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

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

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.

Carter, Hughes, Quitt, & Carpenter (2005); Carter, Sisco, Brown, Brickham, & Al-Khabbaz (2008)
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
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...

---

SRS

---

Peer Relationships in Schools
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. 

Inclusion 

Common practice in both primary and secondary education. Provides opportunities to interact with typically developing peers which may build social networks/social-emotional benefits.

Inclusion = Magic Fix?

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

Proximity and Presence
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

Feldman & Carter
Interventions

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...

Research-based Interventions

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

Netzel (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/peerinterventionasdtips.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

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. (1998)

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 parent/guardian. 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
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)

Kit-For-Kids

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
Step 1: Planning Peer-Mediated Intervention: Training Peers (Continued)

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
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
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 & Kline, 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

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

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

Peer Support Strategies to Foster Social Connections Among Students With and Without Severe Disabilities

Peer Buddy Programs for Supporting All Students in Social and Learning
Types of Intervention
1. Peer Mediated
2. Remaking Recess
3. PEERS

Carter, Asmus & Moss (2013)

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, Sutliff, Kasari & Hamer (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

Cartner, Moss, Asmus, Fesperman, Cooney, Brock, Lyons, Huber & Vincent (2015)

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, Annau, Moen (2016)

Engagement States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement State</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full engagement</td>
<td>The child and peer are engaged in a cooperative activity that involves both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial engagement</td>
<td>The child and peer are engaged in a social interaction that involves only one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel</td>
<td>The child and peer are engaged in a social interaction that occurs in parallel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual with same</td>
<td>The child and peer are engaged in a social interaction that involves one peer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Playground Observation of Peer Engagement
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

### Initial Steps

<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>
Remaking Recess

Social Menus

Social Menus
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>Category</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'TGIF'</td>
<td>What is __________________? (Favorite weekend activity)</td>
<td>Name's favorite weekend activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Movie, Movies, Movies'</td>
<td>What is __________________? (Favorite movie)</td>
<td>Name's favorite movie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'The ‘Eyes’ Have It'</td>
<td>What is __________________? (Your eye color)</td>
<td>Name's eye color.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Home’ Sweet ‘Home’</td>
<td>What is __________________? (Name of the city you live in)</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 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
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

1535 Western Avenue
Albany, NY 12203

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