

AutismONTARIO

Aligning IEP Communication Goals for Academic Success

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Disclaimers & Statements

General

- Opinions are of the presenters
- Make informed decisions

Language

- Identity-first (e.g., autistic person)
- Person-first (e.g., person with autism)

Professional

- Specific questions
- Additional resources

Meet the speakers



- **Andrea Haefele, Parent.**
- **Anne Gingras, SERT.**
- **Tracie Lindblad, SLP, BCBA.**



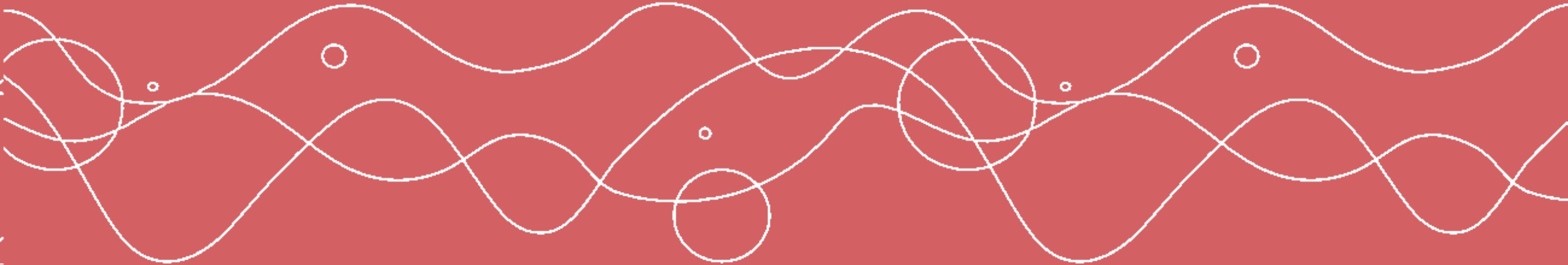
Agenda

- Functional Communication Framework
- IEP (Individual Education Plan) Overview
- Challenges and Advocacy

Learning objectives

1. Understand the importance of functional communication skills.
2. Learn how to align IEP communication goals to achieve desired outcomes.
3. Discover strategies and solutions to overcome common challenges.





Functional Communication

Functional communication...

- is the active process of exchanging information and ideas between people (speaker↔ listener)
- involves understanding
- includes various forms of expression

Individuals should be able to express needs, wants, and preferences so that others can understand.

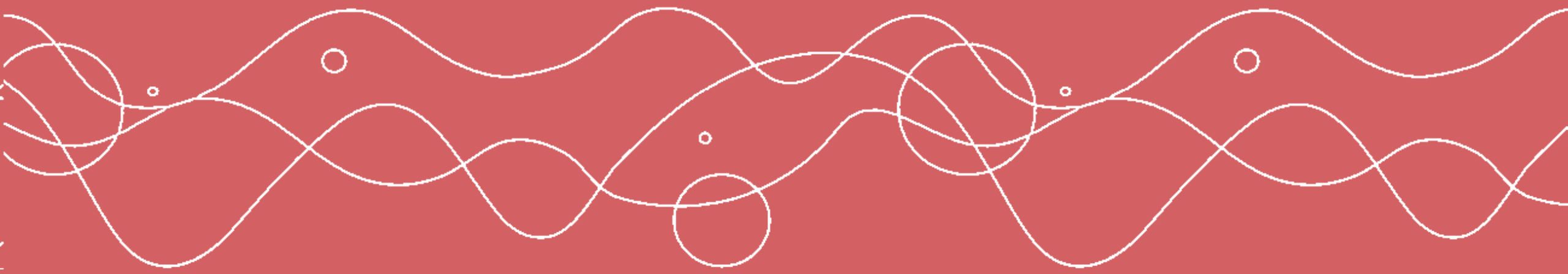
Impact of functional communication

Functional communication allows for:

- independence
- access to the curriculum
- agency
- having their wants and needs met

Positive long-term impacts:

- increase in autonomy
- decrease in challenging behaviours
- increase in happiness ratings and quality of life



Overview:

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Overview: Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Must Include:

- Description of strengths and needs, and educational expectations
- Outline of the special education program and services that will be received
- Methods by which the student's progress will be reviewed
- Transition plan (varies according the student's needs)

