A program with bounce.

Consider a rubber band ball. Made of rubber, it bounces. Its bounce is fairly smooth and high.

Upon examining this ball, we see that it is a rather complex object, consisting of many intertwined rubber bands of different colors.

Even though the bands are made of rubber, they can not bounce by themselves. Individually, rubber bands have their uses – they can hold your hair in a ponytail, keep your pens organized and gather your mail in an organized bunch. But, when interconnected as a tight ball, they acquire the ability to bounce.

The ASD Nest Program is analogous to that rubber band ball. Each rubber band represents a different element of the program: structure, training, documentation, collaboration, and classroom and whole-school supports. While each element is necessary, no element alone is sufficient to create a good Nest program. All elements must be present and working together holistically to help Nest children succeed.

Often, programs for children with ASDs do not take the whole child into account. They see each child as a collection of discrete problems to be remediated by specific therapies – individual rubber bands piled up and not interacting usefully. The rubber bands need to be coherently organized to acquire "bounce."

Similarly, to be most effective, a program for children with ASDs must be more than merely a collection of therapies and supports, all piled up and acting in isolation. To be successful, a program for children with ASDs must carefully organize the necessary therapeutic elements to support the Nest vision.

Both the elementary and middle/high school models share the same Nest vision, but individual Nest elements vary, because children have different needs at different ages and grade levels.

Now, consider the rubber band ball again. Examine its blue, pink, green, turquoise, grey and purple rubber bands – with colors corresponding to different Nest elements -- that are intertwined to form a Nest program with ***bounce***.

1. <u>Structural elements:</u>

    a. **Co-taught classroom**

    b. **Class ratio and cap**

    c. **Nest team meetings**

    d. **SDI mandate**

    e. **Home-school connection**

    f. **Professional development**

    g. **On site consultation**

    h. **ASD Leadership meetings**

    i. **Capacity building**

2. <u>Collaborative approach:</u>

    a. **Co-teaching strategies**

    b. **Collaboration with related service providers**

    c. **Case conferencing**

    d. **Parent involvement**

    e. **<u>Transitions:</u>**

        i. **Between grades**

        ii. **Between schools**

3. <u>Nest documents:</u>

    a. **Nest Guideposts**

    b. **Three-tier intervention framework**

    c. **Non-negotiables**

    d. **Program papers**

4. Training:

   a. Nest staff:

      i. Hunter courses

      ii. Discipline-specific workshops/meetings at NYU

      iii. NYU PD workshops

      iv. On-site PDs and individual support

      v. "Autism luminary" conference day

   b. Non-Nest staff:

      i. BQ Day training for middle/high school staff

      ii. On-site PDs

      iii. Election day

   c. Parents:

      i. On-site workshops

      ii. NYU workshops

      iii. Parent newsletter

5. Classroom supports:

   a. Social

   b. Sensory/self-regulation

   c. Academic

   d. Behavior

6. Whole school supports (for middle & high schools):

   a. Consistent organizational systems

   b. Support during lunch, transitions and other unstructured times

   c. PBIS or similar

   d. Positive school culture emphasizing a diverse community where differences are discussed and valued