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....
  – Highlight research
  – Discuss instructional practices
  – Describe key social skill areas
  – Offer resources

Overview

• In the morning......
  – In depth on foundational social skills
  – Overview of assessment/curriculum tools
  – Highlight several instructional strategies

• In the afternoon......
  – Peer mediated interventions
  – Model social skills intervention
Aren’t Academics Enough?
Why do we need to teach social/emotional skills?

Research shows…
• Social-emotional competence & academic achievement interwoven (Zins & Elias, 1997)
• Instruction in both areas maximize student potential (Zins & Elias, 1997)

What is Social-Emotional Learning?
• Process of acquiring and affectively applying the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to:
  – Recognize and manage emotions
  – Develop caring and concern for others
  – Make responsible decisions
  – Establish positive relationships
  – Handle challenging situations capably

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2003

Impact of SEL

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

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

(CASEL, 2003)

Legislative and Regulatory Support for SEL

- Nationally
  - Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) 12/2015
  - H.R. 497 “Supporting Social & Emotional Learning Act (introduced)
  - H.R. 850 “Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act of 2015” (introduced)
  - S. 897 “Jesse Lewis Empowering Educators Act” (introduced)

(CASEL, 2003)

What about NYS?

- Statewide survey data 2008: schools tend to be reactive rather than preventative
- Developed Educating the Whole Child Engaging the Whole School: Guidelines and Resources for Social and Emotional Development and Learning
  - 10-Point Guidelines

NYSED Memorandum; June, 13, 2011
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
Simply stated…

“For students with ASD, social awareness and understanding do not come naturally. As students progress in school, they are expected to navigate a variety of social situations that required more complicated social skills.” (Myles, 2005)

“As a result, students with ASD may require targeted social skills instruction to facilitate the development of positive social and emotional skills”. (Sansoti, et al. 2010, Myles, 2005)

Most Elusive Targets to Teach

• Limited intrinsic interest
• Little social initiation
• Reduced social responsiveness
• Multi-element complex skills
• Element of judgement
• Endless possibilities that exist in the natural world

History of our understanding

Pervasive lack of responsiveness to other people

Gerhardt & Crimmins, 2013; Weiss, 2013
The "Boom" in Research…

Current Understanding
"Deficits in social-emotional-reciprocity"

- Range
- Types of behaviors specified
  - approach
  - back & forth
  - sharing of interests
  - responding to others
  - initiating
  - conversation
- Severity levels

Foundational Skill: Joint Attention

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

Mundy (2016)
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.

Joint Attention in Infancy

(a) 6th month  (b) 12th month  (c) 18th month
A Common Referent

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

Mundy 2016

Bids for Joint Attention

• Responding
• Initiating

*Note: critical role of attending & shifting of attention

Responding to Bids: ASD vs. Typical

MacDonald et al. 2006
A Broader Understanding of Joint Attention

- Initiating behavior (self-generated)
- Attention control
- Perceiving and responding to others
- Involves attending to both self and others in conjunction with spatial, temporal, or symbolic processing about a 3rd entity
- Two minds try to know a common referent

Mundy (2016)
Joint Attention

Joint Attention’s Lifelong Role


NYS
Joint Attention’s Critical Role

- Learning – referencing, modeling & imitating
- Cognitive Development
- Social/Emotional Development
- Language development
- Reciprocity & play & cooperation
- “Necessary for children to benefit from systematic or incidental instruction”

Mundy (2016)

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

Assessing Joint Attention

• Standardized Testing (parts only)
• Observations
• Criterion Based Tools
  – Do Watch Say Listen
  – Social Skills Solutions
  – Others

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
White et al. 2011
Early Skills

- 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

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

Collateral Positive Effects

Whalen, Schreibman, Ingersoll (2006)
Taylor & Hoch, 2008
Teaching Child To Initiate Bids