Overview: Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

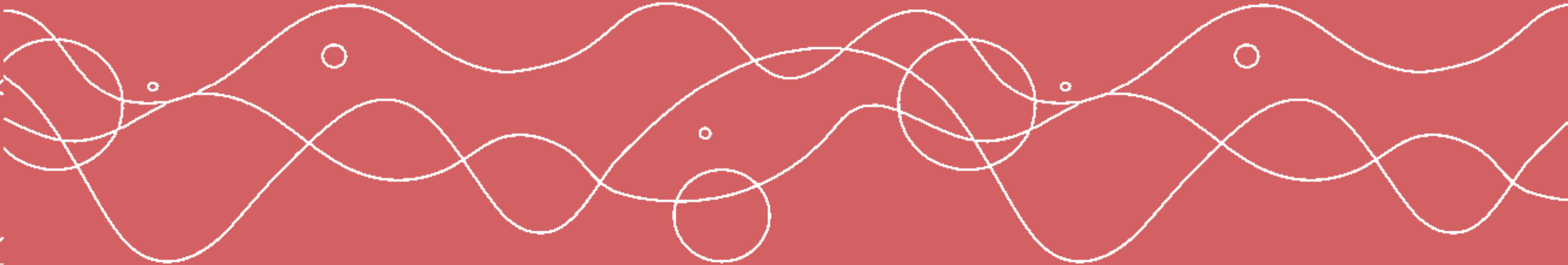
Key Terms

Students may require modifications or alternative expectations to succeed.

- **Modifications** – Changes made to how the student will learn.
The curriculum expectations are **not** altered.
- **Alternative** - Changes made to what the student will learn.
The curriculum expectations are altered.

Challenges with IEPs and non-speaking students

- Limited baseline data of the students' acquired skills/strengths
- Pre-academic/pre-school level goals
- Having the right supports in place to meet the goals



Living the IEP Day-to-Day

Goal setting

1. Set learning goals

Identify what the student should learn and achieve.

2. Create measurable objectives

Turn goals into clear, realistic, action-oriented objectives with a timeframe.

3. Break down goals

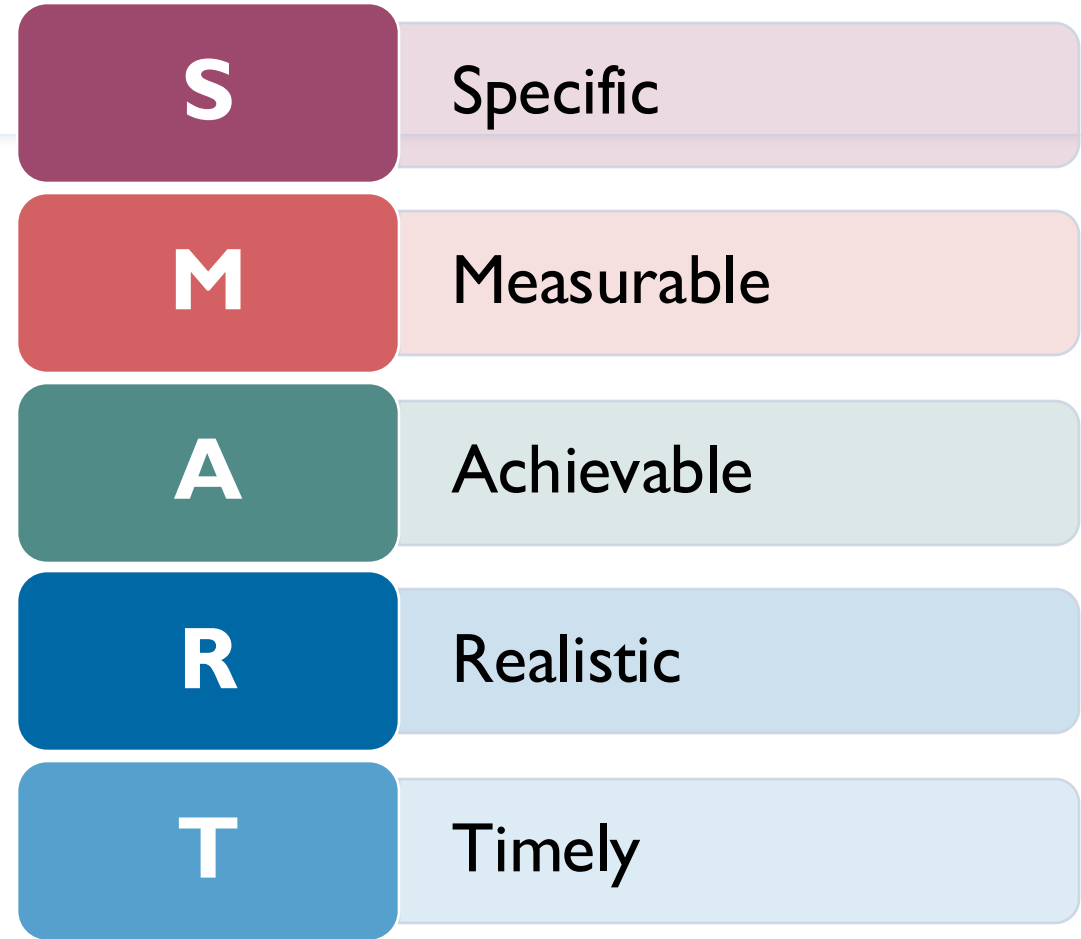
Divide goals into smaller, measurable short-term steps.

