Addressing the Core Deficits of Autism Spectrum Disorder in the Classroom: Evidence-Based Strategies for Teaching Social-Emotional Skills to Students with ASD

Professional Development and Parent Seminar Part One 2016-2017

Tools for Making an Impact....

• Today we will....
  – Describe key social skill areas
    • AM = foundational skills
    • PM = Peer mediated & model interventions
  – Highlight research
  – Discuss instructional practices
  – Offer resources

Aren’t Academics Enough?

Why teach social/emotional skills?

Research shows...
• Social-emotional competence & academic achievement interwoven (Zins & Elias, 1997)
What is Social-Emotional Learning?

- Process of acquiring and effectively applying the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to:
  - Recognize and manage emotions
  - Develop caring and concern for others
  - Make responsible decisions
  - Handle challenging situations capably
  - Establish positive relationships

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2003

Tools for Making an Impact....

- Today we will....
  - Highlight research
  - Discuss instructional practices
  - Describe key social skill areas
  - Offer resources

Impact of SEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impacted by Social-Emotional Learning?</th>
<th>YES OR NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How and what we learn</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide foundation for lifelong learning</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive effect on academic performance</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits to physical health</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demanded by employers</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces risk of maladjustment</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces risk of failed relationships</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces risk of interpersonal violence</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces risk of substance abuse</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces risk of unhappiness</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improves citizenship</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential for lifelong success</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Key Components of Effective SEL

- Self-awareness
- Social awareness
- Responsible decision-making
- Self-management
- Relationship skills

Outcomes Associated with SEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEL Approaches</th>
<th>SEL Skill Acquisition Five Competence Areas</th>
<th>Positive Social Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit SEL Skills Instruction</td>
<td>Improved Attitudes About Self, Others, School</td>
<td>Fewer Conduct Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration with Academic Curriculum Areas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Less Emotional Distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Instructional Practices</td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CASEL, 2003

CASEL, 2004

Social Emotional Learning & Students with ASD
Autism Spectrum Disorder in the DSM-5

Characterized by deficits in 2 core domains:

1. Deficits in social communication and social interaction.
2. Restricted patterns of behavior, interests, and activities.

Diagnostic Criteria A

Persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across contexts as manifested by the following, currently or by history:

- Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity
- Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction
- Deficits in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships

Social Challenges in ASD

- Poor social communication
- One-sided conversations
- Difficulty providing relevant information
- Make unexpected leaps in topics
- Pedantic style of speaking
- Poor speech prosody
- Difficulty interpreting verbal and nonverbal social cues
- Poor social motivation
- Poor social cognition
SEL Elements vs. ASD Deficits

- Self-awareness
- Social awareness
- Responsible decision-making
- Self-management
- Relationship skills

- Difficulty recognizing emotional states
- Difficulty with insight
- Misses social cues
- Difficulty with abstract communication
- Difficulty seeing cause/effect
- Difficulty predicting
- Difficulty with emotional regulation
- Difficulty with social reciprocity

Most Elusive Targets to Teach

- Multi-element complex skills
- Element of judgement
- Endless possibilities that exist in the natural world

Gerhardt & Crimmins, 2013; Weiss, 2013

Current Understanding

“Deficits in social-emotional-reciprocity”

- Range
- Types of behaviors specified
  - approach
  - back & forth
  - sharing of interests
  - emotions & affects
  - responding to others
  - initiating
  - conversation
- Severity levels
Building A Foundation

Foundational Skill: Joint Attention

- One of the most sensitive behavioral markers for identification of ASD

Mundy (2016)

Joint Attention

Gillespie-Lynch K. 2013 OA
Joint Attention Defined…

• Involves the coordinated attention between a social partner and an object or event in the environment.

• Allows people to share information, emotion, or meaning about an event.

Taylor and Hoch, 2018
Bruner 1975
Mundy, Sigman, & Kasari 1994

Joint Attention – a social interaction

Joint Attention in Infancy

(a) 8th month  (b) 12th month  (c) 18th month

Ellan et al. 2005
Changing the trajectory

Evidenced Based Practices
What evidence is there?
What works?
For what ages?
A Common Referent

“Involves attending to both self and others in conjunction with spatial, temporal, or symbolic processing about a 3rd entity.”

Mundy 2016

Joint Attention

A Broader Understanding of Joint Attention

- Initiating behavior (self-generated)
- Responding to others
- Attention control (incl. shifting)
- Perceiving and sharing experiences

Mundy (2016)
Joint Attention’s Lifelong Role

Research Early 2000’s

• Increases in child showing, pointing, & sharing
• Significant language gains
• Significant increases in responding to bids
• Improvements in initiating (verbally and nonverbally)

Take Away = Environmental events and social contingencies can be manipulated to promote joint attention.

