Teaching Social Language Skills: A Collaborative Approach

Presented by Patty Taggart Gerrior, M.S./SLP
and Joyce Peet, OTR-L
Friday, March 7th, 2007, 3:45-5:15 OSLHA 62nd Convention

This presentation will provide examples of the activities and strategies used in our weekly “Monday Friends” group, monthly community social activities and summer camp. Our purpose for these groups is to provide our group members opportunities for communicating and interacting with peers in a playful and facilitating environment. We strive to help them to be successful in building relationships, play, and working together in groups. We do this by addressing not only the communication/social thinking deficits (SLP) but also the attention and sensory deficits (OT) that can significantly impact interactions. By combining the strengths and expertise of both disciplines (OT/SLP) and providing safe and multiple opportunities to practice target skills, we plan to make each group activity a time of successful interaction and fun. We will share what has worked and what has not worked and demonstrate a variety of sensory input/strategies used to have more successful and appropriate participation in groups. This presentation is intended to be interactive with participation and discussion encouraged!

Measurable Learning Outcomes:
1. The participant will be able to identify 3 activities for teaching/practicing social language skills in natural contexts.
2. The participant will be able to replicate several activities that they can use with groups to promote friendships among children with social language and social thinking deficits.
3. The participant will learn about sensory strategies to help maintain appropriate level of alertness for successful participation in groups.

Introduction

Why we decided to do groups and how do we arrange and fund these groups.

Goals of Group
1. Increase successful social interactions (ex. reciprocal communication; understanding what social rules are and why we need them to build friendships) and social thinking (ex. saying and doing what is expected; thinking of others) through direct teaching, role play, and natural opportunities of peer interactions.

2. Provide a variety of environments to interact and play with peers.

3. Learn how and when sensory strategies (ex. fidgets; movement breaks) will help to keep each child at the optimal level of alertness during activities.

Group Activities

Example One: Initiate Greetings/ Reciprocal Conversation Activities.

Strategies:
Contingent word/phrases practice; passing ball; partner role play
Wheel of Friendship/ visual pictures/ balls/

Sensory:
Chairs and seating options/ rotation movement; hand fidgets/weighted balls
Group Activities

Example Two: Thinking About You Activities.
Recognizing that what you say and do affects those around you.

Strategies:
Whole Body Listening
Group expectations written out and individual
Role play with puppets “Chief Thomas” and “Builder Bob”/Charades
Following other's lead(motor Simon Says; group snowman picture)

Sensory:
Seating options/decreasing the lighting/changing rooms/holding fidgets/weighted vests/music choices

Example Three: Making and Maintaining Friendships Activities

Strategies:
Providing structured sharing time; using comment and question cards and talking ball.
Feeling part of a group: Naming group; showing support “Say and Do” practice.
Practicing giving and receiving compliments “Say and Do” practice.
Expressing feelings using “I statement” format.
Planned group social events: Thanksgiving dinner; Super Bowl party; plays; singing; “Friday Friends” monthly community outing.

Sensory:
Predictable routine/tailor sensory to individual needs/seating and room options.

Example Four: Team Sports Activities
Learning recess games; waiting turn; showing support
Entering and exiting a game/turn taking/following rules

Strategies:
Adapting games: (ex 4 square; volleyball; football) by providing visual cues (tape on the floor) and decreasing speed and intensity of play by using variety of ball types/balloons.

Sensory:
Changing the type of ball for individual needs; monitoring loudness; time timers

Community Outing Activities

Examples:
Skating/Bowling/Laser Tag/Tennis/Pump It Up/Putt-Putt/Hayrides/“Not So Haunted Trail”

Strategies:
Teen helpers to interact/ Location conducive to “Parents Night Out” and flexibility.

Sensory:
Ask to modify locations if possible: ex. no fog at laser tag/turn music down at skating rink/ renting the facility to decrease numbers.

