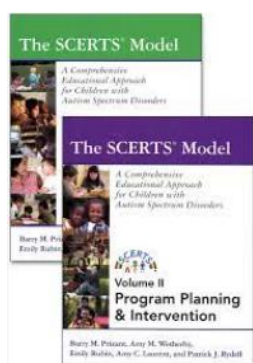




## What is SCERTS?

SCERTS® is a comprehensive intervention model for children and older individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families. The model can also be used with individuals not on the autism spectrum who are developing social communication and emotional regulation skills. SCERTS provides specific guidelines for helping an individual become a competent and confident social communicator and an active learner. Guidelines are also provided to help an individual to be most available for learning and engaging and to prevent problem behaviours. SCERTS is designed to help families, educators and therapists collaborate in a carefully coordinated manner. The SCERTS Model is now being implemented across the US and in more than a dozen countries.

At Prospect Bank we have been taking forward the SCERTS Model. We are using a shortened SCERTS version called SCERTS in Action. This information gives some information about SCERTS Model for our families.



## Who developed SCERTS?

The SCERTS Model collaborators include the team of Barry Prizant, Amy Wetherby, Emily Rubin, and Amy Laurent, who have training in Speech-Language Pathology, Special Education, Behavioural and Developmental Psychology, Occupational Therapy and Family-Centred Practice. The SCERTS Collaborators have more than 100 years of collective experience in university, hospital, clinical and educational settings, are actively involved in clinical work, research, and educational consultation. The collaborators have published extensively in scholarly journals and volumes on ASD and related disabilities.

## What does SCERTS mean?

As a school we are very aware that we already use many acronyms and educational terms and SCERTS does bring some new ones. The acronym "SCERTS" refers to the focus on Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Supports.



### "SC" is Social Communication

the development of spontaneous, functional communication, emotional expression, and secure and trusting relationships with children and adults;

### "ER" is Emotional Regulation

the development of the ability to maintain a well-regulated emotional state to cope with everyday stress, and to be most available for learning and interacting;

### "TS" is Transactional Support

the development and implementation of supports to help partners respond to the child's needs and interests, modify and adapt the environment, and provide tools to enhance learning (e.g., picture communication, written schedules, and sensory supports). Specific plans are also developed to provide educational and emotional support to families, and to foster teamwork among professionals.



## What are the stages of SCERTS?

The SCERTS model has 3 stages and following a short assessment, children are identified as being either a Social Partner, Language Partner or Communication Partner stage.

**Social Partner Stage:** Children at this stage often do not find initiations with social stimuli intrinsically rewarding, as it is difficult to predict that a caregiver or teacher is a source of assistance; thus, even facial and gestural forms of communication are initially delayed. When they do emerge, gestures tend to involve physical manipulation (e.g., pulling a caregiver's hand) rather than using a gesture to send a "shared message" to others (e.g., giving, pointing, showing, pushing away, waving, and a head nod / headshake).

**Language Partners:** Children at this stage often show a preference for object labels (i.e., nouns) versus more social words, namely subjects (i.e., people's names) and verbs (e.g., action words). This is likely due to a limited appreciation of the intentions of others and limited gaze shifting toward people and between people and objects. As subject + verb word combinations are predictive of creative language acquisition limitations in this semantic relationship lead to a reliance on object labels and rote sentence structures

**Conversational Partners:** Children at this stage continue to show difficulty with predicting the intentions of others, a challenge which impacts the development of self-efficacy as a communicator and the ability to establish and maintain peer relationships. This challenge also limits the development of more sophisticated syntax to clarify intentions,

**Key priorities for Social Partner children are;**

- **Increasing functional, spontaneous communication**, for example developing a high rate of nonverbal communication in highly motivating situations
- **Increasing conventional gestures** that have a shared meaning (e.g., giving, pointing, pushing away, head nods, and head shakes).

**Key priorities for Language partner children are;**

- **Increasing range of spontaneous communication involving others** (e.g., requesting actions and social routines, commenting on actions, and sharing experiences with others).
- **Increasing range of word combinations for subject + verb** (e.g., "Sarah open the biscuits," "Jason play basketball," "Mum pour the juice.")

**Key priorities:**

- **Increasing spontaneous communication with one's peers and a sense of self-efficacy.**
- **Increasing awareness of social norms of conversation** (e.g., balancing turns, vocal volume, proximity, conversational timing, and topic selection)



## What will SCERTS look like?

We are using a version of SCERTS called SCERTS in Action. SCERTS is a very comprehensive model and the “in Action” version has been developed by one of the authors, Emily Rubin for use in schools. We have been lucky to have training from Emily Rubin and she has also had a follow up visit with staff.

Your child will have SCERTS in Action plan. This plan consists of a short assessment to help us identify strengths and areas of development in their communication and emotional regulation. This assessment then helps us to identify key targets. At this stage we will share these ideas with families and ensure we are focusing on key areas that you feel are important.

We will share a finalised copy of the targets and we will be assessing and reviewing these throughout the year. We have decided to try running our targets from January to January. This will help with consistently over transitions and also helps to ensure we have comprehensive assessment time with the school terms.

## Is my child still following the Curriculum for Excellence?



Absolutely, SCERTS is helping us identify targets around key areas of Social Communication and Emotional Regulation. We then use this information to help us to engage your child in the Curriculum for Excellence. We are finding that SCERTS targets are more meaningful than our previous IEP targets. The SCERTS stages also help us to better map out the curriculum for your

child, identifying what is relevant and meaningful for their stage of development.

## SCERTS, Predictability and Desirability

Two of the most powerful words within SCERTS are predictability and desirability. These principles are helping us to improve learning and teaching across the school. We are thinking about ways to make your child's day as predictable as possible and also think about how the class teams can all be more predictable in their interactions and responses. Making your child's learning experiences desirable, making your child want to come and engage in activities is really important.

If children are struggling to engage, finding experiences difficult or showing dysregulated behaviour we think about how can we make things more predictable and desirable for the child? We think about what do we need to do differently? What can we change about the activity, environment, interactions and expectations? What we do differently really matters and we feel SCERTS is key in this process.

We hope you have found this information sheet helpful. If you would like to know more, please get in contact with us.

The Prospect Bank Team

