

T3C Training Series

Supporting IDD & Autism

Self-Study Manual

Empowering Angels Group LLC

3634 Glenn Lakes Ln, Suite 195, Missouri City, TX 77459

 empoweringangelstx@gmail.com

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How to Use This Manual

This is a self-paced training designed to take approximately 90 minutes. Each module includes what an instructor would normally say (presented as 'Read & Learn' content), followed by practice, reflection, and a self-check. If you are completing this on your own, read each section, complete the activities, and answer the knowledge check at the end. If you are facilitating a small group, use the 'Instructor Notes (Optional)' callouts.

Structure of Each Module

- What You'll Learn – a quick overview of the key points covered in the module.
- Read & Learn – full content written in clear, plain language (what a trainer would normally cover).
- Try It – short exercises and scripts to practice skills.
- Apply It – concrete steps you can take at home to transfer learning.
- Self-Check – 3–5 questions to confirm understanding.
- Instructor Notes (Optional) – short facilitation guidance if a leader is present.

DFPS Standards Callouts

- Supervision & safety planning per individual needs: §749.1133.
- Confidentiality & youth rights: §749.1003.

Module 1: Understanding IDD & Autism – Estimated 15 minutes

What You'll Learn

- Describe IDD/ASD in clear, respectful language.
- Avoid assumptions; tailor supports to the child.

Read & Learn

IDD and autism affect learning, flexibility, and sensory processing in different ways for each child. Focus on strengths and interests and watch for communication attempts in behavior, gestures, or AAC.

Notice patterns: what helps, what overwhelms, and which transitions are hardest. Build support around those observations.

Try It

- List three strengths and three supports for a sample profile you know.

Apply It

- Observe and write down two times the child communicated without words today.



Self-Check

1. Name one respectful way to describe a support need without labels.

Instructor Notes (Optional)

- Use person-first or identity-first language as preferred by the youth/family.
- Ask what works before suggesting changes.

Module 2: Trauma-Informed, Neuroaffirming Care – Estimated 20 minutes

What You'll Learn

- Integrate trauma-informed strategies with neurodiversity-affirming practices.
- Teach replacement skills rather than suppressing behavior.

Read & Learn

Behaviors often communicate stress or unmet needs. Co-regulate first—use calm voice, reduce sensory load, and offer choices.

Teach replacement skills (ask for a break with a card; use AAC to request help) instead of focusing on stopping the behavior.

Try It

- Write two replacement-skill goals for a behavior you see.

Apply It

- Create a break card and practice using it three times daily.

Self-Check

1. Why can masking be harmful?

Instructor Notes (Optional)

- Avoid forcing eye contact or masking self-regulation behaviors that are safe.
- Collaborate on goals that matter to the youth.

Module 3: Sensory, Communication & Routines – Estimated 20 minutes

What You'll Learn

- Design environments that reduce overload and support communication.



- Use visuals and timers to make transitions easier.

Read & Learn

Create quiet spaces, offer noise-reducing options, and schedule movement breaks. Use first-then boards, visual schedules, single-step prompts, and choices.

Routines reduce uncertainty and help the child participate more independently.

Try It

- Create a first-then board for a challenging routine.
- Draft a morning visual schedule.

Apply It

- Try a 3-minute movement break before difficult transitions this week.

Self-Check

1. Name two sensory supports and when you'd use them.

Instructor Notes (Optional)

- Test supports one at a time to see what actually helps.
- Embed sensory breaks into daily routines to prevent overload.

Module 4: Safety & School Teaming – Estimated 15 minutes

What You'll Learn

- Plan for elopement, self-injury, and overwhelm proactively.
- Align home and school supports through regular communication.

Read & Learn

For elopement: consider door/window alarms, ID wearables (if allowed), community familiarization, and safe-adult scripts. For self-injury: identify early cues, offer safe alternatives, and adjust supervision.

Request IEP meetings, agree on data collection, and share what works at home so skills generalize.

Try It

- Draft an elopement plan with neighborhood check-in points.

Apply It

- Teach a simple 'help' signal and practice it twice a day.



Self-Check

1. List two items to include in an elopement plan.

Instructor Notes (Optional)

- Practice safety plans during calm times so they're easy to follow during stress.

Case Study

Too Loud, Too Fast

R., 8, is minimally verbal and loves routine. On a substitute day, R. eloped from class and later engaged in head-banging when the evening schedule changed.

Guided Prompts

- Write a visual schedule and first-then board for substitute days.
- Identify sensory strategies for cafeteria noise and post-lunch regulation.

Tools & Templates

- Sensory environment audit checklist
- AAC/communication planning sheet
- Elopement response plan and practice log
- Self-injury prevention/response flowchart
- School collaboration meeting agenda template

Module Knowledge Check (10 minutes)

1. Name one strategy to lower cafeteria overwhelm.
2. What is one early cue that might precede self-injury?

Answer Key (for Self-Study Review)

1. Noise-reducing options; quiet table; movement break before lunch.
2. Examples: increased pacing, covering ears, withdrawing.

Resources & Referrals

- DFPS Minimum Standards §749 (Child-Placing Agencies) and §748 (General Residential Operations).
- STAR Health Behavioral Health Coordination & 24/7 Nurse Line.
- Local MHMR or mobile crisis number; 988 Lifeline.



- Education advocacy: local school district special education contacts; IEP/504 resources.
- Caregiver peer support and respite/IAC networks.

If you are in immediate danger or a youth is at risk, call emergency services and follow agency critical incident procedures.

