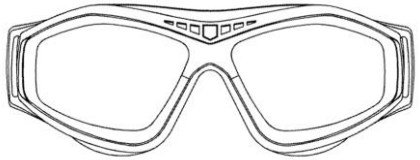
Supporting autistic children and their caregivers in early care & education



Minerva (Miny) Ortiz, CCHW

The Autism Project

Children's Neurodevelopment Center of Hasbro Children's Hospital

minerva.Ortiz@lifespan.org

Stephanie Shepard Umaschi, Ph.D.

Center for Evidence Based Practice of Bradley Hospital

Brown Medical School

stephanie_shepard@brown.edu

THE BAY TEAM

The Barrington Adult Youth Team

Barrington's Prevention Coalition

www.thebayteam.org

Hasbro Children's Hospital

The Pediatric Division of Rhode Island Hospital

A Lifespan Partner

All for one.

THE AUTISM PROJECT

25TH ANNIVERSARY

Building Community Since 1997

Rhode Island Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities

RILEND

Lifespan *Delivering health with care®*

Rhode Island Regional Coalitions

The need

- **Signs by 1-3 yrs, diagnosed at older ages**
- **Progress in early diagnosis and treatment**
- **Impact of COVID on early diagnosis and treatment**
- **Coming to ECE without dx or treatment ECE and providers lack training and support**
  - **High expulsion rates**
  - **Lack of teacher attention and support**
  - **Antagonistic relationships with parents**
  - **Teacher burnout**

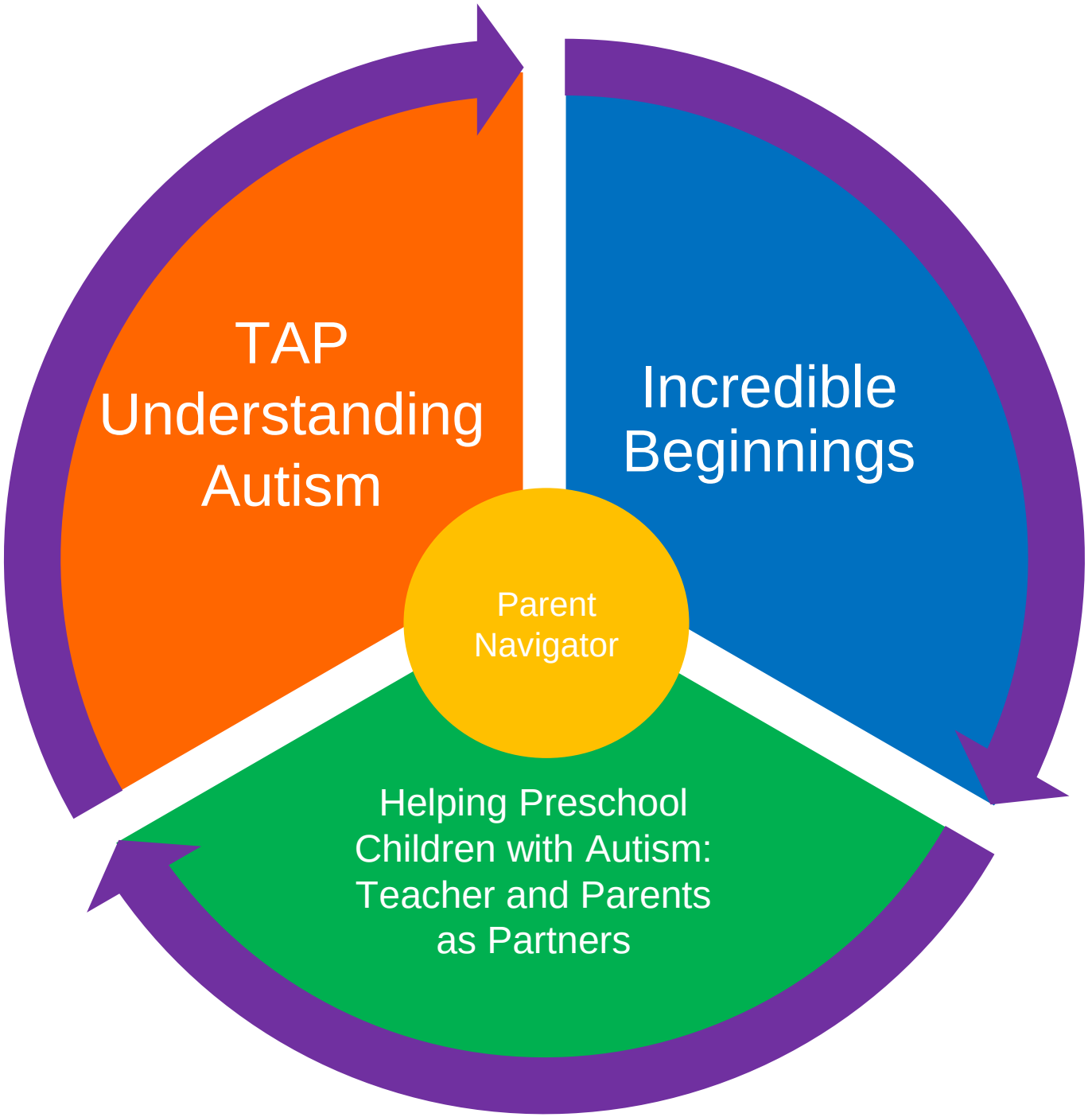
Helping Preschool Children with Autism: Teacher and Parents as Partners

