Impairments in social communication and interaction are identified as hallmark characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Depending on the severity of these challenges, some individuals with ASD may experience difficulties in the development of relationships and positive social interactions. Procedures that promote the development of social interest, social initiations, engagement and play are particularly useful for practitioners designing intensive treatment programs for children with ASD. In this presentation I will provide an overview of the social deficits associated with ASD and present evidence-based procedures to promote social engagement and a cooperative context for learning. Procedures to enhance motivation for social engagement as well as strategies to teach children to initiate and respond to social partners will be presented.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Describe the importance of social motivation during interventions for autism spectrum disorder.
2. Describe how gesture use is related to communication in children with ASD.
3. Describe alternatives to physical guidance for children with ASD.