



Promoting Social-communication and Play in Preschoolers with ASD ↗

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AM & PM Session Agenda


- ↗ **AM Session**
 - ↗ Focus on assessment of social & play skills
 - ↗ General assessment of social skills
 - ↗ Specific assessment of social-communication & play based on the ASAP intervention
- ↗ **PM Session**
 - ↗ Focus on intervention strategies
 - ↗ General intervention strategies to target social skills
 - ↗ Specific strategies tied to ASAP intervention
- ↗ Have fun!

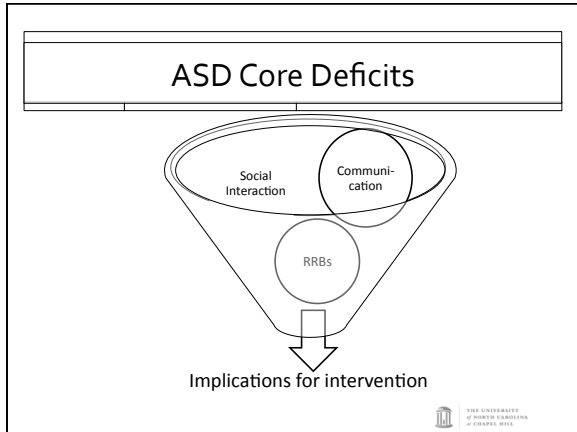


Background on Autism

Neurodevelopmental disorder diagnosed based on behavioral and developmental characteristics

- ↗ **DSM-IV-TR**
 - ↗ At least 6 symptoms in three areas
 - ↗ Social interaction
 - ↗ Communication, &
 - ↗ Restricted, repetitive, stereotyped patterns of behaviors, interests, and activities
 - ↗ **Autism Spectrum Disorders**
 - ↗ Encompasses a range of disorders





**Core Deficits:
Implications for Intervention**

➤ **Social Interaction:**

- Prevent active engagement with others
- Limit independence in natural learning environment
- Limit relationship building skills

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**Core Deficits:
Implications for Intervention**

➤ **Communication:**

- Limit the ability to engage in conversation
- Limit the ability to engage in appropriate levels of play
- Limit ability to make needs known and regulate others' behavior

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**Core Deficits:
Implications for Intervention**

- **RRBs**
 - Prevent social interaction with others
 - Prevent engaging in play
 - Serve as substitution for expressing anxiety or other emotions

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General Assessment of Social Skills ➤

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Behavior Equation

Antecedent (Trigger)	Behavior	Maintaining Consequence

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Setting Event

➤ Event that occurs at another time that increases the likelihood the child will engage in a certain behavior. Setting events serve to “set the child up” to exhibit a given behavior.

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Behavior Equation

Setting Event	Trigger	Behavior	Consequence
	<i>Quan goes into the playroom to get his favorite toy train</i>	<i>Quan pushes the train towards his younger brother (after mom prompts him)</i>	<i>Quan's brother pushes the train back & they begin to play together</i>

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Behavior Equation


Setting Event	Trigger	Behavior	Consequence
<i>Quan's younger brother is crying</i>	<i>Quan goes into the playroom to get his favorite toy train</i>	<i>Quan refuses to push the train to his brother & instead throws it at him</i>	<i>Quan's mom tells him "that's not okay" & takes the younger brother out of the playroom</i>

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Some Potential Setting Events


- Change in Medications
- Lack of Sleep
- Hunger
- Unpredictable Environment
- Little Forewarning of Transitions
- Others??



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Sample Setting Event Chart

		Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Peer presence in block center	Johnny present		✓	✓	✓	
	Lucas present	✓				✓
His behavior?	Appropriate play		✓	✓	✓	
	Hitting	✓	✓			✓



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Direct Observation

➤ We're going to focus on 1 strategy

1. Observation cards

➤ Guidelines:

1. Know whom and what behavior you're observing
2. Observe long enough to get a "representative sample"
 - a. Across contexts
 - b. Multiple team members
3. Try to remain unobtrusive
4. Pay Attention!