FOSTERING COMMUNICATION

SOCIAL COACHING

EMOTION COACHING

PEER SUPPORT


TAP
Understanding
Autism
Incredible
Beginnings
Parent
Navigator
Helping Preschool
Children with Autism:
Teacher and Parents
as Partners

Understanding Autism Training

- I have a story (*I always have a story*)
- Why the why
- What are goal is not
- ‘Learn to learn’
- Tools for life

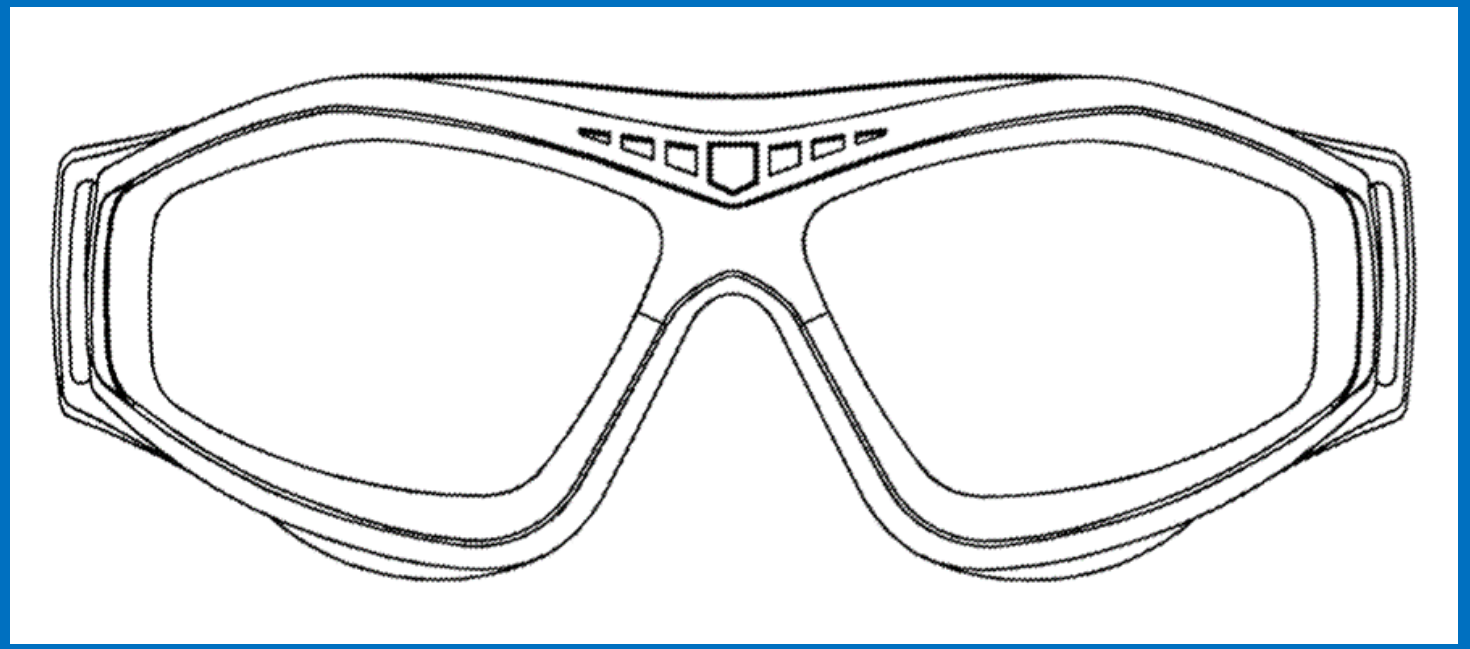
Why Incredible Beginnings?

