

# OUTCOMES

- Program evaluation

# *Why evaluate sensory/autism/relaxed experiences?*

- Increasing inquiries about options for persons with sensory, social & cognitive disorders
  - Ambiguous guidelines
  - Limited model programming or clinical evidence

# *Current research and understanding of disability*

- **Sedentary behaviors, isolation, limited activity range**  
(Bedell, Coster, Law et al, 2013; Ideishi & Mendonca, 2012; Palisano, Kang, Chiarello, et al., 2009)
- **Begin preparations earlier to build routines, habits, and community patterns in childhood and youth** (Hoogsten & Woodgate, 2010)
  - Friendships
  - Empowerment
  - Self-determination
  - Activity patterns
- **Preparing for transition to adulthood**

# OUTCOMES

- Program evaluation

**WALNUT STREET THEATRE**  
AMERICA'S OLDEST · FOUNDED 1809 · PHILADELPHIA, PA

(Ideishi, Ideishi, Pontiggia, & Mendonca, 2010)

## Objectives

- Change in social skills during participation in a theater arts program

## Methods

- Social Skills Inventory Scale (Gresham & Elliott, 2008)

	Typically Developing	Special Needs
Cooperation	↓	↑
Responsibility	↓	↑
Problem Behaviors	↑	↓
Hyperactivity Behaviors	↑	↓

# OUTCOMES

- Program evaluation

## Objectives

- Child behaviors
- Parent expectations & parent experiences
- Performer experiences

## Methods

- Survey
- Interview, focus groups
- Behavioral observations

# OUTCOMES

- Program evaluation

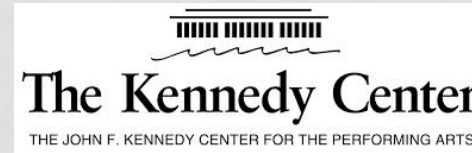


- Families needs (Smithsonian Accessibility MATM – Fernandez, 2012)
  - Judgment free zone
  - Preparation materials useful
- Diverse learning opportunities (The Walters Art Museum – Hosler, 2013)
  - Interactive galleries and studio activities effective
  - Sensory modifications to environment & setting effective
  - Increasing attendance at sensory friendly events
- Family knowledge (NJAAS – Ideishi, Willock, & Thach, 2010)
  - Predicted & actual behavior can be surprising



# OUTCOMES

- Program evaluation



- *A sense of family*
  - *Judgment free zone*
    - *Sensitive & welcoming staff*

The Walter Arts Museum - Hosler, 2013

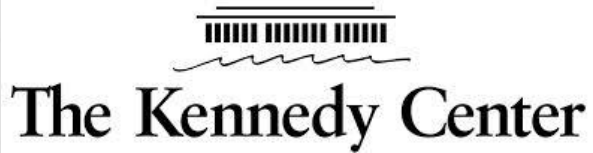
Smithsonian Accessibility Morning at the Museum - Fernandez, 2013

New Jersey Academy of Aquatic Sciences- Ideishi, Willock, & Thach, 2010

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts - Ideishi & Mendonca, 2013

# OUTCOMES

- Program evaluation



PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE



## Objectives

- Parent expectations prior to community experience
- Parent experience after the community experience
- Performer experience

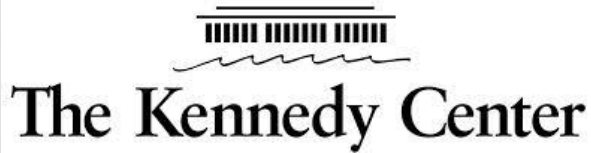
## Methods

- Survey
- Interview & focus groups



# OUTCOMES

- Program evaluation



PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE



Anecdotal (non-significant evidence)

- Pre-visit materials/social stories/picture schedules

“Ala carte” philosophy

- Diversity of people; diversity of autism
- Research design methods
  - Qualitative analyses
  - Sensitive tools

# OUTCOMES

- Program evaluation

Light\*

Sound\*

M o v e m e n t

Usher\*

\*Statistically significant positive change

Data relatively consistent between Kennedy Center, Imagination Stage,  
Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre

Ideishi & Mendonca, 2012 & 2013; Mendonca & Ideishi, 2013

# Performer Qualitative Data Analysis

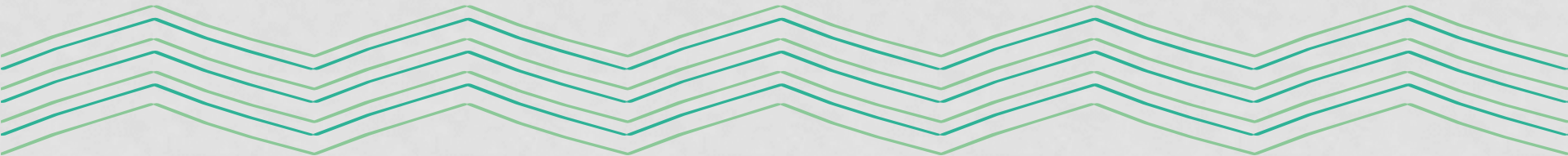
## ACTING WITH INTENTION

We changed the character a bit which I mean at this point in the run, the kind of stuff is fun. So you find about 40 times now. It can be a lot of fun and a good challenge in a long run. So by the time we hit this point in the run, an excuse to change something up is kind of fun.

