Addressing the Core Deficits of Autism Spectrum Disorder in the Classroom: Supporting the Understanding and Development of Peer Relationships

Part Two

Objectives

A. Participants will be able to explain how the core characteristics of ASD effect the development of their peer relationships

B. Participants will identify 3 research-based interventions for developing, maintaining and understanding relationships

C. Participants will select one strategy that is appropriate for their student with ASD
DSM Criteria

“Deficits in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships
– Ranging, for example, from difficulties adjusting behavior to suit various social contexts; to difficulties in sharing imaginative play or in making friends; to absence of interest in peers.”

Friendships

True definition – intimate relationship providing companionship, mutual support and affection
– Understand what someone is thinking and feeling
– Mutually voluntary
– Relatively long term (6 months or longer)
– Stable

How would a student with autism define friendship?
Friendship Quality

“Features of the dyadic relationship such as the level of support, companionship, or conflict it provides to the child”

Bukowski, Newcomb, & Hartup, 1996

Benefits of High-Quality Friendships

Friendship quality has been shown to:

- Buffer impact of stressful events
- Correlates positively with self-esteem
- Correlates negatively with anxious depressive symptoms
- Be a protective factor against bullies
- Be a predictor of later school adjustment and academic achievement
- Lower school drop-out rate
Poor Quality of Friendships Among Youth with ASD

In one study, children with ASD reported:

– Having at least one friend, **but**
– Lower quality friendships in terms of companionship, security, and help, **and**
– Greater loneliness

Compared to their typically developing peers

Bauminger & Kasari (2010)
Loneliness
An undesirable feeling associated with a negative affect and may result from an unfulfilled desire to have friends, an understanding of the gap between an actual and desired social status, and a lack of affective bonding


In Your Own World…
Loneliness Scale

1. It's easy to make new friends at school.
2. I like to read.
3. I have nobody to talk to.
4. I'm good at working with other children.
5. I watch TV a lot.
6. It's hard for me to make friends.
7. I like school.
8. I have lots of friends.
9. I feel alone.
10. I can find a friend when I need one
11. I play sports a lot.
12. It's hard to get anyone to play with.
13. I like science.
14. I don't have anyone to play with.
15. I like music.
16. I like to get along with other kids
17. I feel left out of things.
18. There's nobody I can go to when I need help.
19. I like to paint and draw.
20. I don't get along with other children.
21. I'm lonely.
22. I am well-liked by the kids in my class.
23. I like playing board games a lot.
24. I don't have any friends.

Statistics

- Half (50.6%) of youth with autism report that they have never been invited by other students to social activities (e.g., at their home, to a party) during the past twelve months.
- (83.5%) of students with autism reported to never or rarely receive telephone calls from friends.
- Nearly half of youth with autism (44.3%) reported never spending time together with friends outside of school during the past year.

Considerations Related to Social Interactions

• Students on the autism spectrum are at greater risk for peer rejection

• Consider additional barriers for students who also have a language impairment, a physical impairment, intellectual disability, and mental health issues, etc.
  – For example:
    • ADHD – peer rejected
    • Anxiety/depression – peer neglected

What about gender?

• Girls with ASD are often found to have …
  – More functional social behavior
  – Fewer socio-communicative deficits
  – Less repetitive behaviors/interests
  – More appropriate play behavior
  – More social motivation

But…
This doesn’t mean that girls with ASD have no social difficulties

![Graph showing FQ scores by gender and diagnosis](image)

**Figure 1** Total friendship questionnaire (FQ) scores by gender and diagnosis. Error bars represent standard errors of the mean. ASD, autism spectrum disorder; TD, typically developing.

What about autism makes it hard to form friendships?

