

Teaching Communication Across the Day

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Participant Outcomes

• Overview of Communication strategies

• Ideas on ways to teach communication

“Qualitative impairment in **COMMUNICATION**,

manifested by at **least one** of the following”:

• Delay in or total lack of spoken language.

• Impairment in ability to initiate or sustain conversation.

• Stereotyped use of language.

• Lack of make-believe play

**Communication and Autism**

• Deficits in nonverbal communication is one of the earliest signs of the disorder

• Deficits in vocal communication often the first symptom noted by others

**Communication and Autism**

• Importance of communication as a foundation for the development of social, play, academic behaviors, etc.

• Importance of appropriate communication to replace or prevent the development of inappropriate communicative behaviors such as tantrums, SIB, aggression

**Modes of communication**

Topography Based

• Involves producing a unique response FORM for each word

• Examples:

– Vocalizations

– Sign language

**Modes of communication**

Selection Based

• Involves scanning an array of pictures, words or symbols and selecting one via point/touch

• Examples:

– PECS

– Dynavox

– Go Talker

– Intellikeys

– Switches

REMEMBER: It is fine to instruct multiple modes for various situations (expressive/receptive)



**Reinforcement**

A stimulus change immediately follows a response and increases the future frequency of that type of behavior in similar conditions.

**Communication**

It is important that the communication we teach is:

Motivating Functional Meaningful

Based on Student Preferences- See Handout

**Motivation**

• If the words, signs, or pictures we attempt to teach are not motivating to the child it will be difficult for them to acquire the word.

• If we don’t give them enough to say then they may result to utilizing behavior to gain what they need/want.

**Mand**

• Type of verbal operant in which a speaker asks (or states, demands, inquires, etc.) what he needs or wants.

• Example: asking for a shoe when you want a shoe.

• Asking for a gummy bear when you want a gummy

bear

• Asking someone to stop tickling you when you want them to stop tickling

**Mand Training**

• Mands are the first verbal operant acquired by

by a human child.

• They usually occur in the form of crying when

a child is hungry, tired, in pain, cold, wants toy,

afraid, etc.

• Typically developing children quickly learn to

replace crying

(Cooper and Heron, 2007)



**Mand Training**

• Manding not only lets children control the delivery of reinforcers, but it begins to establish the speaker and listener roles that are essential for further verbal development.

• Manding is the only type of verbal behavior that benefits the speaker.

• Meaning the mand gets the speaker reinforcers.

(Cooper and Heron, 2007)

**Mand Training**

• It is important that mand training occurs throughout the day for individuals on the autism spectrum.

• This will include contriving situations and providing opportunities for these mands to occur.

**Contriving Manding Opportunities**

• For example, Mickey loves vacuums and everyday after school he rushes to the hall closet to look at the vacuum.

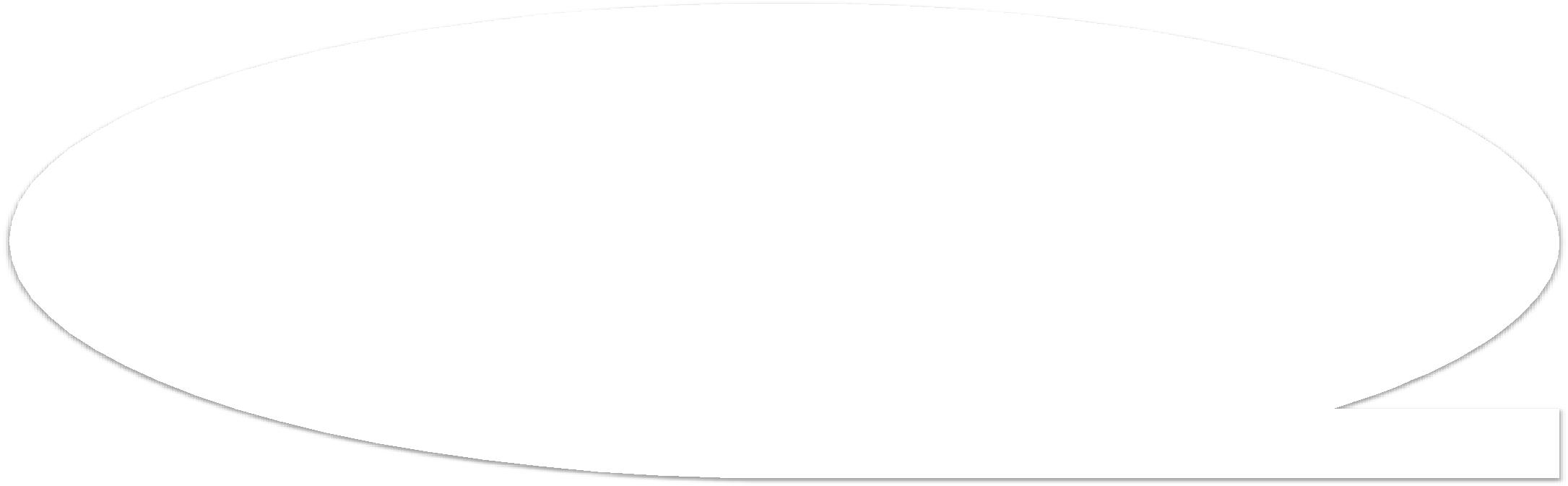
• To contrive a mand for the vacuum you place the vacuum in another location. When he arrives prompt the mand for vacuum.

