

Guide: How to Recruit a Child

I. Introduction

Therapists participating in the QST Home Program Parent Trainer online course will need to recruit a family with a child that meets the eligibility criteria and who agrees to give daily qigong massage to their child for 12 weeks, with training and coaching support, to work with during the course.

Eligibility criteria include:

- 1) Under 12 years of age
- 2) Educational or medical diagnosis of autism
- 3) No additional chronic disability, e.g., cerebral palsy or seizures requiring medication
- 4) Not taking any psychoactive medications (e.g. risperdal) or pharmaceutical chelation therapy
- 5) Parents willing to not begin new autism therapies for the 4 months of the intervention, unless medically necessary.

Therapists will be expected to facilitate pre- and post-testing, and deliver 12 coaching support sessions with the family over 12-weeks.

II. Recruitment Strategies

Therapists have recruited families using a number of recruitment strategies. Following is a list of professionals, organizations, groups and individuals who therapists have contacted in order to recruit families.

- Family Medicine physicians and clinics
- Pediatricians
- Naturopathic physicians
- Public Health Department Well Child Clinics
- Acupuncturists and chiropractors
- Other health care providers
- Autism clinicians
- Occupational therapists working with children
- Schools and Education Service Districts
 - Early childhood education providers
 - Special education directors, teachers and aids
 - Parents
 - Autism specialists
- Day care providers
- Local autism parent support groups and organizations

- State and national autism organizations

III. How to Introduce QST to Professionals

Qigong Sensory Training is a five-month qigong massage intervention that is based on principles of Chinese Medicine. It has been proven effective in the treatment of autism, sensory impairment and self-regulatory disorders. A number of research studies, including randomized, controlled designs, have demonstrated improved behavior and social/language skills, and decreased sensory and self-regulatory impairment in treated children compared to children in control groups.

The intervention involves patting and pressing certain acupuncture channels and points. Therapists are trained to understand and work with the child's body language and reactions to the massage, modifying the technique as the child changes and improves. They train parents to give their children a daily fifteen-minute massage protocol and provide coaching and support to parents until they have mastered the massage, and are able to continue to give it to their child as needed.

The massage works on the sensory and autonomic nervous system, returning sensory hyper- and hypo-reactivity towards normal in all five senses. In children with self-regulatory disorders, it balances the autonomic nervous system, increasing vagal tone, and decreasing sympathetic tone, allowing the child to self regulate and self-soothe as needed. Sleep, digestion and mood improve, as does parenting stress.

A recent study compared the Parent-Only Home Program (which involves parents being trained to give their children a daily fifteen-minute massage protocol and receiving 12 coaching support sessions from QST trainers) against the Dual Program (in which children receive an additional 20 treatments from QST trainers and parents received an additional 13 coaching support sessions.) It was found that less severely affected children had significantly better outcomes with the Home Program than the Dual Program, whereas the more severely impacted children had significantly better outcomes with the Dual Program than the Home Program.

To learn more about this intervention and to access the research papers, visit www.qsti.org.

My professional background is...

I am scheduled to begin a five-month course to become a QST Parent Trainer to implement the Parent-Only Home Program. As part of this training, I am seeking to recruit a family with a child that meets certain eligibility criteria and who agrees to give daily qigong massage to their child for 12 weeks, with training and coaching support, to work with during the course.

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Qigong Sensory Training Program

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Do you know any families who meet these criteria who might be interested in this intervention and who might participate in this training course with me? Could you introduce me to them?

If the family signs your release of information form, I would be happy to share the pre- and post-test results with you.

IV. How to Introduce QST to Families

A qigong massage program has been developed for children with autism that parents can give their children at home that reduces symptoms of autism. Parents who give their children this simple, daily, fifteen-minute massage report that within a few months, tantrums and difficult behavior decrease, and language and social skills improve.

Research shows that behind the developmental delays and behavioral problems seen in children with autism is a sensory nervous system that is out of balance – the child’s skin, eyes, ears and nose simply don’t perceive their own body and the events of family life the same way the rest of the family does. Things that should feel good, don’t seem to feel good (e.g. warm clothes, hugs from grandparents, good food), and things that hurt, don’t seem to hurt (e.g. cuts, scrapes, burns). The result is that either the child doesn’t notice what is going on around them, or they find it uncomfortable and try to avoid it. In both situations, they are missing out on normal, everyday social learning. Both ways, their sensory problems cause them to react in ways that we interpret as problem behavior.

In scientific research, this qigong massage program has been proven to correct sensory problems in five months or less. Within a few months, children are calmer, more aware of what is going on around them and more comfortable. As the stress and confusion caused by the sensory problems disappear, autistic behavior decreases, and along with it the child’s whole system comes back into balance. Children are better able to focus, pay attention and learn. At the end of five months, parents report significantly less stress in caring for their child, and great satisfaction in being given a tool that they can use to ease problem behavior, and help them catch up on their development.

To learn more about this intervention and to view videos about QST, visit www.qsti.org.

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Might you be interested in this intervention? Would you be interested in participating in this training course with me?

V. Informed Consent

Once a therapist has identified a family who meets the eligibility criteria and who agrees to give daily qigong massage to their child for 12 weeks, with training and coaching support, the parent will need to sign an Informed Consent form. This form is available in the Resources folder on the course website.