- Motivation
- Social Communication
- Differences with reciprocity
- Inability to pick up on non-verbal cues

All relate back to core characteristics…
### Peer Relationships in Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 = NOT TRUE</th>
<th>2 = SOMETIMES TRUE</th>
<th>3 = OFTEN TRUE</th>
<th>4 = ALMOST ALWAYS TRUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Seems much more fidgety in social situations than when alone</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Expressions on his or her face don’t match what he or she is saying</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Seems self-confident when interacting with others</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. When under stress, he or she shows rigid or inflexible patterns of behavior that seem odd</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Doesn’t recognize when others are trying to take advantage of him or her</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Would rather be alone than with others</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Aware of what others are thinking or feeling</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Behavior in ways that seem strange or bizarre</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Clings to adults, seems too dependent on them</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Takes things too literally and doesn’t get the real meaning of a conversation</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Has good self-confidence</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Is able to communicate his or her feelings to others</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Is awkward or has trouble taking interactions with peers (for example, doesn’t seem to understand the give-and-take of conversations)</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Is not well coordinated</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Is unable to understand the meaning of other people’s tone of voice and facial expressions</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Avoids eye contact or has unusual eye contact</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Recognizes when something is unfair</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Has difficulty making friends, even when trying his or her best</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Gets frustrated trying to get ideas across in conversations</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Shows unusual sensory interests (for example, mouthing or spinning objects) or strange ways of playing with toys</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Is able to evaluate others’ actions</td>
<td>3 3 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inclusion

Children with autism are often integrated into a general education classroom with the hope that social skills will be absorbed just through proximity and presence within the classroom. Preparation, support and proper social instruction is necessary.

Carter, Asmus & Moss (2013); Myles, Simpson, Ormsbee & Erickson (1993); Smith (2013)

Inclusion = Magic Fix?

Common practice in both primary and secondary education.

Provides opportunities to interact with typically developing peers which may build social networks/social-emotional benefits.

Laugeson, 2008; Parker & Asher, 1987
Inclusion: A Parent’s Perspective

Social Connections
Definition: Peer groups to which a particular student belongs

- Children included in regular education classes are often on the periphery of their classroom social structure and tend to associate with a small group of children
- Findings suggest, that children with ASD in regular education are able to establish social connections with others in their classroom

Close Proximity

How much time are students actually spending in general education classrooms?
- Presence and proximity matter

Only 70% students with disabilities were present at the start and 60% at the end of class
- Conversations with peers generally occur at the start of class and/or at the end of class

Source: Feldman, Carter, Asmus, & Brock (in press)

Proximity and Presence

Average percentage of time students were in close enough proximity to peers to talk with one another: 42%

Feldman & Carter
Expanding students’ shared activities, equipping peers with the proper tools, and engaging adults as facilitators offers a viable pathway to an outcome that matters most...

Carter, Asmus & Moss (2013)
Research-based Interventions

1. Peer Mediated
2. Remaking Recess
3. PEERS (The Program of Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills)
Peer-Mediated Intervention

“Systematically teaching typically developing peers *strategies* to engage learners with ASD in positive and meaningful social interactions by increasing joint opportunities within natural environments.”

Neitzel (2008)

Is Peer-Mediated Intervention an Evidence-Base Practice?

Peer-mediated intervention meets the evidence based practice criteria and has been effective for preschooler to high-school age learners to increase a range of skills of children with ASD and typically developing peers

National Professional Development Center on ASD, UNC-Chapel Hill (2015)
Peers are Great!

- Peers are “experts” on social skills
- Peers are not as “stigmatizing”
- Peers are great problem solvers
- Peers are future supports
- Peers are readily available

✔

Peers benefit too

---

Benefits for Peers - Aiden
Peer-Mediated Intervention

• Other terms: Peer Modeling, Peer Initiation Training, Direct Training for Target Student and Peer, Peer Networks and Peer Supports

• Origination:
  – Behaviorism (e.g., Thorndike, Watson, Skinner)
    • Behaviors are learned from the environment through operant conditioning
  – Social learning theory (Bandura,1961)
    • Social behaviors are learned through observation and imitation

Ready to Start?

