENTS
SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Behavior 2. Support for Staff 3. Professional Development in Autism to remain compliant 4. Meeting parent expectations SCHOOL THERAPISTS SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nonspeaking students don't use AAC devices 2. Need opportunities to use devices 3. Need peers who can interact using a variety of communication <small>Data gathered: survey and interview</small>	INCLUSION TEACHERS General Education Teachers <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of training for Autism 2. Lack strategies for ASD student When classmates don't understand peers with ASD 3. Inclusion "dumping" 4. Meeting parent expectations ESE TEACHERS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need models of expected behavior for LRE 2. Need peer models 3. Labor intensive materials 4. Core features interfere in learning 5. Need Generalization of skills 6. Parent expectations 7. No time to train PARAPROFESSIONALS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Labor intensive 2. 1:1 assistance 3. Transfer to other adults 4. Training for autism 5. Challenging Behaviors 6. Safety 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Don't understand their peers with ASD 2. Don't know strategies to use with peers with ASD 3. Stop trying after unsuccessful attempts with autistic peers 4. Fearful of behaviors 5. Don't invite to play or sit together at lunch or free time 6. Lack confidence interacting with peer with ASD 7. Want to be helpful to peers with ASD, but little/no success 8. Need training to understand and help 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need opportunities to build relationships 2. Need to learn social skills in natural environment 3. Need access to trained peers 4. Need access to trained adults 5. Core features interfere with making and keeping friends 6. Core triad interfere with learning 7. May be socially isolated (behavior) 8. Want friends 9. May need extra motivation and reinforcement to participate/practice 10. Have difficulty initiating interaction 11. Require behavior supports 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Want autism training for staff 2. Want understanding staff 3. Want sensitivity and acceptance by peers for their child 4. Want supportive trained peers and staff 5. Fear of Inclusion "dump" 6. Stop focus on changing their child rather than focus on changing others
NOW <p>The United States spends billions of dollars every year caring for Americans with autism. The majority of the costs are for adult services estimated between \$175 to \$196 billion- compared \$61 to \$66 for children. In 2015 total cost for care for children and adults with ASD was \$268 billion.</p> <p>It is predicted to cost \$461 billion per year by 2025 in the absence of more effective interventions and support across the life span. The future will be costly, as will impact to school and community if core characteristics are not effectively addressed and autistic children are not given access to trained and supportive peers and adults.</p>				

PEER P.A.L.S. PROGRAM: OUTCOMES & BENEFITS



SCHOOLS	ADULTS	PEERS	AUTISTIC CHILDREN	PARENTS of ASD CHILD
ADMINISTRATION <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides many scenarios and strategies to handle common problems with BEHAVIOR 2. OPTIONAL Module 7 teaches to implement a class wide or individual Token Economy if extra motivation and reinforcement is needed to interact and achieve goals 3. Provides Professional Development in Autism to remain compliant 4. Provides training for staff and peers to meet parent expectations SCHOOL THERAPISTS SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nonspeaking students increase opportunities to use devices 2. Have peers who can interact using a variety of communication PARAPROFESSIONALS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Premade materials 2. More 1:1 assistance (peer pals) 3. Generalize to peers (para facilitates) 4. Common challenging Behaviors Interventions 5. Training for safety 	GENERAL EDUCATION AND INCLUSION TEACHERS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides training for Autism 2. Provides strategies for ASD students 3. Educates classmates to understand peers with ASD 4. Training for inclusion 5. Meeting Parent expectations ESE TEACHERS Exceptional Student Education <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides models of expected appropriate behavior for LRE 2. Provides appropriate peer models 3. Provides readymade support materials (download/order) 4. Addresses the Core features that interfere in learning 5. Peers to practice generalization 6. Meet parent expectations for social opportunities 7. Watch Modules anytime as much as is needed to train everyone for validity and consistency 	PEERS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training in autism to understand their peers with ASD 2. Learn strategies to use with peers with ASD 3. Taught to seek assistance and persevere after unsuccessful attempts 4. Module 6 teaches safety techniques 5. Invite to play, sit together at lunch/ free time 6. Develop confidence to successfully interact 7. "Feel" helpful and are helpful 8. Model strategies resulting in student progress on goals 9. Provide feedback & reinforce their pals 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opportunities to Build Relationships in Natural environment settings Practice Skills & Challenges in Natural environment 2. Access to Trained Peers & Adults who understand & want to help 3. Focus on skill building 4. Communication Supports 5. Behavior Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Management • Request Help • Request Breaks 6. Opportunities to Increase Play Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reciprocal Play • Turn Taking • Waiting • Initiating • Joining In play • Proper Toy Use 7. Opportunities to Increase Learning Skills Attention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Participation • Follow Directions 8. Opportunities to Increase Social Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imitating Peer Models • Greeting • Initiating Interaction • Appropriate Language or Actions • Reinforcement of Skills 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides training for Autism 2. Explains Autism for understanding 3. Creates more sensitivity and acceptance by peers for their child 4. Train staff and peers to be supportive 5. Inclusion Training 6. Increases peer assistance, advocacy, social interactions and friendships with children with ASD 7. Focus shifted from child with ASD directly, to focus on developing skills in others THE FUTURE <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intervene early 2. New focus on educating surrounding peers and adults 3. Use existing natural supports and places 4. Save costs for the billions in autism-related services for adults