Kasari et al. 2001
Whalen & Schreibman 2003

Direct Teaching Joint Attention (con’t)

Highlights from several studies (Kasari et al)

• Interventions for minimally verbal children
• Pre-k district wide implementation
• Increasing responsiveness in parent/child interactions
• Positive learning trajectories
Responding to Bids: ASD vs. Typical

Assessment in School Setting

- Standardized Testing (parts only)
- Observations
  - Point, gesture, eye gaze, look back, and/or verbalize to share attention
- Interviews/Checklists/Criterion Based Tools
  - Do Watch Say Listen
  - Social Skills Solutions
  - Asperger Syndrome: A Practical Guide for Teachers

Asperger Syndrome: A Practical Guide for Teachers

Woodlands Centre adapted from Cumine, Leach & Stevenson's (2000)
What Can I Do?

- Teach array of joint attention skills using prompting (ex: time delay, gesture, verbal, visual)
- Use reinforcement in the teaching episodes
- Incorporate student choice in activities
- Interspersing easier/known tasks
- Acknowledging attempts and approximations
- Use highly motivating activities
- Practice turn taking & sharing control

Whalen & Schreibman 2003
Whit & al. 2011

Responding to Bids: greater detail

1. Object placed in child’s hand
2. Object tapped in front of child
3. Object shown (in view/front) of child
4. Make eye contact to gain access (then add #1-3)
5. Following adult’s point to object in the room
6. Following adult gazed to another object in the room

Whalen & Schreibman, 2003

Video Example

Follow my eyes
Collateral Positive Effects

Skills To Build Upon

- Teach the child to give you objects (for your help)
- Teach the child to show you objects
- Teach the child to follow a point
- Teach the child how to point to request objects and to share experiences

Rogers & Dawson 2010

Taylor & Hoch, 2008
Teaching Child To Initiate Bids

Objects Used
- toy hanging from ceiling
- scared mask
- stuffed animal wearing a wig
- spilled liquid
- oversized balloon
- upside down bike

Look!
Wow!
That's Silly!
Oh – No!
Uh-oh!
Creating Opportunities

• Sample scenarios
  – Setting it up – example bid ideas
  – Cues & Teaching
    • Prompts/fading (time delay, gestures, text, etc.)
    – Reinforcement
• In Conjunction with other skills (embed)
  – interactive play, reciprocity, gestures, imitation

Skill Groupings – Joint Attention & Attending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looks when name called</td>
<td>When called</td>
<td>Oriented toward person when speaking/listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can repeat and perform 4-5 step directions</td>
<td>Orients toward person when making requests</td>
<td>Listens quietly when appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows eye gaze, point or gesture by others</td>
<td>Listens when appropriate</td>
<td>Can listen and take notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows and completes large group instruction (whole class)</td>
<td>Follows eye gaze to objects</td>
<td>Uses gestures to communicate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Joint Attention as a collateral effects of other interventions

• Peers Taught Skills to Increase Interactions
• Students with ASD taught imitation skills
• Incorporating the child’s favorite themes as motivation into games (with siblings)

Pierce & Schreibman 1995
Ingersoll and Schreibman 2006
Baker 2000
Foundational Skill: Social Reciprocity

Social + Reciprocity

Increasing Social Attention & Motivation

Teaching Goal: Being Social is Fun!

Look for:
- attending
- approach
- engagement
- positive affect

Be more fun. Play!
What Motivates This Child?

Finding items of interest
- Observe Try out
- Interviews
- Inventory
- Preference Assessments

Preference Assessments

Categories Commonly Included
- Consumable items such as food and drinks
- Tangible items such as various toys and materials
- Activities that involve movement
- Games
- Electronic media such as TV, computer
- Various forms of social interaction
- Music
- Preferred dramatic themes and characters

Linking Motivators to Social Interactions

- Create a positive working relationship (happens over a period of time)
  - **Highly preferred** object/activities → Positive social components

  **Key is TIMING**: Introduce social component "just before" preferred motivator
CHANGE VALUE BY BEING PAIRED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Reinforcement</th>
<th>Other types of reinforce (examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocalizations</td>
<td>Favorite-game/technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise</td>
<td>Sticker/Token/Check mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facial Expression</td>
<td>Special Interests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use Age appropriate choices, individualized to the child
Evaluate yourself often: using child approach as indicator(s)
Partington 2014