It's better to prepare than repair

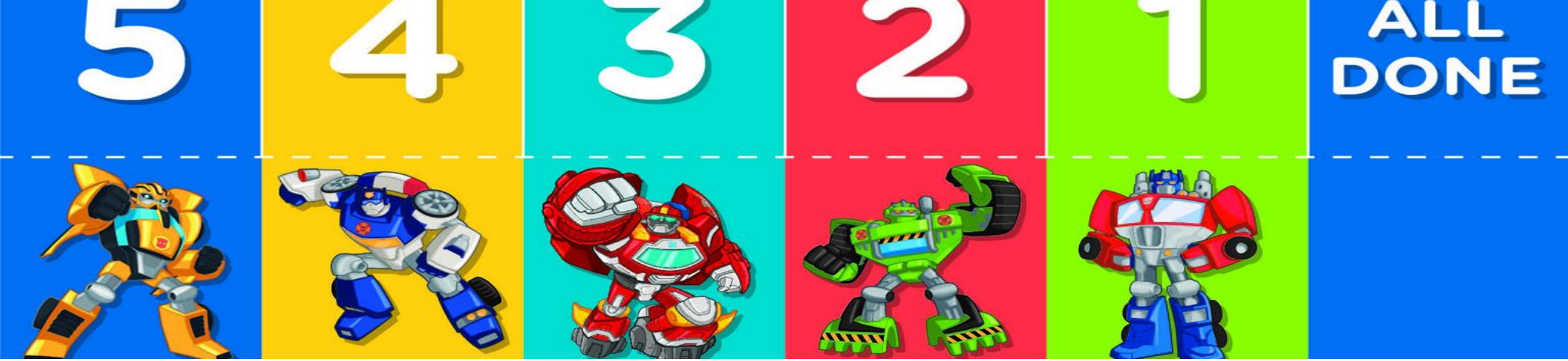
"When they go high we go low!"

- Building relationships
  - Supporting separations
  - Child led play (entering child's spotlight)
  - Partnering with parents
- Proactive strategies
  - Rules, routines, schedules
  - Transitions
  - Physical environment
  - Giving commands
- Addressing "misbehavior"
- Providing support during *meltdowns*
- Building *support* plans
- Finding your calm

Putting on your autism goggles to see the WHY



"Put on your autism glasses and be responsive"



Building tools for life: Not just "classroom behavior management"

Schedules

- Provides a sense of predictability
- "Helps me feel calm and relaxed"
- Can promote flexibility
- Fosters independence/self-monitoring

Visuals

- Gives ASD children a voice
- Promotes understanding and interactions

Social stories

- Allows them to know and follow the routine
- Prepares so you don't have to repair
- Helps children know expectations
- Teaches the skill of accessing information

Why a Parent Navigator?