Step 1: Planning Peer-Mediated Intervention
• Identify the “when, where and what” of naturally occurring social interactions
• Selecting peers
• Training peers

Step 2: Using Peer-Mediated Intervention
• Assign peers to target students
• Plan for at least a 15-minute daily session
• Provide materials
• Provide support and feedback

Step 3: Monitoring Peer-Mediated Intervention and Data Collection
✓ Tip Sheet:
  http://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/assets/files/tipsheets/peerinterventionas_dtips.pdf
Step 1: Planning Peer-Mediated Intervention

Identify the “When, Where and What” of Naturally Occurring Social Interactions at Your School:

• Ask yourself:
  “Are students with and without disabilities …..
  – ….. present in the same places? (Where)
  – ….. there at the same time? (When)
  – ….. engaged in the same activities?” (What)

If answer to any of these questions is no, then activities are not truly shared and real relationships are less likely to develop

Activity: Reflecting on your School
Activity: Reflecting on your School

Pre-Assessment for Learner

PMII Pre-Assessment for Learner

Learner's Name: James
Activity: 2nd grade math class
Data/Time: 11/13/16 at 1:30
Observer: T.J.

Communication:
- How does the learner get his or her needs met?
  - Interacts with class and teacher when he has a question or needs something

Verbal and nonverbal communication used:
- Communicates verbally, but has difficulty waiting his turn and following classroom procedures (talking loud to ask a question)

Social behaviors used:
- Speaks slowly and answers questions when peers or teachers speak to him first
- Does not initiate interactions

Inappropriate behaviors (displayed if any):
- Interrupts class during lesson when he has a question

Where do social behaviors currently occur?
- Math class

Who does the learner interact with most?
- Speaks to the students who are closest to him
- Jennifer and Melisa sometimes try to help him when he has a question

Academics (if applicable):
- Academic strengths of the learner:
  - Above grade level for math
- What area of academics does the learner need support?
  - Following class procedures

Considerations:
- What time of the day would work best for using PMII?
  - During a peer support during math class
Examples of Targets Skills

• Initiating interactions
• Responding to initiations
• Keeping an interaction going
• Starting and engaging in conversations (e.g., greetings, topics)
• Giving and accepting compliments
• Taking turns and sharing
• Helping others and asking for help
• Including others in activities

Kamps et al., 1992; Thiemann, 2007; Thiemann & Goldstein, 2001; Zhang & Wheeler 2011

Step 1: Planning Peer-Mediated Intervention:
Selecting Peers

• Exhibit good social skills, language, and age appropriate play skills
• Be well liked by other peers
• Have a positive social interaction history with the target child
• Be generally compliant with adult directives
• Attend to an interesting task or activity for 10 minutes
• Be willing to participate
• Attend school on a regular basis

Plan to select 1-6 peers who can stay involved for at least 3-4 months

Strain & Odom, 1986; Sasso et al. (1988)
Inviting a Peer

"Hi Melanie. Do you have a minute? I’m Ms. Smith. We are putting together a social group to help Anna become more involved at school. We are looking for students who would get to know and talk to her in between classes, at lunch, or before or after school a few times a week. As you know, interacting with other students at school is one of the best parts of school and Anna would like to get to know more students at school. The group would get together weekly to hang out and discuss how things are going. Your teachers and I thought you would be great for this group because:

– you and Anna are both interested in reading;
– some of your friends are already joining; you are popular with lots of other students;
– you seem to like interacting with new people; Anna really likes hanging out with you, etc..

Is this something you are interested in?"

If Interested: Great! Because we want to make sure that having students get to know Anna can help her be more engaged at school. So, I have a short permission form that explains what we will be doing. You’ll need you to take it home and read it along with your parents/guardians. You can either mail it back to the address or bring it to me in class. If you know anyone else in your school who might want to do this, let me know. We are hoping to have at least three to six students participate. Once I get your permission form back, and the others at school, I’ll set up a meeting with all of us to go over some ideas to help support and include Anna at school. We can meet over lunch, a study hall, or before or after class. What would be best for you? I’m really glad you are interested. Thanks!