Learning Characteristic Considerations

- Individualized to student
  - “Best” Modality
  - Language’s Role
  - Organization
  - Motivation

Evidence Base

- National Standards Project
- National Professional Development Center AFIRM http://autismpd.fpg.unc.edu/
Reciprocity

- Mutual exchange, back and forth; giving or done in return.
  - In play
  - In imitation
  - In turn-taking
  - In greetings
  - In conversation
  - In friendship

Weiss & Harris 2001
Rogers, Dawson, & Vismara 2012

Increasing Social Reciprocity

- Improve imitation
- Improve turn-taking
- Shape and directly teach reciprocal skills

Some Strategies:
- Routines
- Scripts
- Visual supports

Value of Imitation

Learn to Imitate.....Imitate to Learn

“a cusp behavior”

Required in order to learn from peer models
Imitation

- Ways to imitate (a broad class of skill)
  - Vocal qualities, gestures, actions, verbalizations
  - Matching speed
  - With delay
  - With or without objects/materials
  - Sequences
  - From a distance
- Who can be a model?
  - Adults, peers, videos

Partington 2014

Obstacle Course

Imitation & Turn Taking
(with activity schedule as visual support)

McClannahan & Krantz 2010
Reciprocity Between Students

Reciprocal Greetings
McConnell & Ryser 2007

Making Plans & Teaching Skills
Reciprocal Play

Social Scripts

- Help support social interactions
  - Learn functional scripts ("I like ___")
  - Talking about activities (play)
  - Initiating conversation
  - Talk books

McClannahan

Script Example

McConnell & Ryser, 2000
Perspective Taking

Definition

The capacity to understand an experience from another person’s point of view
Top 10 Social Skills for School

- Listen to others
- Follows directions
- Follows classroom rules
- Ignores peer distractions
- Asks for help
- Take turns in conversation
- Cooperates with others
- Controls temper in conflict situations
- Acts responsibly with others
- Shows kindness to others

Silent Film

Importance

- To build relationships
- To sustain friendships
- To comfortably navigate the mainstream social world
Theory of Mind

Factors Influencing Performance
- passage of time/memory
- phrasing of questions ("when", "before")
- language ability
- conversational fluency
- similarities between child’s home and the test conditions
- parent’s language and use of mental state utterances “I think it’s a cat” and use of variety of emotion terms “happy” etc.

Can these skills be taught?

✓ YES –false belief test success

✓ YES –perspective taking (broader category)

Development of Perspective Taking

Beginning in infancy.....
Adopting Another’s Point of View

“requires coordinating among language skills, abstract thought, social understanding, as well as a capacity to respond to others with compassion.”

• Break it down: teach in small increments

Weiss & Harris, 2001
Main Challenges

1. Understand that perception is relative
2. Understand that the context of the event is important
3. Learn pro-social skills
   (for expression & responding to others)

Pre-requisites

Language Skills
- Receptive/Expressive Identification of emotions
- Yes/no
- I/you discrimination
- "Wh" question discrimination (incl "why")
- Reciprocity

Social Skills
- Identification of emotions in simple stories
- Identification of emotions in self and others in context
- Social responses (ex: saying "Bless you")
- Some awareness of real versus pretend

Fundamental Level

Others don’t see things exactly as you do

- Field of Vision Program
- Pretending
- Perception vs non-perception

Weiss & Harris (2001). Topics in Autism: Reaching Out, Joining In
Intermediate Level Skills

- **Appearance vs reality** (yellow block & lunch box)
- **Lining up** (the bell rings)
- **Non-logical placement** (my silly box)
- **Utility of eye gaze**
  (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1s4wNH4KcU)

Non-logical Placement

Utility of Eye Gaze
Advanced Level Skills

• Differential experience
  – answer varies based on experience
• Differential knowledge
  – answer varies based on knowledge
• Perspective taking game (False belief tasks)
• Play “What’s wrong”?
  – Helps child recognize common social errors

Add Extensions … Moving into Social Skills Curriculum Areas

Extensions
Recognizing false information
Truths vs. lies
Empathy & compassion
  – Apologizing (physical, then non-physical)
  – Expressing concern for others (now & later)
Building Further on Perspective Taking: Social Implications

Michelle Garcia Winner
Your behavior, thoughts & feelings AND your thinking about the behavior, thoughts and feelings of others.

