AFIRM

Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules

Functional Communication Training (FCT)
---Parent's Guide---

This parent introduction to **Functional Communication Training** is designed as a supplemental resource to help answer basic questions about this practice.

To find out more about how **Functional Communication Training** is used with your child, speak with:

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For more information visit:
www.afirm.fpg.unc.edu

This introduction provides basic information about functional communication training (FCT).

What is a FCT ?
- FCT is an evidence-based practice for child and youth with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) from 3 to 22 years old.
- The FCT process involves:
    o identifying an interfering behavior (that is, a challenging behavior that interferes with the learner's ability to interact and learn),
    o determining what the learner is trying to communicate with that behavior (such as needing help, wanting a break, wanting attention, etc.), and
    o teaching the learner a more acceptable way to communicate that need.

Why use FCT with my child?
- FCT is helpful for learners with social communication deficits and challenging behaviors because it provides a more acceptable form of communication that enables the learner to achieve the same desired outcome.
- Some of the problematic behaviors that can be addressed by FCT include: aggression and self-injurious behaviors, tantrums, running away, and/or disruption.

What activities can I do at home?
- Think about challenging behaviors your child exhibits as a form of communication, and try to identify other ways your child might be able communicate that need.
- When trying to develop an alternative way for your child to communicate a need (such as asking for a break or requesting a favorite toy), think of the simplest and easiest way for your child to communicate that need at the beginning.
- Remember to praise your child or provide reinforcement when your child uses a more appropriate form of communication to get his or her needs met (such as asking for a preferred activity instead of screaming).