Think First

A Social Skills Group
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
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.
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.
Given three scenarios, students created three polite requests. 4/7 students created all three polite requests.

Given three scenarios, students created three polite requests. 6/7 correctly created three polite requests.
## Teacher Pre and Post Surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Above Grade Level</th>
<th>At Grade Level</th>
<th>Below Grade Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small group participation in class</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making and keeping friends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to ask for help in class</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
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 = Initiation of communication act
- L = Listening with Eyes and Brains
- A = Abstract and Inferential
- U = Understanding
- G = Gestalt Processing; Getting the Big Picture
- H = Humor 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
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, & Sibler, 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 embarasses 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 & Huisingh, 2008).
- Between 6 & 7 children defer judgment or decision making to an authority vs. taking responsibility to resolve conflict themselves. (Bowers and Huisingh, 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 & Huisingh, 2008).

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, 1995).
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 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).
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, drawings\(^1\), 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.
And Yet Another Reason…

• To be successful in the 21st century!
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)
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😊
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)
Resources

- **Saying One Thing and Doing Another Activities for Clarifying Ambiguous Language**, Cecil Cyrl Spector, PhD, Super Duper Publications.