**Contriving Manding Opportunities**

• Sally always comes into the playroom to grab the ball out of the toy box. You place the ball on the top shelf where Sally cannot reach it.

• You have now contrived the opportunity for multiple mand responses.

Examples; help, ball, where is it, which shelf,etc.

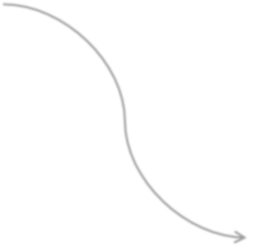


**“Choice boards empower children**

**to participate actively in their**

**home, school, and community**

**environments.” (Savner, 1999)**



Implementing a Choice Board

What are the skill

prerequisites?

Steps for Implementing a Choice Board

1. Select an opportunity during the day when a student has choices

2. Create visual representations of the available choices using actual objects, drawings, photos, or icons

3. Present these visuals to the student and allow time for her/him to point to or pick up the desired object

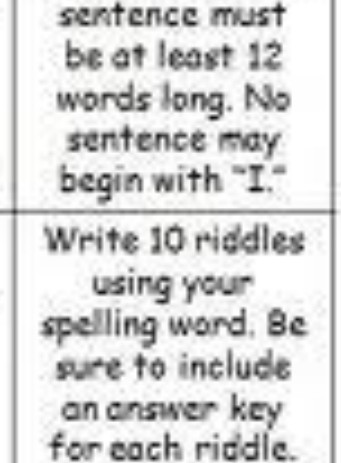
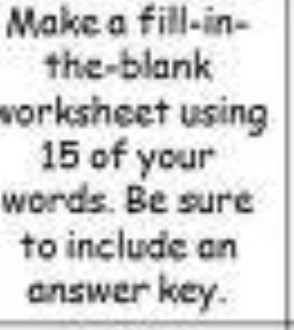
 Only present options that are available at that time

4. Acknowledge the student’s choice by verbally labeling the choice

(“You chose blocks”)

5. Give the student the chosen item or allow her/him to get the item for herself/himself (James & Knowlton, 2007)

**Choice Board**



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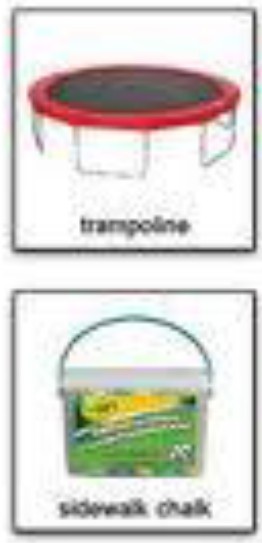
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**Functional Communication Training (FCT)**

FCT is a systematic practice to replace

inappropriate behavior or subtle communicative

acts with more appropriate and effective

communicative behaviors.

When using FCT, teachers/practitioners analyze the problem behavior to determine what the

learner is trying to communicate.

**Functional Communication Training (FCT)**

Why do you think FCT is such a powerful intervention for students with ASD?

**Functional Communication Training (FCT)**

What types of things do students with ASD

communicate via problem behavior?

‘Hi, notice me” “I need help”

“ I don’t want that” “What is that”

“I want that one”

“Something’s wrong”

**Functional Communication Training (FCT)**

Reinforce the student saying help, instead of screaming when the computer freezes.

Reinforce handing a picture card to a peer

requesting a toy instead of grabbing it.

**Functional Communication Training (FCT)**

*Advantages*

Dramatic decrease in challenging behavior

• Increases communication

• Social validity

• Gains that generalize

• Gains that last

*Disadvantages*

• High rates of recruitment for reinforcement

• Request may occur at inconvenient times

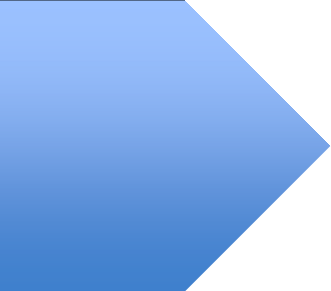
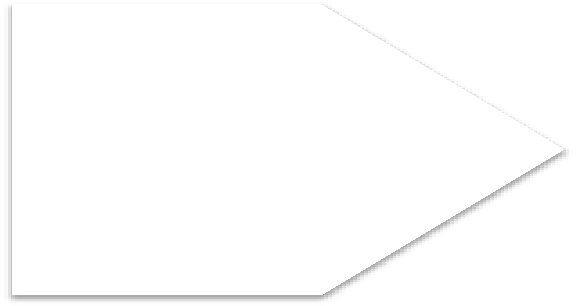
• Extinction may produce undesirable effects



