

63RD CONFERENCE ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

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Think First

A Social Skills Group



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Getting the Ball Rolling

- Evolution of the groups- “*Build it and they will come*”
- Funding- “*Where’s the money?*”
- How to get the money in times as tight as these.





Student Driven

- Students drive the group
- Students make the Rules
- Students set goals
- Adults facilitate for the group
- Adults support the rules and positive behavior
- Adults provide the activities to meet the goals

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Rules

For the kids and by the kids!

- No Gum!
- Be on time.
- Be kind and respectful to others.
- Participate.....Pitch in.....Pay attention!
- Use an indoor, age appropriate voice.
- Use your words.....be polite!
- Be SUPER respect to people and property.

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Club Goals For and by the kids!

- I will learn to volunteer.
- I will learn to use my words to ask for help, information, and clarification.
- I will control my actions and reactions to situations. I will make the response match the situation.
- I will learn ways to join in.
- I will learn how to be an active listener.





Where's the Data? Does this thing work?

- Student pre-survey
- Student report-anecdotal information
- Teacher pre-survey
- Teacher report



Keeping it Simple

Student Pretest Items & Students responses:

1. Friends never argue. 6/7 replied yes.
2. Give a hug to someone you just met. 4/7 replied yes.....this is a good idea.
3. What would you do if you and a friend disagreed over playing with a ball? 3/7 had difficulty identifying three possible solutions for conflict resolution.

Student Posttest Items & Student Responses:

1. Friends never argue. 1/7 replied yes.
2. Give a big hug to someone you just met. 2/7 said yes.....this is a good idea.
3. What would you do if you and a friend disagreed over playing with a ball? 6/7 identified all three possibilities for conflict resolution.



Student Pretest Responses

Student Posttest Responses

Student Pretest Items & Responses:

Given three scenarios, students created three polite requests. 4/7 students created all three polite requests.

Student Posttest Items & Student Responses:

Given three scenarios, students created three polite requests. 6/7 correctly created three polite requests.

Teacher Pre and Post Surveys

Skill	Above Grade Level	At Grade Level	Below Grade Level
Small group participation in class	0	2	7
Making and keeping friends	0	3	6
Ability to ask for help in class	0	2	7
Organization in class	0	2	7
Organization from home to class	0	3	6

Skill	Above Grade Level	At Grade Level	Below Grade Level
Small group participation in class	0	2	7
Making and keeping friends	0	7	2
Ability to ask for help in class	0	4	5
Organization in class	0	3	6
Organization from home to school	0	3	6



Quick and Easy Assessments

- **This and That**
- **Social Skills Rating Scale-Student Form-Communication Solutions for Older Students**, Pro-Ed, Inc. 2003
- **Questionnaire for Teachers and Related Service Professionals, Thinking about You Thinking about Me** , Michelle Garcia Winner; 2007 Social Thinking Publishing

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I Will Statements

I will:

- 1. Understand the importance of direct instruction to teach pragmatic skills based on current research.**
- 2. Understand the common areas that present difficulty for socially challenged students.**
- 3. Analyze social communication breakdown.**
- 4. Apply what I have learned to create a mini lesson to teach an abstract social skill.**



Pragmatic/Social Skills What are They?

Let's solve the mystery!

According to Michelle Garcia Winner:

- “Sharing Space with others effectively.” or “Adapting to others effectively across contexts.”
- To paraphrase: “ Social skills are not only essential to interactions but for quiet situations like quietly sharing space in a classroom or on the job.”



Michelle Garcia Winner's “*I LAUGH MODEL*”

- I= **I**nitiation of communication act
- L=**L**istening with Eyes and Brains
- A=**A**bstract and Inferential
- U=**U**nderstanding
- G=**G**estalt Processing; Getting the Big Picture
- H=**H**umor and Human Relatedness



According to:

The American Speech Hearing and Language Association:

Pragmatics involve three major communication skills:

- 1. Using language** for different purposes, such as....
 - greeting (e.g., hello, goodbye)
 - informing (e.g., I'm going to get a cookie)
 - demanding (e.g., Give me a cookie)
 - promising (e.g., I'm going to get you a cookie)
 - requesting (e.g., I would like a cookie, please)



According to:

The American Speech Hearing and Language Association:

2. **Changing language** according to the needs of a listener or situation, such as:

- talking differently to a baby than to an adult
- giving background information to an unfamiliar listener
- speaking differently in a classroom than on a playground



According to:

The American Speech Hearing and Language Association:

3. **Following rules** for conversations and storytelling, such as
 - taking turns in conversation
 - introducing topics of conversation
 - staying on topic
 - rephrasing when misunderstood
 - how to use verbal and nonverbal signals
 - how close to stand to someone when speaking
 - how to use facial expressions and eye contact

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Daniel Goleman in the prologue of his book, Social Intelligence, 2007, said :

“ Neuroscience has discovered that our brain’s very design makes it sociable, inexorably drawn into **an intimate brain-to- brain linkup** whenever we engage with another person.”