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Observation Card

Name:	Observer:	Date:
General Context:	Time:	
Trigger:		
Social or Play Behavior:		
Consequence:		
POSSIBLE EXPLANATION:		

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Example of Observation Card

Name: <i>Karen</i>	Observer: <i>teacher</i>	Date: <i>1/22</i>
General Context: <i>Dramatic Play Center</i>	Time: <i>10:00</i>	
Trigger: <i>Playing alone in house. Teacher comes over to Karen and tries to get her to pretend to feed the baby doll.</i>		
Social or Play Behavior: <i>Karen refuses to feed the doll but does pretend to feed herself.</i>		
Maintaining Consequence: <i>The teacher says, "You fed yourself. Good job!" The teacher continues to try to get Karen to feed other people & inanimate objects.</i>		
POSSIBLE EXPLANATION: <i>Karen is having difficulty involving others in play, but is able to engage in self-directed play.</i>		

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Let's Look at An Activity Analysis

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Social Communication and Play in Children with Autism

Impacted SC Skills	Impacted Play Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Joint attention ➤ Gestures ➤ Eye contact ➤ Language expression ➤ Language comprehension ➤ Peer relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pretend play ➤ Imitation ➤ Variety in play ➤ Social play

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Response to Intervention: Symbolic Play vs. Joint Attention (Kasari et al., 2008)

Goal: expressive language

Initial Child Behavior	JA	SP
< 5 words; AE< 20 months Expressive	✓	
> 5 words; AE> 20 months Expressive	✓	✓

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Selecting ASAP Intervention Targets ➤

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Development of Social Communication

- **Social Interaction:** Communicating to engage with a person
- **Requesting:** Communicating to gain access to something, someone, or some action
- **Joint Attention:** Communicating to share interest in an object or an event

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Assessment: Communicative Form & Function

- **Communicative form**
 - Definition: the way a person communicates
 - Examples: words, **gestures**, picture symbols, signs, vocalizations
- **Communicative function**
 - Definition: the purpose for the communication
 - Examples: request, interact, comment

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Skill Levels across Three Categories of Social-Communication


SKILL LEVELS	CATEGORIES		
	Social Interaction <i>Age of Emergence: 8-15 months</i>	Requesting <i>Age of Emergence: 8-15 months</i>	Joint Attention <i>Age of Emergence: 10-18 months</i>
SH	Child looks face to face, gazes, physical activities, or reactions, child watches the adult closely	RQ1. Child reaches for out of reach object to show wanting the object	
SM	During face to face games, physical activities, or reactions, when a brief pause child shows wanting the game to continue (e.g. looks, waves body to make a motion of the game, touches the partner, vocalizes)	RQ3. Child pulls parent's hand toward objects to show request for help	
SL	Child play's back-and-forth games with objects or actions (e.g., exchange objects back-and-forth)	RQ2. Child gives objects to show request for help	
SH	Child initiates familiar games or reactions (e.g., not right after an adult does the action)	RQ4a. Child looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request (i.e., objects within reaching distance)	JAT1. Child responds to another person giving objects just to share interest in the objects
SM	Child responds games or reactions, e.g., includes a third person in the game or game. Switches roles with other person (e.g., finds, hides)	RQ4b. Child points to nearby objects to request them	JAT2. Child gives objects just to share interest in objects with another person
SL	Child combines gesture and/or vocalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue	RQ4c. Child looks at distant objects when another person points to the objects as a request (i.e., objects that are beyond reach)	JAT3. Child responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects
		RQ4d. Child points to distant objects to request them	JAT4. Child shows objects just to share interest in the objects with another person
		RQ4e. Child combines gesture and/or vocalization verbalization with looking at person to request	JAT5. Child follows a point to nearby objects, wants just to share interest in objects events
			JAT6. Child points to nearby objects just to share interest in objects events with another person
			JAT7. Child follows a point to more distant objects events just to share interest in the objects events
			JAT8. Child points to more distant objects events just to share interest in objects events with another person
			JAT9. Child follows gaze of another person to objects events just to share interest
			JAT10. Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event