4. Identify responsibility

Include who evaluates each goal; consider using a shared digital document.

SMART goals

How do I ensure goals are attainable, and that my child makes progress?



Communication challenges

- What is written in the IEP vs. the team's skill set that is implementing.
- Collaboration across various environments.
- Functional communication (other than spoken language skills) are not taught at school, in some boards.

Foundational skills for communication: Milestones

Joint attention

Understanding spoken words

Imitation skills

- speech sounds
- gestures
- pointing/choosing, etc.

A 'listener' is required (speak to another person)

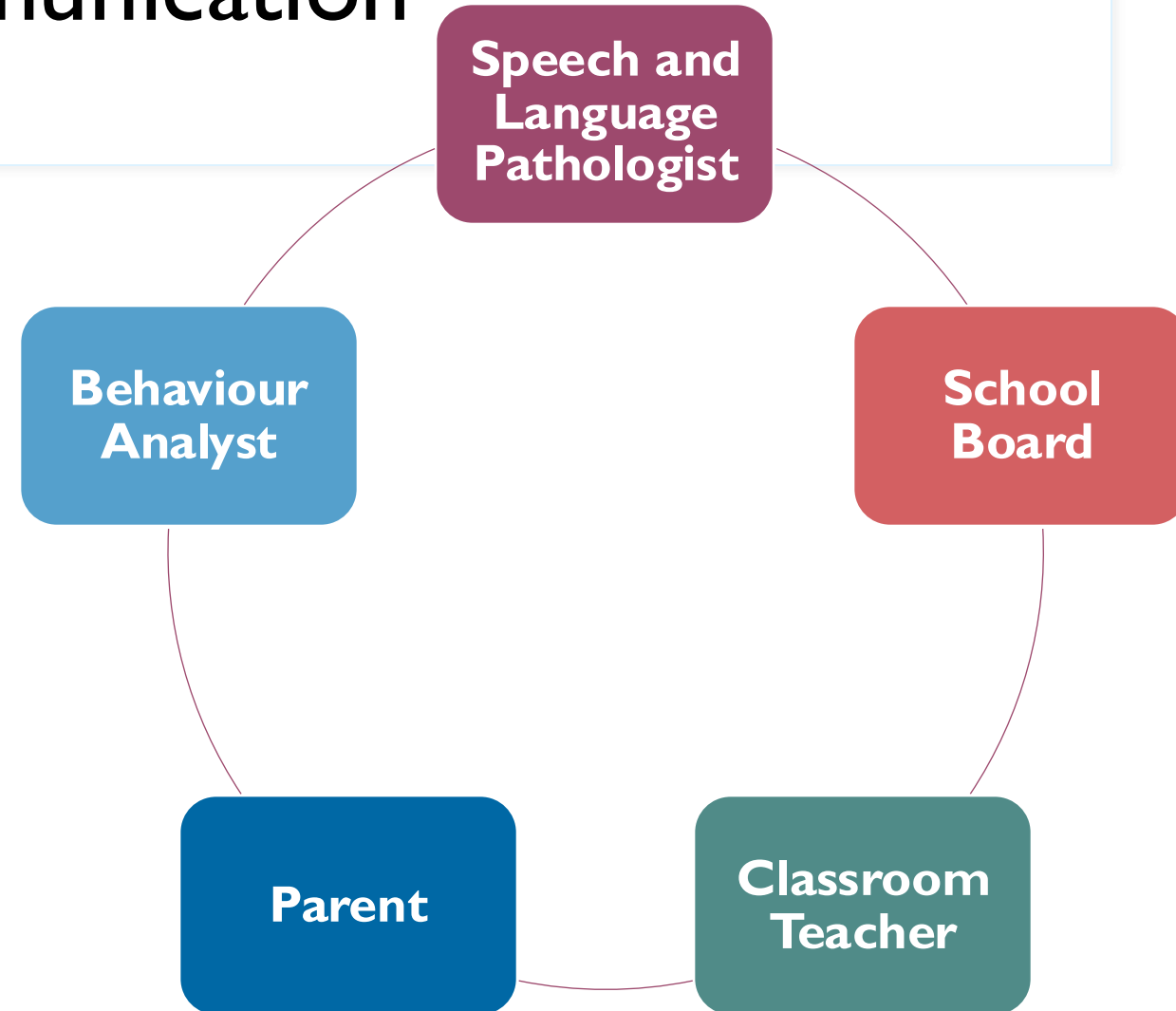
Auditory and visual discrimination skills

