

# Implementation of a caregiver workshop series through a hybrid in-person and teleconferenced training model

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## Introduction

- Feedback from caregivers following their child’s ASD diagnosis often indicate feeling overwhelmed and frustrated at the task of securing these services. This is exacerbated in countries with little funding for these services, an insufficient number of specialized providers, and long waitlists.
- In 2008, The Vanderbilt Kennedy Center’s Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorder (VKC-TRIAD) Families First Program was created to try to address this need.
- This began through a base model of free live monthly workshops focused on providing caregivers with practical tools to address common goal areas for their child following diagnosis. This base model has been continually refined to meet the needs of the caregivers served by presenting the information in an engaging and interactive way, which results in caregivers leaving the workshop with a clear action plan and supporting materials to implement their individualized plan.
- As the use of telehealth, telemedicine, and online learning has increased, Families First sought to use these components to increase the reach of the base program while still maintaining the overall goal and quality of the programming.

## Training Paradigm



### Live workshops

- Intended for primary caregivers of children with autism
- Large group instruction, modeling, and discussion
- Small group application and role play activities
- Planning with TRIAD Educational Consultants
- Observed live by regional health providers
- Train-the-Trainer models involved training select providers in conducting live workshops through 3 programs



### Livestream workshops

- Created for caregivers who travel long distances to attend the live workshop, particularly those in rural, low-resource, and traditionally underserved communities
- Initial orientation call, tech run-through, observation, content orientation
- Livestream workshop. Sites facilitate activities and submit questions as needed
- Debriefing via email following workshop
- Sites provide evaluation, demographic, and show rate information via Box



### Basic online trainings

- Free online platform
- Available to caregivers unable to/ uncomfortable with attending a live workshop or who attend a live workshop and would like a refresher and/or to share this information with others in their child’s life
- Caregiver-specific trainings on same platform as educator trainings
- Combination of video clips and associated handouts
- Can be viewed as a series or standalone training
- Track progress within platform

## Results

### Livestream Sites



### Livestream Data as of 10/2018

Number of live and train-the-trainer participants	3,721
Number of livestream sites	9
Number of brief online trainings	12
Number of livestream participants	353
Number of live topics	Approximately 20
Overall evaluation summary average	3.8 (out of 4.0)
Age range of participant’s children	1-16 (majority 2-6)
Positive feedback themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Video examples</li><li>• Materials provided/approach to content</li><li>• Interacting with others</li><li>• Being able to attend from a distance (livestream)</li></ul>
Suggestion themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More time to network</li><li>• More workshops/longer</li></ul>

## Summary and Future Directions

- VKC-TRIAD Families First’s goal is two-fold: 1) to empower caregivers with strategies that enable them to capitalize on their child’s strengths in helping their child meet their full potential and 2) to provide a network of support in doing so.
- These goals are rooted in an effort to achieve inclusive communities by providing practical strategies to promote successful home routines and community outings in which caregivers are often hesitant to engage for fear of not knowing how to best structure or respond in these situations. By promoting such routines and activities at a young age, the ultimate goal is to help set young children with ASD on a trajectory of meaningful inclusion throughout their childhood and adulthood.
- Families First data has been collected regarding the demographics of families reached and feedback regarding the social validity of the model. These data and the exponential growth over the 10 years of this program demonstrate how to develop a feasible model for educating and supporting caregivers of young children with ASD during a critical time in their lives.

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