“Empathy is an individual ability, one that resides inside the person....**rapport only arises between people as a property that emerges from that interaction.**”



Where is the Evidence?

We know that there are Developmental Milestones to Social Language Development:

- Infants respond to others' facial expressions and tone of voice. (Flinn & Dziurawiec, 1989).
- Joint attention skills are typically mastered by 18 months (Baron-Cohen, 1995).
- Children as young as 20-24 months can express and/or label internal states. (e.g. happy, sad, good, bad) (Bretherton, McNew, & Beeghly-Smith, 1981).
- Children between ages 24-36 months talk about their thinking with words like remember, think, and know.(Bretherton & Beeghly, 1982).



More Evidence

- By 36 months children can infer happy (Haldwin & Perner, 1991).
- Preschoolers can listen to a situation and predict the emotional reaction and facial expression a person will display. (Denham, 1986).
- Between ages 3 & 7 children begin to tell white lies, knowing that the blunt truth may hurt others and that this is expected. (DePaulo & Bell, 1996; DePaulo & Kashy, 1998).
- 4 & 5 year olds use words that refer mental states:
 - modulating an assertion-*I think it's a dog.*
 - expressing desire-*I hope we have pizza.*
 - direct interaction-*I guess I'll go outside.*

Later these words are used for direct mental emotional states-*Before I thought it was a crocodile; now I think it's an alligator.* (Shatz, Wellman, & Sibling, 1983).



More Evidence

- At about age 5, children infer complex expressions, such as: surprised can be a happy surprise, a shock, or sudden discovery or sad vs. mad (Hadwin & Perner, 1991).
- Kindergarteners know:
 - they have their own thoughts and feelings
 - other people have different thoughts and feelings that can be inferred from facial expressions and nonverbal cues
 - what embarrasses others
 - how to please others

These skills continue to be refined throughout the school years (Bowers & Husingh, 2008).



More Evidence

- Between ages 6 & 8 children can
 - tell which person in a photograph shows a particular emotion, label the emotion, and make a face to show an emotion.
 - interpret gestures to send a common message like, “Come here” (Bowers & Huisingsh, 2008).
- Between 6 & 7 children defer judgment or decision making to an authority vs. taking responsibility to resolve conflict themselves. (Bowers and Huisingsh, 2008).
- Student age 6-11 give more desirable responses to test items when situations involve a friend rather than a sibling. Students show less compassion and more dominance in conflicts with siblings than they do with friends. (Bowers & Huisingsh, 2008).

Bowers, L., R., & LoGiudice, C. (2008). *Social language development test elementary. East Moline, IL: LinguiSystems, Inc.*



Evidence Based Practice

- **Conversational group therapy approach** with professional providing cues, facilitating questions, negotiations, verbal praise for spontaneous production of targets, modeling, mediating, prompting, gate-keeping, and summarizing. (Ewing, 1999) (Roth and Paul, 2007).
- **Conversational coaching-** SLP Stimulates conversational interaction in a structured context by providing a model of short, meaningful utterances as a written script and the student imitates. The topic is selected based on student interests. The student reads the script one sentence at a time using gestures, if needed, to convey meaning. Sessions are videotaped, and the tape is replayed to an unfamiliar listener. The listener rates his/her ability to understand what has been said. The SLP, student and unfamiliar listener evaluate the video to determine the most effective and least helpful strategies. (Holland,



Evidence Based Practice

- **Positive behavior support**-The SLP, intervention team, educators, and/or family directly target the relationship between challenging behavior and communication. The scientific practice of applied behavior analysis is incorporated into a person-centered, comprehensive program with a focus on intervention in in the natural context to use prevention strategies, foster replacement skills, and respond in a positive manner. (Horner, Albin, Sprague, & Todd, 2000)



Evidence Based Practice

- **Emotional Support**-Professionals provide empathetic listening and teach problem-solving strategies to address concerns that are identified by families. (Marcus, Kunce, & Schloper, 2005).
- **Natural language**-An ecological approach in which communication competence is fostered in natural settings.
- **Pivotal response training**-The SLP, intervention team, educators, professionals, and/or family allow choice over the nature of the interaction and materials used in a natural context. The attempt to respond to the ASD child is reinforced. (Koegal, 1995), (Koegal, Camarata, Koegal, Ben-Tall, & Smith, 1998), (Whalon & Schreibman, 2003)
- **Developmental strategies**-The SLP, intervention team, educators, professionals, and/or family teach language in based on a model of typical development and sequence. (Aldred, Greer, & Adams, 2004), (Hwang & Hughes, 2000), (Lewy & Dawson, 1992), (Mahoney & Perales, 2005), (Rogers & Lewis, 1989), Greenspan & Weider, 1997), (Prizant & Wetherby, 1998).