“Think Social” Curriculum Snapshot
Section 1 – Being part of a group & recognizing expectations

Critical Vocabulary & Concepts
• Doing what is expected in the group
• Doing what is unexpected in a group
• “You can change my feelings.”
• Observing others through imitation
• Identifying whether there is a “big problem - little problem”
• Feeling “safe” within a group
• Three parts of play: set up, play and clean up
• Various “feeling” words

Pro-Social Skills - Find A Guide
Identify the skill(s) & Plan Instruction (Choose Supports & Method to Teach)

Ex: Identifying & Understanding my feelings
Identify/label emotions
Identify context(s)
Express emotions
Managing emotions/coping skills

Expanding Upon ID Feelings

5 Point Scale for MS & HS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Not angry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bad mood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Good day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I need help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What can I do?

- Keep calm
- Talk to someone
- Ignore it

Angela Greene, Cherokee CSD

Modeling & Behavioral Rehearsal (role play)

An adult or peer provides a demonstration of the skill to be imitated

- Live or video modeling
- Participants imitate the model
- 3 examples & 3 “non”-examples (a little wrong)
Identify the skill(s) & Plan Instruction (Choose Supports & Method to Teach)

Ex: Empathy & Concern:
Understanding feelings of others

• Multiple Skills – approach; ask a question; wait for a response; record response; monitor your own behavior (body posture, volume, etc)

• Method: Activity Based (scavenger hunt)
  • Find someone who

  Lynn Dudek Step by Step Academy

Identifying what other people are thinking and feeling within situations

• Use social clips and images

Creating social opportunities:
  Planning a party
  Making a gift for someone

Lynn Dudek Step by Step Academy
(Pro)Social Skills & Social Rules

- Identifying the rule
  - Review rules prior to the start of a task
  - Create rule cards to serve as a visual reminder

- Identifying rule violations (visual supports help)
  - Link rules to previously established token economies or classroom management system

Ex: Identify the Rule
(to accept an object or invitation)


Using visual supports

- Comic Strips - Advantages
  - Visual learning (usually a strength)
  - May be high interest
  - Can be stored in a book and referred to often for rehearsal
  - Can support memorization of social rule/skill
  - Can break down into FRAMES (smaller parts)
How To Join A Conversation

Using visual supports
Using scripts to support social interactions.
Using visual supports to identify emotions & problem solve to calm.

http://www.interactingwithautism.com/section/treating/teacch

Solving Social Problems

McConnel & Ryser 2007
Social Narrative

Describe social situations
- Includes social stories and power cards
- for step by step guide & development worksheets
- Ideally, read prior to identified situation
  - Points out relevant information


Social Stories

Field Trip to the Aquarium

Jeff Rides the Bus to School

Image Credit: Creative Commons

Sharing means to use things together
Social Stories (con’t)

• Gather information about the id social situation
• Use proper ratio of describing sentences and directive sentences
• Elementary General Education: Ms. Barnes  "When working in groups, Oliver had a hard time keeping his hands to himself.

Power Cards

• Identify learner’s special interest
• 2 parts:
  – a brief story scenario
  – A power card
    • A small card with rules outlining behavior
    • Uses pictures of learner’s special interest
Socio-Behavioral Displays

• Similar to classroom display of rules/social expectations
• Main function is clarify rules and desired social behaviors
• Putting rules in visual form

Quill (2000)

Other Strategies

• Social Encyclopedia
• Autopsies
• Journaling
• Comic Strips
• Video Modeling

Mapping

• Visual support
• Helps children understand expectations
• Identifying choices and associated consequences
• Used after FBA to help visually show alternative/replacement behaviors
• 4 types:
  – Consequence maps
  – Complex behavior maps
  – Language maps
  – Problem solving maps

Buie (2013)
Self Monitoring

Jim Wright 2013
Morning Re-cap

✓ Foundational Social Skills
  ✓ Joint attention
  ✓ Reciprocity
  ✓ Imitation skills
  ✓ Perspective taking
✓ Evidence base of strategies & resources
✓ Direct teaching pro-social skills
  ✓ Examples of specific skills with evidenced based strategies

In the Afternoon

- We will highlight other teaching strategies such as role playing
- We will focus on relationship building
- Incorporating peers into the teaching and learning opportunities related to social skills.
New York State Regional Centers for Autism Spectrum Disorders
http://www.albany.edu/autism/nysrcasd.php

CARD Albany is now on Facebook
www.facebook.com/cardalbany

Required Coursework for Special Education Professionals now online – “Responding to the Needs of Students with ASD”
http://www.albany.edu/autism/nysed_autism_training.php

LMSW Continuing Education Online Course – “Responding to the Needs of Students with ASD”
http://www.albany.edu/autism/social_work_cpe.php

Online Distance Learning Training
http://www.albany.edu/autism/33452.php

For More Information/Training

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