

# ACT Programming Domains

## 1. Social Skills

### **Why it matters:**

Social interaction is a key part of daily life—from navigating a workplace to building friendships and relationships. Many of our trainees experience barriers in interpreting social cues, starting conversations, having friends, or managing group dynamics.

### **Impact:**

- Reduces social isolation and anxiety
- Builds meaningful friendships and support networks
- Helps individuals feel understood and valued
- Increases self-confidence
- Enables collaboration in work, housing, and community settings

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## 2. Communication Skills

### **Why it matters:**

Communication is the foundation of self-expression, relationships, and learning. This includes verbal, nonverbal, written, and AAC-based modes. Strengthening communication increases self-determination and reduces frustration or behavioral challenges. Our SLP facilitates a number of communication opportunities for our trainees through 1:1 service, group work, and by partnering with our teachers to best support our trainees.

### **Impact:**

- Enables self-expression of needs, wants, preferences, and boundaries
- Supports success in our trainees social lives, daily tasks, and community life
- Increases self-advocacy and participation in decisions
- Supports speech language development through our SLP
- Decreases behavioral outbursts due to misunderstanding or lack of communication

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## 3. Independent Living Skills

### **Why it matters:**

Daily life requires managing tasks like cooking, cleaning, shopping, hygiene, and more. Without these skills, trainees may remain overly dependent on caregivers or struggle in supported living.

Supported or independent living is a goal for many of our trainees; therefore, increasing independent living skills is crucial for success.

**Impact:**

- Increases ability to live in supported or independent living home
- Promotes personal autonomy over daily choices
- Increases independence and confidence in the kitchen, home, and community
- Improves health, safety, and long-term housing stability

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## 4. Community Participation

**Why it matters:**

Community participation brings connection, purpose, and belonging to our trainees. It also makes our communities better! Community participation includes using transportation, accessing services, enjoying recreational spaces, and understanding one's rights and responsibilities as a community member.

**Impact:**

- Fosters autonomy in navigating the world beyond home
- Increases access to leisure, education, and social activities
- Builds familiarity with local resources (libraries, banks, public agencies)
- Reduces isolation and enhances inclusion
- Better our communities

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## 5. Prevocational Skills

**Why it matters:**

Many young adults with autism are eager to work but face high unemployment or underemployment due to lack of job readiness skills. Many of our trainees are not yet ready for a full time job, but are capable and willing to work. Growing in their prevocational skills by job sampling in our community, with support from staff, or by bringing jobs to our center is the best way to meet their current needs and prepare them for future employment.

**Impact:**

- Opens the door to meaningful employment or volunteering
- Develops time management and task endurance
- Enhances problem-solving and workplace communication

- Prepares individuals for vocational programs or job coaching

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## 6. Self-Advocacy and Self-Regulation

### Why it matters:

Self-advocacy empowers individuals to speak up for themselves, ask for accommodations, and make informed choices. Self-regulation helps manage emotions, sensory input, and behavior—key for independence and mental health. With assistance from our wonderful BCBA and RBTs, we are able to wrap around our trainees to provide a holistic approach to behavior services that empowers our trainees to advocate for themselves.

### Impact:

- Promotes agency and autonomy
- Increases independence in our center, homes, and communities
- Supports mental health by identifying/using coping strategies
- Supports behavioral health through ABA therapies under a BCBA.

### In summary:

Domain	Main Focus	Long-Term Benefit
Social Skills	Building relationships, navigating groups	Greater connection, safety, and community access
Communication Skills	Expressing needs and understanding others	Stronger relationships and self-representation
Independent Living Skills	Daily routines and self-care	Independence and autonomy for the future
Living in My Community	Community navigation and involvement	Social inclusion and confidence outside the home
Prevocational Skills	Readiness for work or volunteering	Meaningful employment and increased workplace stamina
Self-Advocacy/Regulation	Decision-making and emotional/behavioral regulation	Empowered, balanced, and resilient living