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One More Reason Why.....

Access to the Core Curriculum

Think about the specific social skills that a normally developing child uses day in and day out:

- Reciprocity/Turn-taking
- Joint Attention
- Listening
- Reading cues
- Proximity
- Maintaining a topic/Responding, Commenting/Questioning
- Eye contact
- Perspective taking
- Social Register
- Inferential and abstract thinking
- Getting the big picture





Pick a Standard, Any Standard.....

Think about how a deficit in any of these skills can affect a child's ability to achieve the standard...

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.1](#) Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.2](#) Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.3](#) Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.



Pick a Standard, Any Standard.....

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1](#) Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.2](#) Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.3](#) Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).



Pick a Standard, Any Standard.....

- [CCSS.Math.Content.K.OA.A.1](#) Represent addition and subtraction with objects, fingers, mental images, drawings¹, sounds (e.g., claps), acting out situations, verbal explanations, expressions, or equations.
- [CCSS.Math.Content.K.OA.A.2](#) Solve addition and subtraction word problems, and add and subtract within 10, e.g., by using objects or drawings to represent the problem.
- [CCSS.Math.Content.K.OA.A.3](#) Decompose numbers less than or equal to 10 into pairs in more than one way, e.g., by using objects or drawings, and record each decomposition by a drawing or equation (e.g., $5 = 2 + 3$ and $5 = 4 + 1$).
- [CCSS.Math.Content.K.OA.A.4](#) For any number from 1 to 9, find the number that makes 10 when added to the given number, e.g., by using objects or drawings, and record the answer with a drawing or equation.

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And Yet Another Reason...

- To be successful in the 21st century!



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Let's Get to the "Nitti Gritty" ...

What do the students need to be successful?

- Students need direct instruction, immediate feedback, and guided practice to learn a new way.
- As professionals we need to bring the abstract notions of social language to life!
- Students need to apply social skills in a variety of meaningful situations.
- Students need to be self aware and self assertive.



Bringing Social Skills to Life

- Matching Response to the situation (SB)
- Hidden Messages- (MB) (Group activity)
- Joining In (group activity)
- Meeting and Getting to Know Someone (Group Activity)
- Social Register
- Body Language
- Making Friends (Group activity)

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Your Turn..

- Work in groups and use the materials on your table to create a mini lesson for the social skill on your card.
- Share out 😊



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Let's Wrap it Up; *In their words...*

- 6th grade girl: ***“There’s some drama going on with my friend. We decided to work it out. We aren’t going to Ms. Amanda’s room (school counselor). We’re “gonna” handle it mature.”***
- 5th grade boy: ***“Talking about hidden messages helped me.....now when my mom asks me to do something, I just do it!”***
- 6th grade boy: ***“I was in the music room and when I pulled the curtain, there was a group of pre K kids so I gave them a tour and showed them all the music stuff!”***

(this child used to cry and melt down if you asked him to convey a message to an unfamiliar teacher or student)



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Resources

- **Early Social Behavior Books** , Nita Everly, Linguisystems, 2005.
- **Comic Strip Conversations**, Carol Gray, Future Horizons Inc., 1994.
- **Inside Out: What Makes a person with Cognitive Deficits Tick?**, Michelle Garcia Winner, Think Social Publications, Inc. 2000.
- **Room 14 A Social Language Program**, Carolyn Wilson, Linguisystems, 1993.
- **“Say and Do” Early Social Scenes for School**, Susan Rose Simms, Super Duper Publications, 2006.
- **Saying One Thing and Doing Another Activities for Clarifying Ambiguous Language**, Cecil Cyril Spector, PhD, Super Duper Publications.
- **The Social Times**, Kari Dunn Buron, AAPC, 2010.
- **Spotlight on Social Skills Elementary**, Carolyn LoGiudice & Paul F. Johnson, LinguSystems, 2009.
- **Thinking about You Thinking About Me 2nd Edition**, Michelle Garcia Winner, Social Thinking Publishing, 2007.
- **Worksheets! For Teaching Social Thinking and Related Skills**, Michelle Garcia Winner, Social Thinking Publications, 2007.
- **You are a Social Detective! Explaining Social Thinking to Kids**, Michelle Garcia Winner & Pamela Crooke, Think Social Publishing, Inc., 2008.