OUR ANIMATED MODULES

An activity corresponds with each module. You print out and students build their survival skills by completing activities with assistance from Peer P.A.L.S.®

Module 1 Orientation

- Who Are Peer P.A.L.S.
- What is a Disability
- What is Autism
- What You Might Do With Your Pal
- Ways Peer P.A.L.S. HELP
- Commit



Module 2 Play

- Characteristics & Type of Play
- How to Get Into Their Play



- Turn-Taking
- My Turn/Your Turn Cards
- How to Structure Play
- Strategies for Expanding Play
- Strategies for Successful Play Interactions

Module 3 Communication

- Learn About Augmentative & Alternative Communication Skills
- Strategies to be a Communication Partner
- Conversation Techniques
- Supports to Increase Spontaneous & Appropriate Functional Communication

Module 4 Learning

- Characteristics of Learner with Autism
- Strategies to Increase Participation & Attention
- Behavior Skills
- Model
- Prompt
- Fade
- Feedback
- Reinforcement
 - Natural
 - Token Economy
- Student Supports-Prompting Strips help get message across
- PRACTICE TECHNIQUES

Module 4 Learning

Activity: Prompting Strips Sets for Student, Facilitator and Peer P.A.L.S.® (You Print, Laminate and Assemble)



Student Visual Supports

Module 5 Socialization

Activity: Keeping your conversation afloat can be completed with a few classroom materials.



Module 6 Rough Waters

Activity: Create a Stress Ball can be completed with a few inexpensive items.



Balloons



Bag of Sand



Module 5 Socializing Part 1 & 2



- Social Communication Deficits in ASD
- Social Initiations
- Personal Space
- Remain on Topic
- Special Interests
- Friendly Words/Tone
- Allow Others to Do Things Their Way
- Use I-Message
- WHAT TO DO IF YOUR PAL...
- Doesn't Accept Ideas
- Seems Negative
- Misinterprets Situations
- Switches Topic
- Argues, Quits, or Insists on Doing Things His Way

Module 6 Rough Waters



- Challenging Situations & Safety Techniques
- WHAT TO DO IF YOUR PAL...
- Won't Imitate, Interact or Follow Rules
- Doesn't Understand
- Has Food On Face
- Picks Nose
- Makes Rude Comments
- Acting Out
- MOM and DAD
- Move Outward Monitoring
- Distract And Disengage
- PRACTICE TECHNIQUES

Module 7 Behavior Support Bead Token



- Reinforcement
- Why Do We Need a Token Bead System
- How PALS Earn Beads
- How to Deliver and Fade Beads
- Spending Beads
- Charting Their Course



THE TESTIMONIALS



Pragmatic skill acquisition is essential not only for successful socialization, but also for group interaction skills, job interviews and all interpersonal relations. Neurotypical individuals acquire pragmatic skills through observation beginning with the development of joint attention as an infant. Individuals with autism spectrum disorder are unable to glean from observation alone the skills needed to successfully interact with others. Direct instruc-

learned skills and continued observation of appropriate interactions will result in improved pragmatics for individuals with autism. Peer facilitated interactions are an evidence based intervention proven successful with individuals with autism. However, peers must be instructed in how to facilitate in those interactions effectively and safely in order for them to result in improved pragmatic skills. The Peer P.A.L.S. program provides an entertaining, evidence based instructional tool for typical peers to learn how to effectively engage with individuals with asd resulting in improved pragmatic skills. Peers are taught about the characteristics of autism and how to engage an individual with autism in a safe and motivating manner.

Over the last 15 years I have observed students instructed through the Peer PAL program facilitate social interactions more efficiently than any other social intervention. This program provides a learning opportunity for those affected by autism, neurotypical peers and our community as a whole. With the numbers of individuals with autism growing rapidly our communities will need to be aware of the characteristics of autism and the strategies

brought the information back to their friends at school, on the bus, on the baseball field, to college settings and later to place of work or their own family. The skills learned by both those affected by autism and typical peers are essential not only to the individuals themselves, but also to the development and success of our community as a whole. ~Joanne Sweazey,

Executive Director, The Hope Center for Autism, Inc.

PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

"This program is beneficial to both typical peers and the children with autism. Typical peers become more empathetic, understanding and of course educated to the challenges and strengths of their peers with autism. Throughout the school year typical children continued to support their peers with autism and advocate for them. It is obvious that the Peer Pals program and experiences has a huge impact on the trained typical peers. With the ever increasing numbers of students with autism, I highly endorse the Peer PALS Program as a character building and relationship enhancing program that is needed in our schools today."