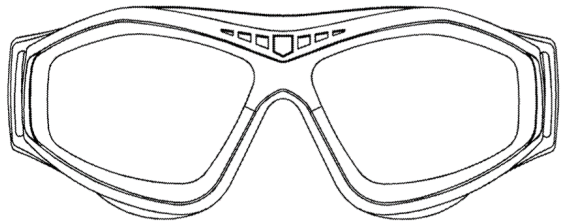
Why not a parent navigator?
Parents need teachers
Teachers need parents
Provide parents' perspective
Provide child's perspective
Autism is a team sport: We need partners

"Creating a close and trusting relationship with your student and their families so that you both gain each others respect and trust"

Program pilot

- 2 groups
- virtual delivery
- 1 IY leader + 1 parent navigator
- 12 3-hour PM sessions
- sharing of resources
- classroom resources
- recruited by email/flyers
- PD credits
- paid for time (group 2 only)

Examining the data



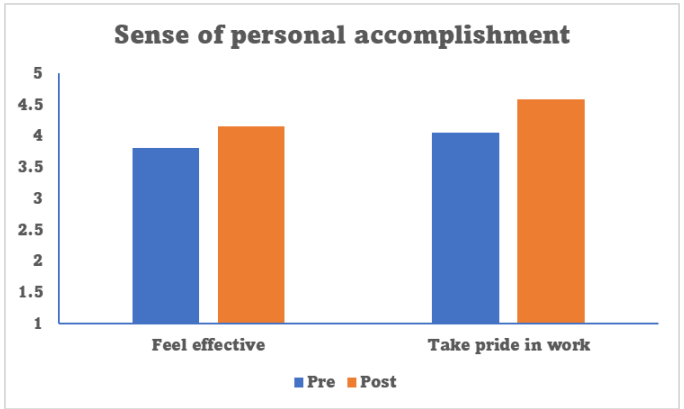
Implementation outcomes

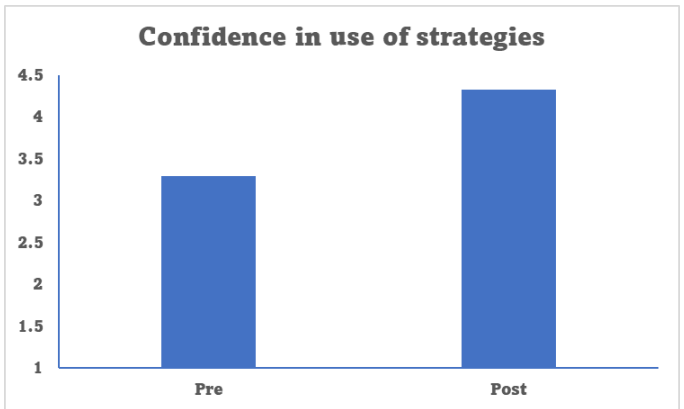
- Reach
- Acceptability
- Appropriateness