If not interested: That’s okay; thank you for talking with me about this project. If you change your mind or know someone who might be interested please let me know. Thanks!

Peer Selection Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Possible Pair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has goals for social skills, language, and age-appropriate play skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has positive social interactions with peers with ASD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is generally compliant with adult directives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has access to an interesting task or activity for age-appropriate amount of time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attends school on a regular basis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has similar schedule or academic group to the teacher with ASD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expresses willingness to participate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has parent/teacher permission to participate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information visit: www.afirm-figure.org
Step 1: Planning Peer-Mediated Intervention: Training Peers

- Select a quiet space for peer trainings
- Include sessions in daily schedule
- First training session:
  - Age-appropriate teaching of autism specific characteristics and activities around learning to recognize individual differences ("how are we the same and different")
  - Kit for Kids (http://www.researchautism.org/resources/KitForKids.asp)
Step 1: Planning Peer-Mediated Intervention: Training Peers (Continued)

Follow-up training sessions:

1. Select and introduce a target skill: content varies depending on age and needs of peers and student with ASD
   - Develop a list of prompts or script with peers which might be necessary to promote social interactions with student with ASD

2. Other essential components of the training session:
   - Teach how to organize play/activity (e.g., making suggestions what to do as part of a play/activity)
   - Teach to “look, wait and listen”
   - Teach how to share, offer, give and accept material
   - Teach how to provide assistance and respond to requests for assistance
   - Teach how to provide affection, praise and positive feedback
   - Teach how to facilitate communication with other peers

Carter & Kennedy (2006)
Step 1: Planning Peer-Mediated Intervention: Training Peers (Continued)

3. Tools such as role plays, coaching, observing others, feedback are helpful:
   - coaching examples: “suggest a game to play”, “try talking about Taylor’s animals”, “it’s your turn to talk”, “try again”)
   - Introduce picture cues and use gestures
   - Repeat prompt if peer does not respond within 10 seconds

Target Skill Written Cues Script

- Ask & Share
  Say: "May I have it?"

- Ask & Share
  Say: "Here you go!"

- Share Group Play
  "Can I play with you?"
Step 2: Using Peer Mediated Intervention

- Assign participating peers depending on the schedules of peers and target students
- Plan for daily 15 minute session
- Provide materials for target student to participate in session
  - Visuals
  - Written scripts
- Remind peers to use self-monitoring checklist after the session
- Provide support and feedback to peers
Peer-Mediated Intervention in Action

Step 3: Monitoring and Data Collection

- Observe and collect data
- Determine if peers need more support or training
- Determine if target student shows increase in target skill(s)

✓ Next steps: consider expanding the program to other environments throughout the school day (e.g., lunch, recess, specials, etc.)
Self-Monitoring Checklist

Progress Monitoring Form
Parent Feedback Form

General Educator Feedback Form

Name: ___________________ Semester: ___________________

1. In what ways did peers with and without disabilities support and interact with one another in your class?

2. What went especially well? Why?

3. What challenges did you notice (if any)?

4. What differences has this made for students with disabilities?

5. What impact has it had on participating peers?

6. In what ways has this experience impacted your views on inclusion and instruction?

7. What additional resources, assistance, or training do you need to support students well as they work together in your classroom?