# Aquarium Study: Resources for Children with Autism



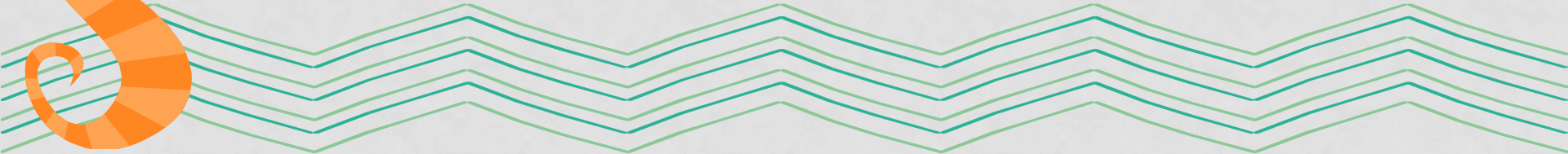
- Family pre-interviews
- Pre-survey
- Home & school preparations
- Aquarium visit
- Post-survey





# Aquarium Strategies

- A “learning kit” in an over-the-shoulder carry bag
  - Sensory aquarium map
  - Sensory flip book
  - Aquarium artifact box
  - Soft manipulative toys
  - Picture schedule



# Aquarium Visit

- **Time range of visit: 20 minutes to 2 hours**
- **Generally moved quickly from one exhibit to another (less than 45 secs)**
  - Crowded or closed exhibit areas were difficult (e.g. shark tunnel)
- **Longer attention periods (5 minutes+) at particular exhibits**
  - Outdoor open areas facilitated calm and quiet engagement
  - Visually larger exhibits facilitated increased attention

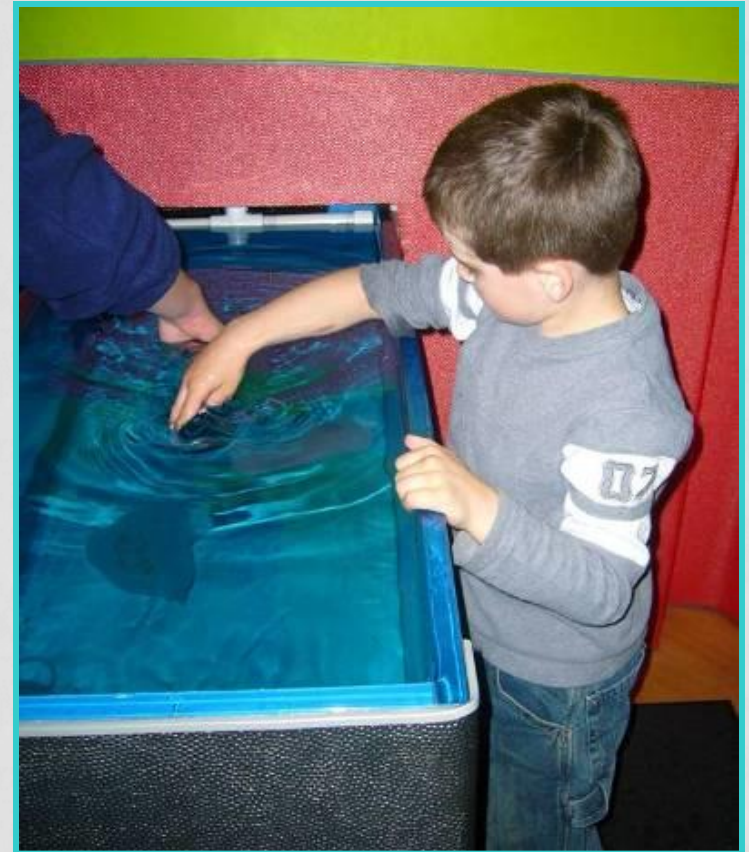




# Aquarium Project Results



- **Active use of materials and verbal references to social story**
  - Parents rated effective
  - Useful for direction & calming
- **All children touched an animal to some degree**
  - All parents surprised their children touched animals



# OUTCOMES

- *Meaningful impact*

**Welcoming and  
accepting environment**

**Letting my kid be  
who he is**

**Being a family**





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