

Module: Pivotal Response Training (PRT)

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE

Jason, a Preschooler

Jason is a 4-year-old with ASD enrolled in a fully inclusive preschool classroom. Jason's teacher informed his parents that he refuses to participate in circle time. When the paraprofessional brings him to circle time, Jason engages in aggressive behavior (e.g., hitting, scratching) to escape the activity. Most often, Jason occupies himself by lying on his side in the corner of the room rolling trains back and forth across the carpet.

In order to increase Jason's desire to participate in circle time, Jason's parents were recruited as additional interventionists. The teacher informed them of activities that occur during circle time so that Jason's parents could practice role-playing with him at home. Activities that typically occur during circle time (e.g., singing songs, reading books) were interspersed with Jason's preferred interests to increase his motivation to attend to the group. For example, Jason loves trains, so songs, rhymes, and books about trains were introduced at home and then brought into circle time to share with the rest of the class. Jason was also brought to the front of the group to help teach his peers the words and gestures to the songs or to present his book to the class.

By exercising some control over his environment, Jason stopped fighting the one thing he had no choice over-- coming to circle time. Offering natural rewards contingent upon appropriate engagement, such as turning the pages of the book or pointing at favorite

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pictures on the page, also improved Jason's behavior. In addition to embedding Jason's interests in circle time, offering him choices such as which activity to do first or what motion to imitate during the song increased his motivation to join circle time. Once Jason showed more enthusiasm to participate, he also became interested in other songs, topics, and books introduced during circle time. Expanding his interests was further facilitated by continuing to preview the new materials or information with him at home the day or two before being introduced during circle time. Overall, these strategies allowed circle time to become more pleasurable and rewarding to Jason. In addition, familiarizing Jason with routines during circle time enabled him to become a more active and competent participant.