Other Comments or Feedback:
Moving on to High School…

Social landscape changed dramatically as students move on to high school
- Peer affiliations elevate in importance
- Classmates change from one period to the next
  - Many communication partners throughout the day
- Peer interactions take place away from adults

Brown & Klute, 2003; Lynch et al., 2013

Why is this important?
- Social skills and “soft skills” are critical for post-secondary success
- “High school is the last best chance.” – Peter Gerhardt
- There are decreasing services and supports in high school
- Many students are “dropping off the cliff” after high school

Dykstra (2014)
Peer Support Network

A social group established around a student with a disability that:

• Meets weekly to talk and plan/discuss interactions occurring outside of the group (e.g., particular club)
• Helps the target student become more involved in everyday school life and get connected to other school activities
• Receives regular guidance and support from an adult facilitator (e.g., coach, educator, paraprofessional)
• Lasts throughout an entire one semester

Carter, Asmus, Moss, et al. (2013)

Peer Support Networks

Contexts such as dances, school newspapers, sporting events, thematic clubs, service-learning projects, and student government all provide potentially rich places to meet others, develop relationships, and learn new skills
How can staff support involvement in extracurricular activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify potential activities</th>
<th>What clubs, programs and other events are students interested in? Ask, observe and brainstorm for students, with and without disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determine activity requirements</td>
<td>Is required parental permission required prior to participation in the potential activity? Are there fees associated with the activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address logistical issues</td>
<td>Where do the activities take place? Determine necessary accommodations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify peer buddies</td>
<td>Are there students already participating in activities who could assist? Is there a current peer buddy who shares similar interests and would want to join/assist target student(s)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine support needs</td>
<td>Determine what sort of adult supervision is provided for participating students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How can staff support involvement in extracurricular activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determine peer buddy responsibility</th>
<th>Does the target student need: Transportation assistance? Aid required in learning new routine?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate with staff</td>
<td>Work together to make sure extracurricular activities are beneficial experiences for everyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address potential challenges</td>
<td>Issues may arise considering the target student(s) may not have been encouraged to participate in these activities before. Prepare for potential barriers ahead of time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Peer Support Network

Types of Intervention

1. Peer Mediated
2. Remaking Recess
3. PEERS
Looking for Other Intervention Opportunities

- Efforts to increase shared activities should not focus narrowly on the classroom...
- Extracurricular clubs, afterschool activities, lunchtime, time in between classes and recess provide rich contexts which students spend time and have the opportunity to deepen relationships with peers

Carter, Asmus & Moss (2013)

Benefits of Recess

- Time to think, rest, play, move, socialize, imagine
- Time for socialization to be put into play and practiced
- Practice skills child cannot acquire in a classroom setting
- More attentive and productive in classroom following recess
Isolation vs Solitude

• Natural for all children to spend approx. 10% of recess engaged in independent activities – i.e. bathroom, decompress

• Important to find out why individuals with ASD are spending more than this time alone at recess (approx. 30%)
  – What do they wish to do doing their free time – skill vs performance deficit

Locke, Shih, Kretzmann & Kasari (2015)

ReMaking Recess

• Focuses on increasing and promoting social engagement and opportunities for children with autism (ages 5-11) and their typical peers

• Training school staff members to employ strategies that will increase the quantity of engagements opportunities as well as quality of those interactions

• Interventions take place during lunch, recess, and on the playground
Trends in Paraprofessionals

“Just Enough Support”

- Be careful that supports do not:
  - Set students apart
  - Limit students social interactions with their classmates
  - Decrease contact between students, general educators or other group leaders
  - Hinder students learning and achievement
  - Reduce unnecessary dependence on adults

Kasari, Locke, Gulsrud, Rotheram & Fuller (2010); Carter, Asmus, Moss (2016)
Engagement States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement States</th>
<th>Parallel aware</th>
<th>Joint engagement</th>
<th>Games with rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solitary/Isolated (Alone)</td>
<td>The child appears uninvolved with peers and plays alone with no other children.</td>
<td>The child and peer(s) are engaged in similar activity and mutually aware of each other.</td>
<td>The child participates in an organized game with clear rules and engages in fantasy or pretend play with clearly defined roles set by the child or higher peers. A game has to be with at least one other child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gripper (Watching)</td>
<td>The child has a one-way awareness of another child or group of children who is farther away than 3 feet.</td>
<td>The child and peer(s) direct social behavior with one another (e.g., the child and peer(s) other objects, have a conversation, exchange turns in an activity like reading a comic book, drawing, singing, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel</td>
<td>The child and peer are engaged in a similar activity but there is no social behavior.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Playground Observation of Peer Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>&gt;1</td>
<td>&gt;2</td>
<td>&gt;3</td>
<td>&gt;4</td>
<td>&gt;5</td>
<td>&gt;6</td>
<td>&gt;7</td>
<td>&gt;8</td>
<td>&gt;9</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
<td>&gt;11</td>
<td>&gt;12</td>
<td>&gt;13</td>
<td>&gt;14</td>
<td>&gt;15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Event Site**
- Early介入
- Teacher