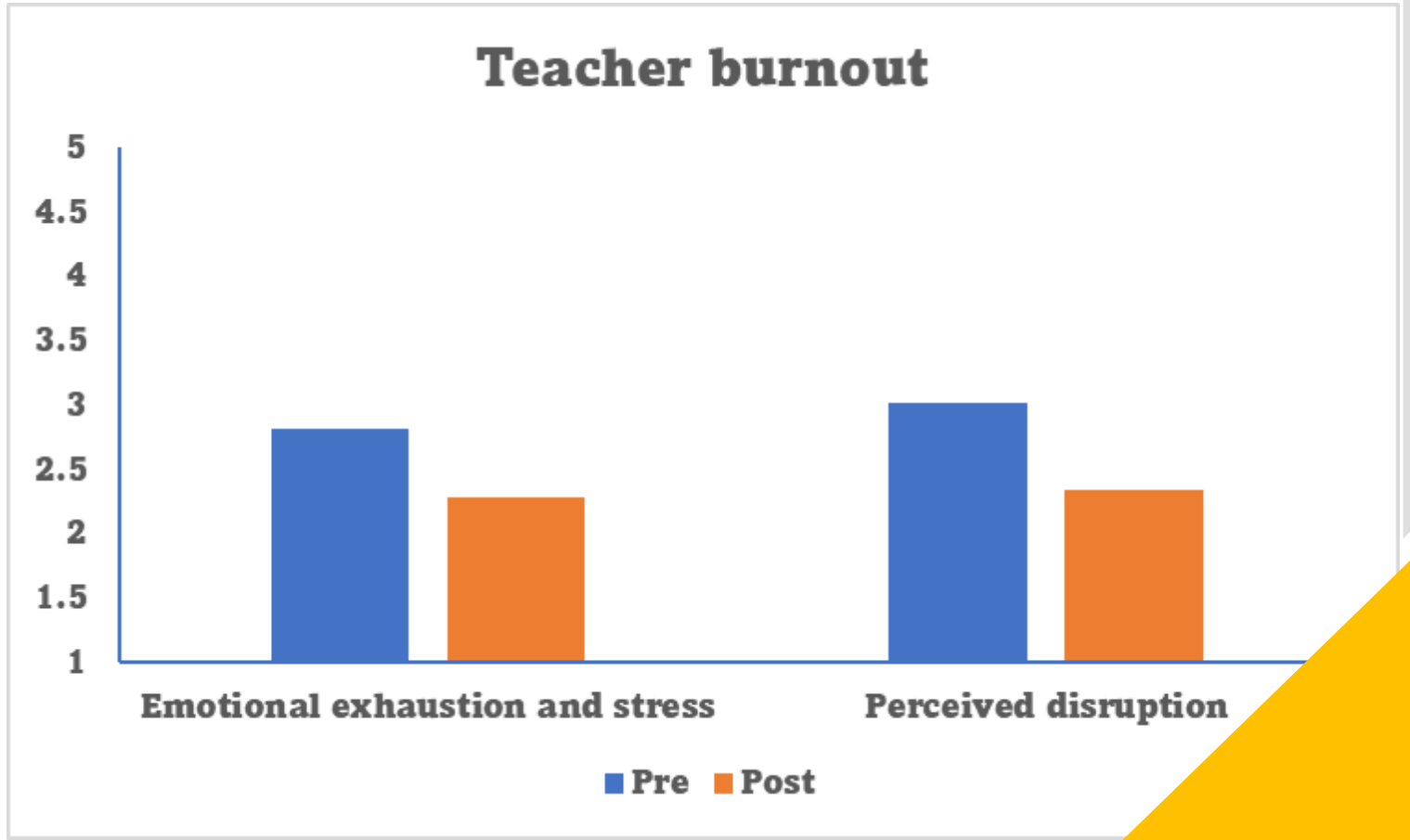
Participant outcomes

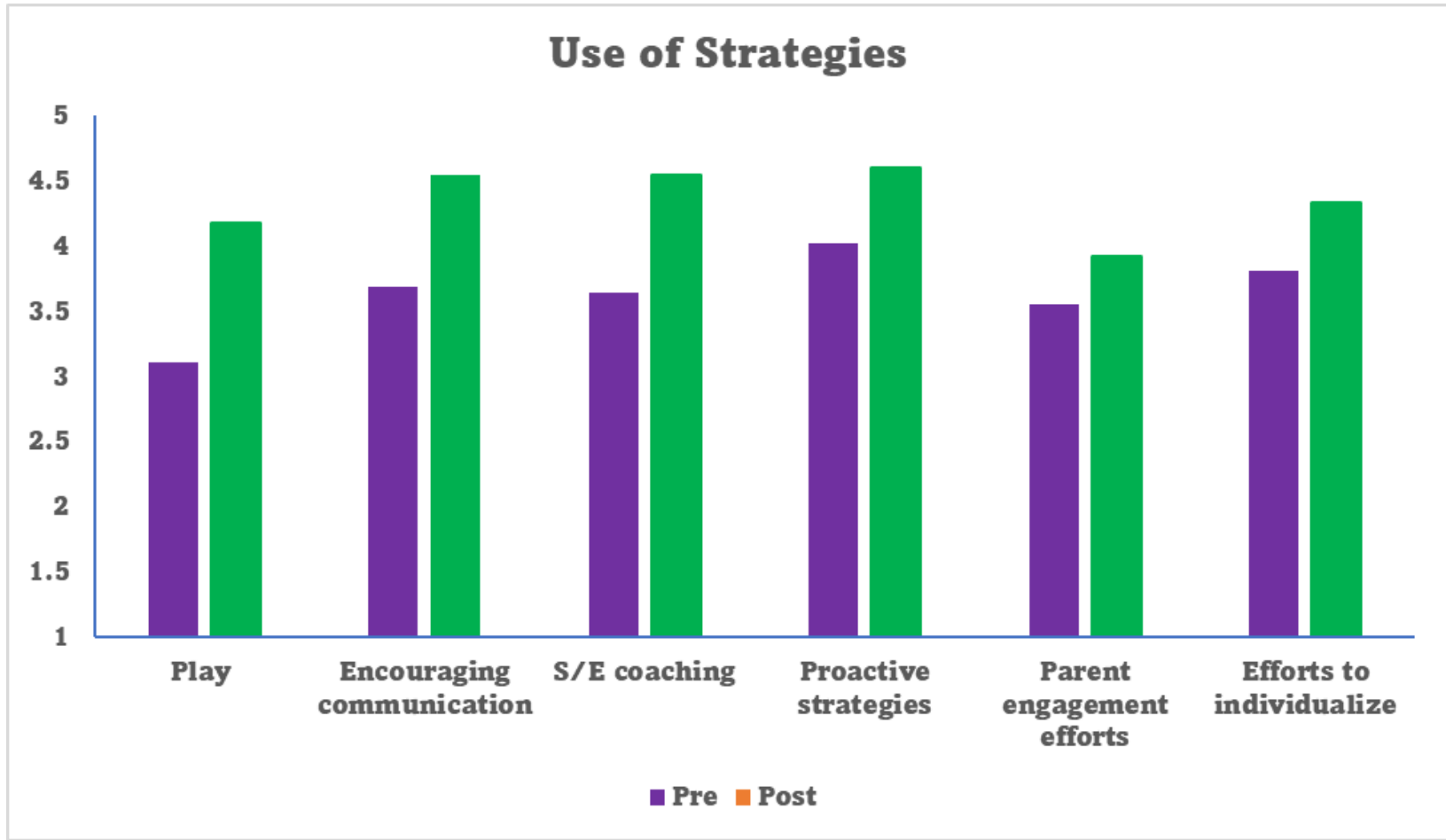
- Teacher burnout
- Confidence
- Use of strategies
- Parent Engagement

Participant satisfaction	m	sd	min	max
Overall satisfaction	6.35	0.39	5.38	7.00
Appropriateness of approach	6.86	0.35	6.00	7.00
Training techniques	6.33	0.52	5.00	7.00
Content	6.34	0.46	5.14	7.00
Recommend to others	6.86	0.35	6.00	7.00


Sense of personal accomplishment
5
4.5
4
3.5
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
Feel effective
Take pride in work
Pre
Post


Confidence in use of strategies
4.5
4
3.5
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
Pre
Post


Teacher burnout
5
4.5
4
3.5
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
Emotional exhaustion and stress
Perceived disruption
Pre
Post


Use of Strategies
5
4.5
4
3.5
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
Play
Encouraging communication
S/E coaching
Proactive strategies
Parent engagement efforts
Efforts to individualize
Pre
Post

“Helping to minimize the struggles our children are having and being about to best support them and their parents”

“Builds a team for the children to help them be understood, supported, and successful”

“Supporting students in becoming more independent at self regulation. Finding the way to connect with each individual child”

“Opening my eyes and using my autism goggles! Remembering that a behavior or a meltdown is caused by something they are trying to communicate or something they need from us”

THANK YOU