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Social Communication
Social Interaction

S11. While playing face to face games, physical activities, or routines, child **watches adult closely**


S12. While playing face to face games, physical activities, or routines, after a brief pause child **shows wanting the game to continue**



Social Communication
Social Interaction

S13. Child plays back-and-forth games with objects or actions


S14. Child **initiates** familiar games or routines



Social Communication
Social Interaction

S15. Child **expands** games or routines

S16. Child **combines** gestures and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue




Social Communication
Requesting

RQ1. Child **reaches** for out of reach object to show wanting the object

RQ2. Child **pulls person's hand** toward objects to show request for help

RQ3. Child **gives** objects to show request for help



Social Communication
Requesting


RQ4. Child **looks at nearby** objects when another person points to the objects as a request

RQ5. Child **points to nearby** objects to request them

RQ6. Child **looks at distant** objects when another person points to the objects as a request

RQ7. Child **points to distant** objects to request them

RQ8. Child combines modalities




Social Communication
Joint Attention

JA1a. Child **responds** to another person **giving** objects just to share interest in the objects

JA1b. Child **gives objects** just to share interest with another person

JA2a. Child **responds** to another person **showing** objects just to share interest


JA2b. Child **shows objects** just to share interest in the objects with another person



**Social Communication
Joint Attention**

JA3a. Child follows a point to **nearby** objects/events just to share interest in objects/events


JA3b. Child points to **nearby** objects/events just to share interest in objects/ events with another person



**Social Communication
Joint Attention**

JA4a. Child follows a point to more **distant** objects/events just to share interest in the objects/events


JA4b. Child points to more **distant** objects/events just to share interest in objects/ events with another person



**Social Communication
Joint Attention**

JA5. Child follows gaze of another person to objects/ events just to share interest

JA6. Child combines modalities



SKILL LEVELS	CATEGORIES			
	Exploratory	Relational	Functional	Symbolic
	Age of Emergence: 2-10 months	Age of Emergence: 10-18 months	Age of Emergence: 12-18 months	Age of Emergence: 22-24 months
				33 Child uses 7 or more different gestures • waves one hand or the other, with the same eye • points with extended hand, open palm but closed fingers • gives an indication to bring, to separate and of substance, and places an object in hand by mouth 34 Child uses one or two types of gestures to stand for another • waves • points with one hand on top • puts objects in hand or foot • uses gesture on hand or finger for help 35 Child uses pointed fingers to point • shows an object of simple use • makes "vocal" gesture when presenting to use for drink 36 Child uses pointed fingers to play • waves • holds hands out as if holding on phone • shows hand as if holding a pretend object toy's name 37 Child uses one or two gestures to get that other people does • waves • points to show what someone is • plays construction vehicle with another child's response 38 Child requests pretend role to play with or other people • play • pretend, suggesting roles such as "I'm a doctor, you be the patient" 39 Child requests pretend play with other people and • uses roles, and or • fantasy roles • pretense social roles • pretense and pretend play

Exploratory

- **Definition:**
 - » Exploration and simple manipulation of single objects
 - » Ex: acts on an object with mouthing, banging, patting, turning over, etc.
- **Levels:**
 - » **E1.** Child picks up & looks at toy
 - » **E2.** Child plays with toys using both hands together
 - » **E3.** Child plays with one toy in three or more different ways

Relational

- **Definition:**
 - Taking objects apart and general combinations, often involving two objects or two parts of the same toy
 - Ex: taking nesting cups apart, stacking blocks, shape sorter
- **Levels:**
 - » **R1.** Child takes pieces of toys apart
 - » **R2.** Child puts toys together in simple ways
 - » **R3.** Child puts several toys together in specific ways


Functional

➤ Definition:

- Simple pretend play, directed towards objects, self, people, and doll figures
- Ex: stirring spoon in a cup, feeding person or doll

• **Levels:**

- » F1. Child plays with toys in functional or “simple pretend” ways
- » F2. Child plays with toys in simple pretend ways directed to self
- » F3. Child includes a doll/action figure in simple pretend play with toys
- » F4. Child includes other people in simple pretend play with toys
- » F5. Child uses same action in simple pretend play with two different people or dolls/figures




Symbolic

➤ Definition:

- More complex pretend play including object substitution, imaginary objects/qualities, agent play, and role play
- Ex: Pretending a banana is a phone, using hand for phone, moving a doll if it is feeding itself, pretending to be a police officer

• **Levels:**

- » S1. Child makes doll/figure move or do things as if it were alive
- » S2. Child does 2 different pretend actions, one right after another, with the same toy
- » S3. Child does 3 or more different pretend actions, one right after another, with the same toy
- » S4. Child uses one toy/object to represent or stand for another
- » S5. Child uses pretend qualities in play
- » S6. Child uses pretend objects in play
- » S7. Child takes on pretend role
- » S8. Child suggests pretend roles




Unstructured Assessment and Scoring

PLAY CATEGORY AND SKILL LEVELS	Examples, Prompts, & Notes	Summary Score
EXPLORATORY PLAY	<p>Write in examples of behaviors observed. Note if a behavior was prompted. Prompted behaviors are scored 0. If an example was observed, leave blank and score 0 to indicate that child did not display the skill.</p>	5 - score 4 - no example 3 - 1 example 2 - 2 examples 1 - 3 examples
E1. Child picks up and looks at a toy. • Example: Picks up, looks at, puts down block; Picks up, looks at, puts down ball. E2. Child plays with toys using both hands together. • Example: Pushes button on pop up; Rolls ball; Grabs blocks; Turns pages in book.	0 1 2 3 4 5 0 1 2 3 4 5 0 1 2 3 4 5 0 1 2 3 4 5	

- Demonstration of Skill
 - » Prompt levels
- Description of skill
 - » Activity
 - » Materials
- Summary Score

EXPLORATORY PLAY	Summary Score
E1. No B score entered	
E1. Child picks up and looks at a toy	
E2. Child plays with toys using both hands together	
E2. Child plays with toys using both hands together	
E2. Child plays with toys using both hands together	

***** NOTE:** Undemonstrated lower level play skills



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Teamwork: Observations of Nicholas

Strengths	Challenges	Other Observations

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What about Intervention?

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Components of ASAP Intervention

The diagram illustrates the components of an ASAP intervention. On the left, there are two circles: the top one is labeled 'Content' and the bottom one is labeled 'Strategies'. A plus sign (+) is positioned between these two circles. An arrow points from this plus sign to a larger circle on the right labeled 'Intervention'. This visualizes the process of combining content and strategies to create an intervention.

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Content of Effective Interventions

- Includes evidence-based practices
- Uses assessment data to determine child’s goals as starting point for instruction
- Uses teaching strategies that are matched to targeted goal
- Provides a method to collect data in an ongoing and systematic manner to monitor child’s progress

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Evidence-Based Practice: The Model

Best available empirical evidence

Individualized practice decisions

Family wisdom & values Professional wisdom & values

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Evidence-Based Practice: Realities

Many challenges impede the integration of different sources of evidence &/or translation &/or access to EB services

Best available empirical evidence

Individualized practice decisions

Family wisdom & values Professional wisdom & values

Result: Empirically based interventions often are not implemented in the “real world”

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Phase 1: Focus Groups...

Play: Valued by teachers and related service providers

"Getting those play skills as far along in preschool as we can is imperative ...because they're not going to get it in kindergarten. They're not playing in kindergarten."

Play: Systemically undervalued as a goal


"Pretend play can get brushed aside because other things are more important."

"We're not supposed to write play goals into their IEPs."

"Play is an unfortunate word for what these children need to do."