- understanding what you hear and see

Assigning meaning to speech/picture/gesture and the corresponding object/person/activity

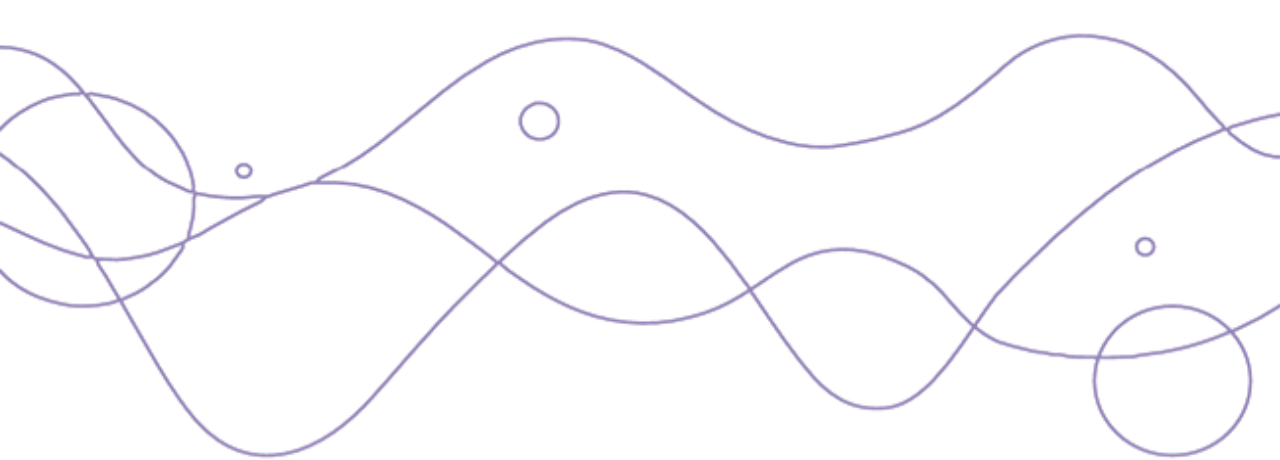
Collaboration and communication

- The Education Act
 - your rights as a parent
- Establish open communication
- Provide the school with information about your child



Take aways

- Functional communication is important for the future success, independence, and outcomes for individuals who have complex communication needs
- IEP goals can be developed to assist the individual in meeting foundation goals which will further enable them to access additional learning opportunities within the school environment
- Collaborate and extend your team to include others with specific skill sets and the competencies to assist your child in their learning journey



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