**Functional Communication Training (FCT)**

FORMS Function

Gestures Signs Words



Picture systems Requests/ Objects Mands Technology

**Sign Language**

Teaching sign language to children with autism can

serve the purpose of functionally replacing other

disruptive behaviors such as aggression

Teaching a child with autism to communicate using sign language may be an easier transition to vocal communication

**Advantages of Sign Language**

• May help to develop motor imitation

• Stimulus & response often resemble each other, providing a built in prompt

• Topography based, like speech

• Single stimulus and single response relation, like

speech

• Community of signers already exists

• Can be used to teach all operants

**Disadvantages of Sign Language**

• Parents & teachers must learn the child’s signs

• Parents & teachers need to use sign language when interacting with the child

• Parents & teachers must teach/shape each individual sign

**Begin Sign Training by teaching**

**Mands**

• Identify items and activities that are reinforcing for the learner

• Select reinforcers that instructors can easily control and that provide many opportunities to mand (request)

• Determine the manual sign for each of the reinforcers the child will learn to mand for

**Selecting Mands**

• Do  **NOT** teach the following until the learner can mand for many items:

– Yes/no

– More

– Finished

– Please

– Potty

– Help

– Eat

– Drink

– Help

– Carrier phrases (“I want .” “Give me .”)



**Why not teach these mands?**

• These are generalized responses.

• If a child is signing “more” it will be difficult for the the listener to understand and reinforce their request.

**Picture Exchange Communication**

**System (PECS)**

• designed to teach functional communication with an

initial focus on spontaneity

• There are 6 phases

– How to communicate

– Distance and persistence

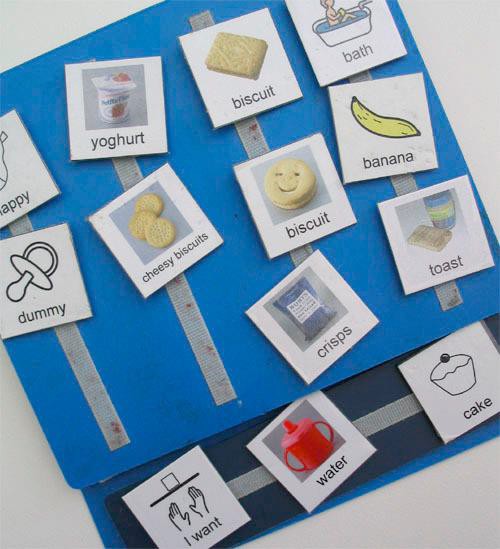
– Picture discrimination

– Sentence structure

– Answering questions

– Commenting

**Picture Exchange Communication**



**System (PECS)**

**Picture Exchange Communication**

**System (PECS)**

• If PECS is chosen as the communication

system it is important that the book is

available throughout their day.

• Make sure it is available at home, school, on the bus, etc.

• This will increase use as well as initiation of communication

**Advantages of PECS**

Each exchange is clearly intentional and readily understood. When a child hands you a picture or sentence strip, the request or comment is quickly determined

Communication is initiated by the child

Communication is meaningful and highly motivating

**Disadvantages of PECS**

Parents and educators must be trained

After pictures and binders, it can get expensive

In order for a child to request something, there must be a picture. Therefore, there must be pictures of almost everything in their environment

**Opportunities to Respond (OTR)**

• The number of times the teacher provides academic requests that require students to actively respond

• A teacher behavior that prompts or solicits a student response - Results in positive behavioral and academic outcomes

• Allows teacher insight

– (Miller, 2009; Sprick, Knight, Reinke, & McKale, 2006)

**Opportunities to Respond (OTR)**

• Increases student engagement with instruction

• Allows for high rates of positive specific

feedback related to behavior

• Limits time for engaging in inappropriate behavior

• Results in more effective use of instructional time

**Opportunities to Respond (OTR)**

• Can be used as a quick assessment to guide teaching/lesson direction

• Provides teacher information on

student understanding/thought process

• Allows teacher to correct errors in knowledge/understanding

• Evidence of gains in Reading and Math

(e.g. mastery, rate, etc.)

**OTR**

Verbal Non-verbal

• Orally answering a question

• Sharing thoughts

• Summarizing

• Repeating

• Writing

• Performing an action

• Moving about room

**Types of Verbal and Non-verbal**

Verbal Non-verbal

Individual Question

Choral Responding

Response Cards/Response

Systems

Movement Activities

**Peer Interaction**

• Make sure that there are multiple opportunities to interact with peers

• Lunch time- have the student mand for items from peers and/or paraprofessionals

• Recess- place items that they need two people to complete the activity (i.e., bubbles, chase, catch)

• Free time- items that are reinforcing are in close proximity to peers. Reinforce student when they are within proximity of peers or are playing with peer

**In Summary**

One of the most important things we can teach individuals with autism is the ability to communicate.

Choose a communication system(s)( or let

them choose)

Be consistent

Have the communication systems available all the time across environments

REMEMBER: It is fine to have more than one

FORM of communication.

Thank you so much for coming!!

**Questions??**

**Questions?**

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