Paying attention vs. joint attention

Example of goal
"[The child] will engage in an adult-directed task for one minute."




Phase 1: Focus Group Study Outcomes

Valued Intervention Components		Perceived Barriers	
Child level	Motivating & Fun	Child level	Lack of generalization
	Applicable across developmental levels		Does not include peers
	Sensory needs / preferences		No mechanism for collaboration
Provider level	Includes peers	Provider level	Service intensity not driven by child needs
	Collaboration		Training & staff turn over
	Evidence-based		Play is undervalued
System level	User-friendly	System level	Disconnect from assessment team
	Administrative support / buy-in		Limited resources (e.g., time)
	Fits with existing curricula		Delay in getting services
			Transition to kindergarten



General Treatment Recommendations



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Dimensions of Treatment

- Context
- Level of structure
- Adult- or child-directed
- Amount and types of prompts
- Amount and types of reinforcement

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Evidence-based Strategies

Treatment Approaches	Context
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discrete Trial Training ➤ PECS ➤ Naturalistic approaches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pivotal Response Training ➤ Milieu Teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ One-to-one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maximizes opportunities for skill practice ➤ Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Opportunities for generalization

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Discrete Trial Training

- Also known as “Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)” and “Lovaas Approach”
- Characterized by
 - High structure
 - Adult control
 - 1:1 drills with S-R-S^{R+} format
 - Repetition
 - Incremental steps, including opportunities for generalization
 - Data-based decision making

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Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

- Developed by Bondy & Frost (6 Phases to PECS)
- Characterized by
 - High structure, initially (discrete trial)
 - Trials initiated by child's motivation
 - 2:1 adult:child intervention in initial steps
 - Physical prompting as needed to ensure child success on each trial
 - Natural reinforcers in first phases
- Reaching Phase 4 (use of sentence strips) may promote speech development in children with ASD



Natural Language Paradigm/Pivotal Response Training (PRT)

- Based on work by Koegel & Koegel
- Characterized by:
 - Moderate structure
 - Greater child control
 - 1:1 functional play with stimuli
 - Teaching of pivotal skill sets (e.g., initiations)
 - Natural reinforcers



Milieu Teaching/Incidental Teaching

- Milieu teaching (Kaiser, Hart, Yoder) or incidental teaching (McGee)
- Characterized by:
 - Environmental arrangement
 - High degree of child control
 - Intervention in the natural environment (e.g., within a classroom)
 - Natural reinforcers



Proven Naturalistic Strategies

- Environmental arrangement
- Encourage child initiation & follow child's attentional focus & interest
- Intersperse preferred & non preferred activities
- Embed instruction in natural environment
- Offer choices & encourage choice making
- Use natural reinforcers
- Use time delay/waiting
- Use contingent imitation
- Structure predictability into activities
- Provide multiple learning opportunities

Peer Mediated Strategies

- Peer-mediated strategies involve:
 - Using competent peers to facilitate the learning and display of appropriate behaviors by the child with a less complex set of skills (Odom et al., 2003; Utley, 1997)
 - Peers are taught to prompt and reinforce child responses during naturally occurring interactions
 - Siblings can serve as peers

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Example of Peer-Mediated Strategy


Goldstein and colleagues (1997) used *Stay-Play-Talk* to facilitate peer-target child interaction

- Stay = You ask the peer to stay engaged in the same activity
- Play = You ask the peer to play with the target child during the activity
- Talk = You remind the peer to comment on the play of the child with autism, and in general, to talk to the child while playing

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Peer Initiation Training

- Peer Initiation Training – directly teaching the peer how to:
 - socially initiate an interaction with the target child
 - appropriately respond to the target child when s/he socially initiates



Things to Think about with Peer-Mediated Strategies

- During what activities and settings will the peer and target child with autism work on the skill?
- Are the peer and target child in proximity to one another?
- What strategies will the peer use to prompt the target child to engage in the expected behavior (i.e. antecedent strategies)?
- How will the children be reinforced?