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

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>Skill Groupings</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
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<td>Looks when name called</td>
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Quill, 2000; McKinnon & Krempa, 2002
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
• Preference Assessments

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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocal Intonations</td>
<td>Favorite games/technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Praise</td>
<td>Stickers/Tokens/Check marks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facial Expression</td>
<td>Special Interests</td>
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Use Age appropriate choices, individualized to the child
Evaluate yourself often: using child approach as indicator(s)
Parlington 2014
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 direct teach reciprocal skills

Some Tools:
- Routines
- Scripts
- Visual supports

Imitation

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

Partington 2014
Joint Action Routines

- Elements:
  - repeat a few times p/wk for 2-4 weeks
  - Unifying motivating themes
  - Joint focus and interaction
  - Clear beginning and end (signal)
  - Limited number of roles and/or Exchangeable roles
  - Logical, non-arbitrary sequences
  - Turn taking
  - Repetition
  - Variations

McClannahan & Krantz 2010

Reciprocity Beyond Students with ASD
Making Plans & Teaching Skills

Reciprocal Greetings
McConnell & Ryser 2007

GROUP III: FRIENDSHIP-MAKING SKILLS

Skill 13: Greeting Others

Steps:
1. Smile.
2. Say, “Hi,”
   Encourage children to use the person’s name if they know it.
3. Walk on.
   This step should be used if the children are supposed to be following along with
   the group or if they don’t know the person well. The children may wish to begin
   a conversation if the person is a friend and it is an OK time to have a conversation.

Reciprocal Play

Playing with Blocks

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Social Scripts

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

Script Example

Perspective Taking
Definition

The capacity to understand an experience from another person’s point of view

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
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)

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

Extensions

- Recognizing false information
- Truths vs. lies
- Empathy & compassion
  - Apologizing (physical, then non-physical)
  - Expressing concern for others (now & later)
And finally.....
Teaching pro-social Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary Skills</th>
<th>Social Skills</th>
<th>Dealing with Feelings</th>
<th>Skills for Dealing with Feelings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Contributing to Discussions</td>
<td>20. Offering Help to a Classmate</td>
<td>32. Dealing with Another’s Anger</td>
<td>42. Accepting Consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Asking a Question</td>
<td>22. Accepting a Compliment</td>
<td>34. Dealing with Fear</td>
<td>44. Negotiating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Deciding on Something to Do</td>
<td>25. Apologizing</td>
<td>37. Expressing Your Feelings</td>
<td>47. Making a Complaint</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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

Using visual supports

McGinnis & Goldstein 2003

Social Rules
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Using visual supports

McConnell & 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
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
Power Cards

• Ex 1: Elementary school example of power card from AFIRM (sharks)
• Ex 2:

Power Card
1. Louis Armstrong always took good care of his trumpet so that it would sound in tune.
2. When I am done playing my trumpet, I may be in a hurry, but I still carefully lay my trumpet on my chair or put it away in my case.
3. When I take care of my trumpet, it will sound in tune.

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
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)

Mapping: Dealing with Feelings

LAURENT’S GOOD CHOICES

Buie (2013)

Complex Map: Dealing with Feelings

Buie (2013)
Review

- Child has several of the foundational social skills (joint attention, reciprocity, beginning perspective taking, imitation skills)

- Begun to move forward to direct teaching of social skills

Find A Guide

Evidenced Based Strategies

- Behavioral intervention methods
- Modeling (in vivo & video)
- Naturalistic Teaching Strategies
- Pivotal Response Training
- Parent Training Package
- Peer Training Package
- Scripting
- Social Skills Package
- Story-based Intervention
- Self-management
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.

Top 10 Social Skills for School
• Listen to others
• Follows directions
• Follows classroom rules
• Ignores peer distractions
• Asks for help
• Takes turns in conversation
• Cooperates with others
• Controls temper in conflict situations
• Acts responsibly with others
• Shows kindness to others

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”
hp://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

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