**Observation Rating**
- Parent Rating
- Peer Rating
- Child Rating
- Observer Rating

**Event**
- Group Work
- Independent Work
- Free Play
- Recess

**Quality**
- The improvisation of observed events
- The development of the child's social skills and independence
- The involvement of the child in appropriate tasks

**Efficacy Rating**
- The effectiveness of the observed events
- The impact of the child's social skills and independence
- The child's involvement in appropriate tasks

**Developmental Appropriateness Rating (DAR)**
- The appropriateness of the observed events in terms of age and development
- The appropriateness of the child's social skills and independence in terms of age and development
- The appropriateness of the child's involvement in appropriate tasks in terms of age and development
- The appropriateness of the child's performance in terms of age and development

*Note: DAR is a measure of the appropriateness of the child's engagement in the observed events.*
Initial Steps

After understanding the different engagement states…

1. Scan the playground
   A. Circulate
   B. Identify
2. Facilitate an activity
   A. Be prepared with materials
   B. Follow the child’s lead = Motivation
   C. Ensure that all children understand
3. Join in!
   A. Show interest and curiosity
   B. Model positive affect towards the children

Training Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Information Covered: (How to…)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>Scan and circulate the cafeteria/playground for children who may need additional support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>Identify children’s engagement states with peers (See chart)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>Follow children’s lead, strengths, and interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 4</td>
<td>Provide developmentally and age-appropriate activities and games to scaffold children’s engagement with peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 5</td>
<td>Support children’s social communicative behaviors (i.e., initiations and responses) and conversations with peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 6</td>
<td>Create opportunities to facilitate reciprocal social interaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Training Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Information Covered: (How to…)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 7</td>
<td>Sustain children’s engagement within an activity or game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 8</td>
<td>Coach children through difficult situations with peers should they arise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 9</td>
<td>Provide direct instruction on specific social engagement skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 10</td>
<td>Individualize the intervention to specific children in order to generalize the intervention to other students in their care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 11</td>
<td>Work with typically developing peers to engage children with autism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 12</td>
<td>Fade out of an activity/game so children learn independence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quick Guide: Boosting Peer Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement State</th>
<th>Help Within The Current State</th>
<th>Boost To a Higher State</th>
<th>Strategies To Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solitary</td>
<td>Adult engage with child to assess reason for solitary state. Lasso to the child then offer support.</td>
<td>Review a peer to ask child to play. Give friendly direct instruction telling the child to engage with peers. Provide an appealing and developmentally appropriate activity to show the child’s parallel position with peers.</td>
<td>Avoid pressuring or isolating a child during social times. Avoid pushing a child into an activity as opposed to inviting them and showing them in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onlooker</td>
<td>Model being interested and focused on peers activities. Use language like “Look at Jimmy,” “What are they doing?”</td>
<td>Review a peer to invite the target child to join in play. Encourage the target child to play with peers or to ask a friend to play.</td>
<td>Avoid alienating the peers by making them feel that they must perform under scrutiny. Avoid embarrassing this same or a preferred peer, so that the child only watch all the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel</td>
<td>Support good social positioning, simulate parallel play verbally or with other reward.</td>
<td>Join into play with the child. Cue child to notice peers.</td>
<td>Avoid being overly directive or positioning yourself in such a way that blocks children’s view of one another. Avoid helping too much.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel Aware</td>
<td>Ask peers if they can demonstrate play games or games for each other. Verbally prompt target child to watch the peer. Model focusing on and being interested in the peer’s activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Avoid interacting too many comments or adding information that might obscure the child’s observation or each other. Don’t overly focus on the play objects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Engagement</td>
<td>Provide an environment that makes playing with peers easy. Clearly state that playing well with friends or school is the goal. Fade back and support from a distance as children transition toward peer engagement.</td>
<td>Prompt the children to make a game out of what they are doing, i.e., taking turns setting goals. Teach children the rules and progression of popular games. Provide equipment and workshill objects by children to advance engagement.</td>
<td>Avoid interrupting play and over-managing behaviors that might be less-skilled or a bit rough. Instead, allow the children to set the tone for what is fine and fun as much as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game With Rules</td>
<td>Help the children get the game started or iron out any problems related to the game rules, rules setting, etc. Play with the child for a few turns and model the appropriate behaviors. Make sure to fade out. Check them out.</td>
<td>Overlay a pretend play scenario onto the game. Add a companion that draws out generalized documents. Fade out the scenario and mnemonic. Engage the child in parallel play and check back periodically.</td>
<td>Avoid dominating play as an adult. Don’t stop the flow of play between peers. Avoid engaging overly positive comments when children exhibit rough behaviors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ReMaking Recess