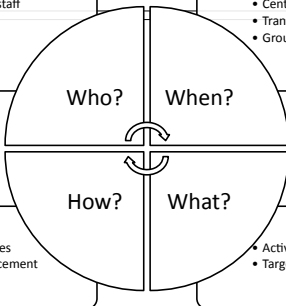


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Other Intervention Considerations


- School staff
- Peers
- Parents

- Centers
- Transitions
- Group & 1:1




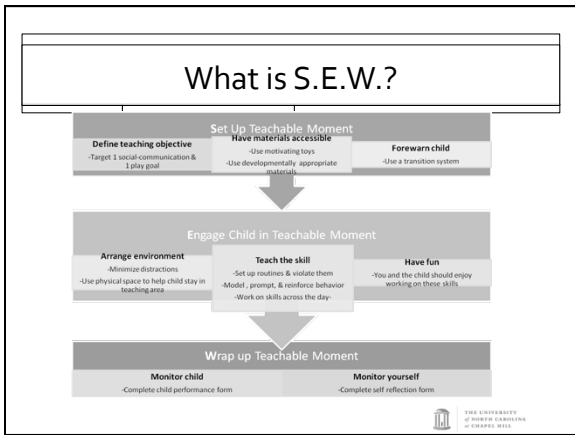
- Strategies
- Reinforcement

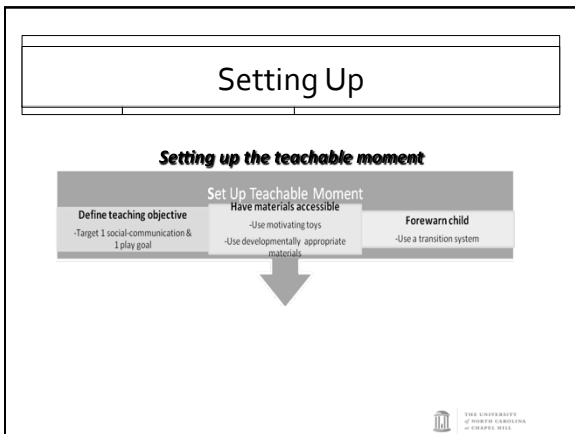
- Activities
- Target skills



SEWing It All Up







Engagement

Engaging the child in the teachable moment

Engage Child in Teachable Moment

<p>Arrange environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Minimize distractions -Use physical space to help child stay in teaching area 	<p>Teach the skill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Set up routines & violate them -Model, prompt, & reinforce behavior -Work on skills across the day 	<p>Have fun</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -You and the child should enjoy working on these skills
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Wrapping Up

Wrapping up the teachable moment

Wrap up Teachable Moment

<p>Monitor child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Complete child performance form 	<p>Monitor yourself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Complete self reflection form
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Child's Name: _____ Date: _____

Goals:	Activities: (underline materials)	Results: * Prompt Level	Did the child engage?	Reinforcers: T = Tangible S = Social N = Natural	Notes:

* Just in case" activities: _____

How was performance compared to the last session? _____

* Prompt Levels: TP=prompted, FP=partial physical, PM=full model, P=verbal model, VM=whole model, O=gesture, P=prosocial, EV=environmental/pictorial

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Teaching social skills

Proximity	Peer or other student sits next to student in music or circle
Parallel	Peer or other student completes same activity next to student (puzzle, coloring, play-do, dolls, computer)
Sharing	Peer or other student completes same activity next to student with only 1 set of materials
Cooperating	Peer or other student completes same activity with student (mural, floor puzzle)
Turn-taking	Peer or other student plays basic games with turn taking (Memory, Geo Safari)
Rules	Peer or other student plays games with rules (Go Fish, Candyland)
Reciprocal	Peers included students at recess and in inclusion activities

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7 Principles of Behavioral Interventions ↗

(Adapted from McWilliam, 2002)