Lisa Estevez, Director of Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

TEACHERS

"It carried over into the child's school where they would see PEER PALS and have a friend that understood them. Peer PALS in turn learned from the children with Autism and to be a PEER PAL. Parents would let us know that they could see a difference in their child's behavior and interaction with other people.

I highly recommend this program."

Lisa ESE/ASD Teacher

PARENTS

Christopher is in middle school and has always had considerable trouble making and keeping friends. His mother says, "This is a great program and it's been a big help in so many ways. 'Normal' kids can always use the same positive social education too, the younger the better." After the program, Christopher had the skills to improve his peer relationships, and had made a new friend.

Emma's mom Kelly loves the program as much as her daughter.

"Prior to the Peer P.A.L.S. program, Emma would lock her bedroom door and tell other children they were not allowed in and couldn't touch her things. These last few weeks she has been letting kids in her room and sharing her toys with them. She has also been tending to the younger children who come to our house as if she is pretending to be a Peer PAL. Since Emma started the program, she is sharing a lot better and seems to be more in tune to other children's feelings."

**“Since the program started she
is sharing a lot better and
seems to be more in tune to
other children’s feeling”**

Emma’s Mom (Kelly)



**“After the program, Christopher
had the skills to improve his
peer relationships and had
made a new friend”**

Christopher’s Mom

PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL

PEER P.A.L.S.® PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL

Goal: Promote successful inclusive learning environments by focusing on educating and providing skills for surrounding peers and supporting adults (SPSA) thereby increasing positive and successful interactions with autistic children.

INPUTS		ACTIVITIES		OUTCOMES		
What we invest	What we do	Who we reach	Short-term results	Intermediate results	Long-term results	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Time • Money • Materials • Technology • Expertise • Research findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Online Curriculum • Provide evidence based professional development adults/staff in Inclusion, Autism, PMI- Peer PALS, ABA, NI • Provide training for peers (surrounding and volunteering) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Orientation: What to expect and ASD overview 2. Play: Common Challenges and interventions 3. Communication: Techniques, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Use 4. Learning and Attending: Strategies to increase attention and participation 5. Social Skills: Common challenges and interventions 6. Challenging Behaviors: Safety techniques 7. Behavior Support: Token Economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide printable coordinating documents, manuals, guides • Pre and posttest evaluation • Project Materials list (\$ store) if choosing to do activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-makers • School Districts • Administration • Staff • Surrounding peers and supporting adults (SPSA) • Children with ASD (CWA) • Parents • Agencies and community-based organizations (CBOs) • Staff of CBOs • Members of CBOs • Clinical professionals 	Surrounding peers and supporting adults (SPSA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of ASD- positive attitudes, skills knowledge, commitment • SPSA can identify actions to take with CWA for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play skills and techniques for play challenges • Communicating in various ways AAC • Have skills to assist peers when learning: getting attention • Become successful interacting with peers • Feel safe, aware of challenging behaviors, • Techniques to stay safe (MOM DAD) • Understand need for token reinforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with ASD (CWA) • Access to trained peers/ adults • Increased play skills: take turns • Increased communication skills: AAC use • Increased learning skills: Attention-participation • Increased social skills • Increased social interactions • Increased self-management skills • Increased motivation • Reduced • Social isolation • Improved parent satisfaction 	Conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved inclusion • Improved relationships • Improved school/parent relationships • Improved social conditions • Improved economic conditions • Improved CBO conditions • Improved mental health (CWA) 	

Assumptions: The time is NOW for a paradigm shift, with 1:36 children being diagnosed with ASD and continuing to grow at an ever-rapid pace. Traditional intervention is aimed directly at the CWA. Yet, core features, variations in severity, delivery and dosage of social skills, social isolation, lack of opportunities and access to trained adults and peers are obstacles to be overcome. Our diverse world depends on social skills. Social skills are most effectively learned in the natural environment, with lots of opportunities to practice with appropriate models- especially for CWA. However, peers aren't sure what to do, many gave up attempts at interacting due to continued failure, negative interactions, or fear, all contributing to the social isolation and lack of "expected" appropriate behaviors. **To increase successful inclusion, those who support and surround CWA are our focus of change.**

Economic Conditions: The US spends billions every year caring for Americans with autism. The majority of the costs are for adult services estimated between \$175- \$196 billion. As compared to \$61-\$66 for children. In 2015, the total cost for care for children and adults with ASD was \$268 billion. It is predicted to cost \$461 billion per year by 2025 in the absence of more effective interventions and support across the life span.

The future will be costly as will impact to school and community if core features are not effectively addressed and CWA are not given access to trained and supportive peers and adults.

By intervening early, giving lots of opportunities for neurodiverse and neurotypical children to be together, and investing money in children now for programs such as Peer P.A.L.S, we can reduce the rising billions in costs for future adult services.



Want to learn more?

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Visit our webpages for pricing and take a peek at some of the module clips

www.peerpals.us