

## **Title of Proposal Raising a Child with Autism: Perspectives of Parents**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Strong attachments formed in early infancy serve as building blocks for development and provide the infant with a secure, predictable foundation to explore the world around them. Children with autism require the parent to meet the needs of their child first and the emotional needs of their child and themselves second. Parents raising a child with a disability express low levels of emotional reserve, making the formation of emotional bonds cumbersome. Therefore, the parent-child dyad may be compromised. Given the increase in the rise of children with autism in the United States (1.e. 1 out of 150 children have autism and 1 out of 90 children are boys), efforts to provide early intervention services need to encompass not only the traditional domains of cognition, speech, and motor development, but also the domains of infant mental health and parent/family support. The goal of such a combined approach to intervention, therefore, would focus on examining how families of young children, specifically young children with autism, respond to their child's cues, interpret their child's behavior, and establish a reciprocal social relationship. Research such as the type being proposed will not only contribute to the field of child development research, but it will also help teachers and related professionals develop effective instructional strategies and interventions that can be implemented with parents to help improve the quality of the relationship with their young child and to subsequently improve the educational performance and mental and social health of the child as he/she gets older.