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Principle 1

↗ Comprehensive purposefulness - each instructional opportunity should address multiple goals, AND each goal should be targeted during a variety of instructional opportunities

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Principle 2

➤ Balance participation and independence - provide assistance when *needed* AND allow the child the opportunity to function independently




Principle 3

➤ Behavioral responsivity - be responsive to the child's interests and motivations AND use those to target important skills




Principle 4

➤ Distributed learning opportunities - work on teaching episodes throughout the day and during a variety of activities versus using massed learning trials




Principle 5

➤ Contextually relevant learning - embed teaching episodes in naturally occurring activities that provide an opportunity for the child to display the targeted skill




Principle 6

➤ Program generalization - do NOT just expect the targeted skill to generalize BUT actively work on having the child use the skill with other people and in multiple settings




Principle 7


➤ Use natural reinforcers - provide the child access to logical consequences when they display the targeted skill or behavior




Linking Assessment to Intervention ↗



Things to Think About




Characteristics of Autism + Behavior(s) of Interest = Intervention Options




Characteristics of Autism ↗

Mesibov, Shea, & Schopler, 2005



Characteristics of Autism

- Excessive focus on details – child may focus on irrelevant or unimportant details
- Example: You're trying to teach the child that this photo represents playground, and instead the child focuses on the vines growing on the building in the background.



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Characteristics of Autism

- Distractibility – child can be easily distracted by competing environmental stimuli
- Real-life Example: A child is sitting inside his classroom working on an art project (the windows are closed), and he gets distracted by the faint sound of a dump truck that is outside.

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Characteristics of Autism

- Concrete thinking – child has difficulty with abstract concepts and figurative language, and gravitates towards facts
- Example: Child may not understand idioms, such as, "She kicked the bucket."

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Characteristics of Autism

- Disorganization – child may have difficulty with organizing his/her own time or activities, or putting together a sequence of steps to accomplish a goal

- Example: Sequenced picture schedules, such as one for washing hands, often are used to help children independently perform the necessary steps in the correct order.

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Characteristics of Autism

- Difficulty with generalization – child has difficulty transferring skills learned in the trained setting or situation to a non-trained situation

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Assessing Behaviors of Interest ➤

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Direct Observation

- Most direct method of becoming familiar with the learning & development of a young child
- 3 major purposes:
 - To understand children's behavior
 - To evaluate children's development
 - To monitor progress

Common direct observational methods include:

- Anecdotal Recording
- Frequency Recording
- Duration Recording
- Interval Recording

Wortham, 2001

What Skills Do You Need to Teach?

- **Replacement Skills:** One-to-one replacement skills that serve the exact function as a problem behavior.
- **Cognitive Skills:** Includes actual academic skills as well as skills related to organization and planning.
- **Communication or Social Skills:** Skills that increase the child's communicative and social attempts.
- **Coping and Tolerance:** Skills that teach students to cope with or tolerate difficult situations.


How to Link Assessment to Intervention

Characteristics of Autism	Behavior(s) of Interest	Skill to Teach	Intervention Options/Strategies	Stage of Learning			Monitoring Progress			
				A	F	M	P	E	F	
Details	☒ Communication	☒ Comm/Social	☒ Incidental Teaching	☒						
Distractible	Social	Replacement	Millieu Teaching							
Concrete	Play	Cognitive	PRT		☒					
Organization	☒ Problem Behavior	Coping	Peer-mediated							
Generalization			Positive Behavior Support							

Key: Stage of Learning – A = Acquisition; F = Fluency; M = Maintenance
 Monitoring Progress – P = Pass; E = Emerging; F = Failing to Emerge

Take Home Points

- Social-communication & play are considered pivotal skill sets for children with ASD
- These skills can be effectively targeted through systematic interventions that involve:
 - Assessment of child's current level of performance
 - Intervention strategies matched to child's needs and developmental abilities
 - Data-based decision strategies



Most important strategy...

**HAVE FUN
and help the kids
HAVE FUN!**

Aim for a
HIGH LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT



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