Types of Intervention

1. Peer Mediated
2. Remaking Recess
3. PEERS
PEERS: The Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills

- Parent/caregiver assisted
  - Concurrent parent and teen sessions
  - Parents are trained as social coaches
- Appropriate for socially motivated teens
- Focuses on relational skills
- 14-16 week curriculum
  - 90 minute weekly curriculum

PEERS
Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills
(Laugeson & Frankel, 2010)

- Evidenced-based
  - Teens in middle and high school with ASD
  - Young adults (18-24 yrs old) with ASD
  - Teens with ADHD
  - Teens with FASD
  - Teens with ID
Rules and Steps of Social Behavior

• Ecologically valid social skills
  – Do’s
• Common social errors committed by those with ASD
  – Don’ts
• Create rules around Do’s and Don’ts
• Break down rules into concrete and easy to follow steps

Sheldon Friendship Algorithm
PEERS Sessions and Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Didactic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction and Conversational Skills: Trading Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Conversational Skills II: Two-way Conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Conversational Skills III: Electronic Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Choosing Appropriate Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Appropriate Use of Humor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Peer Entry I: Entering a Conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Peer Entry II: Exiting a Conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Get-togethers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Good Sportsmanship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Rejection I: Teasing and Embarrassing Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Rejection II: Bullying and Bad Reputations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Handling Disagreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Rumors and Gossip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Graduation and Termination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PEERS Teen Session Format

- Homework Review
  - Troubleshoot homework problems
- Didactic Instruction
  - Teach concrete steps for social etiquette
  - Role play/Modeling
- Behavioral Rehearsal
  - Performance feedback through coaching
- Reunification with parents
  - Assign homework
Session 1: Rules for Trading Information

• Ask the other person about himself or herself
• Answer your own question
• Find common interests
• Share the conversation
• Do not get too personal at first

Role Plays
Behavioral Rehearsal

- Teens practice trading information with the person sitting next to them
- Group leader and coaches help facilitate exercise and troubleshoot if problems arise

Homework Assignment

- Teens practice trading information with parents and find a common interest
- Have an in-group phone call with another group member
  - Should be at least 5-10 minutes
  - Goal is to find a common interest
## Teen Activity: Jeopardy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“TGIF”</th>
<th>“Movie, Movies, Movies”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The answer is:</strong></td>
<td><strong>The answer is:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____________________’s favorite weekend activity.</td>
<td>____________________’s favorite movie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Name)</td>
<td>(Name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The question is:</strong></td>
<td><strong>The question is:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is ____________________?</td>
<td>What is ____________________?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Favorite weekend activity)</td>
<td>(Favorite movie)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“The “Eyes” Have It”</th>
<th>“Home” Sweet “Home”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The answer is:</strong></td>
<td><strong>The answer is:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The color of ____________________’s eyes.</td>
<td>The name of the city ____________________ lives in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Name)</td>
<td>(Name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The question is:</strong></td>
<td><strong>The question is:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is ____________________?</td>
<td>What is ____________________?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Your eye color)</td>
<td>(Name of the city you live in)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Reunification

- Teens and parents reunite
- Review rules of Trading Information
- Go over homework for next week
- Individually and separately negotiate with each family where the parent will be during the phone call
PEERS Parent Session Format

- Homework Review
  - Troubleshoot
  - Individualize treatment
- Review of teen didactic lesson
- Homework assignment
  - Troubleshoot potential problems
- Reunification with Teens
- Assign homework

PEERS for Educators
Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills
(Laugeson, 2014)

- Facilitated in classroom
- 16 week curriculum
- 30-60 minute daily lessons
- Focuses on friendship skills
- Strategies for handling peer rejection/conflict
- Includes weekly comprehensive parent handouts
PEERS in the School Setting

- Monday
  - Homework Review
- Tuesday
  - Didactic Lesson
  - Role Play
- Wednesday
  - Lesson Review
  - Role Play
  - Behavioral Rehearsal
  - Homework Assignment
  - Parent Handout goes home
- Thursday and Friday
  - Didactic Summary
  - Teen Activity
  - Homework Assignment

The Science of Making Friends
Helping Socially Challenged Teens and Young Adults
(Laugeson, 2013)

- Book for parents
- Friendship skills
- Parent section
  - Narrative lessons
  - Social coaching tips
- Chapter summary for teens and young adults
- Chapter exercises and homework
- Companion DVD
FriendMaker App

• Breaks down the process of making friends into easy, concrete steps
  – choosing friends
  – improving conversational skills
  – online etiquette
  – handling teasing.

• Role-play videos demonstrate these social skills in action
  – Social Do’s and Don’ts

Summary

• The core characteristics of ASD effect the development of peer relationships

• Having a quality friendship has been known to have a positive effect on self-esteem, and be a predictor of later school adjustment and academic achievement

• While inclusive settings provide great opportunities for peer interaction, students with ASD still need to be taught skills on how to develop, maintain and understand relationships
New York State Regional Centers for Autism Spectrum Disorders
http://www.albany.edu/autism/nysrcasd.php

Clinton - TBD
Albany Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders
SUNY Albany • 15225 Western Ave. • Albany, NY 12203
Phone: (518) 422-2574
card@albany.edu • www.albany.edu/autism

Hudson Valley Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders
Westchester Institute for Human Development
Cedarwood Hall • Valhalla, NY 10595
Phone: (914) 493-7373
http://www.wihd.org/page.aspx?pid=6948.0&MMSP_ID=12

Old Westbury Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders
SUNY Old Westbury • 223 Store Hill Road • Old Westbury, NY 11568
Phone: (516) 628-5647
autism@owwestbury.edu • http://www.cwautism.com

Rochester Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders
University of Rochester
601 Elmwood Ave. • Box 671 • Rochester, NY 14642
Phone: 855-508-0485
rcrcasd@urmc.rochester.edu • www.urmc.rochester.edu/rcrcasd

Western NY Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders
Summit Educational Resources
150 Stahl Road • Gatesville, NY 14068
Phone: 716-637-3445
www.summitautismcenter.org

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

CENTER FOR AUTISM AND RELATED DISABILITIES
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY State University of New York

1535 Western Avenue
Albany, NY 12203

Phone: (866) 442-2574
Fax: (518) 442-4834
E-mail: card@albany.edu
Website: www.albany.edu/autism