References and Resources
**Social Skills/Communication**

**Peer Play and the Autism Spectrum**
Integrated Play Groups (IPG) Field Manual


**Social Skills Training**

“Greetings/Asking Someone to Play”

**Social Skills Picture Book**
Teaching Play, Emotion, and Communication to Children with Autism
Jed E. Baker (2001)

“Real pictures of children..doing what is right /wrong” (Goofus and Gallant:)

**Social Skills Strategies**
A Social Emotional Curriculum for Adolescents, Book B
Nancy Gajewski, Patti Hirn, Patty Mayo (1998)

Using “I messages and statements”

**Scripting: Social Communication for Adolescents**
Patty Mayo and Patti Waldo (1994)
Thinking Publications ISBN: 0-93599-08-X

“Prewritten role play scripts for readers..ex. Accepting a compliment.

**Teaching Friendship Skills, Primary Version**
Pat Huggins (1998)

Pre-made very visual forms for discussion and practice.

**Teach Me Language and Companion Exercise Forms**
A Language Manual for Children with Autism, Asperger and Related Developmental Disabilities
Sabrina Freeman and Lorelei Dake (1997)
Reciprocal Conversations/ Finding out About Someone/ Asking and Answering/Topicalization

**Navigating The Social World**
A Curriculum for Individuals with AS, High Functioning Autism, and Related Disorders  
Jeanette McAfee (2002)  
Future Horizons Publishing  
ISBN: 1-885477-82-1

Gives goals and clear instructions and activities to address social skills/emotions/behavior/thinking

**Comic Strip Conversations**  
Carol Gray (1994)  

Visual cues and format for using line drawings to understand situations.

**Inside Out: What Makes A Person With Social Cognitive Deficits Tick?**  
Michelle Winner (2006 -R)  

Wealth of material for teaching the social skills needed (the what) and also (the why) learning the skill is necessary. Great ideas for lessons and groups and forms. I adapted with my own forms to tailor and add visual pictures if needed.

**Things I Can Say and Do/ Autism & PDD “Feelings & Actions”**  
Michelle Saunders  
LinguiSystems

Ready made templates for use in a wide variety of situations.

**Games:**

**Communicate**  
Patty Mayo and Patti Waldo  
Thinking Publications

Lots of situations pre-printed on business size card stock for role play and practice in social interactions with group.  
**Communicate Junior**  
Patty Mayo et. al.  
Super Duper

Learning/practicing social skills while moving along a pizza theme game board.

**Use Your I's**  
Express Feelings Using I messages  
Donna McGoff; Creative Therapy Store
Board game to practice using “I statement” format (I feel....when....because...I want/need.....)

**Puppets**
SouthPaw

Used to reinforce good communication and social skills and group expectations. Also used to show right and wrong way to communicate/interact/behave in a group (like Goofus and Gallant)

**“Wheel of Friendship”**
(hand crafted like wheel of fortune)

Used to practice communication skills/ increase participation/work with partners.

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**Sensory Resource Equipment**

**Sensory Processing Disorder**
SPD is a complex disorder of the brain. People with SPD misinterpret everyday sensory information, such as touch, sound, and movement. This can lead to behavioral problems, difficulties with coordination, and many other issues. This site contains a scientific research section, a national directory of professionals, conference listings, and many more areas just for you.
http://www.sinetwork.org

**Products used during group:**

“Mustard and ketchup” from Hot Dog Kit weighing 10 pounds each Southpaw Enterprises  
Weighted vests Southpaw Enterprises  
Bear Hug Southpaw Enterprises  
Time Timers  
HowdaHug Chair  
Music: Say G'day CD  
OTvest Integrations  
Giant Yuk-E-Balls set of 6 Integrations  
Fidget Ball Set Integrations

---

**Camp Silver Lake:** @
WWW.THERAPYCONNECTIONS.NET
**Integrations:** @
INTEGRATIONSCATALOG.COM
**Southpaw Enterprises:** @
WWW.SOUTHPAWEENTERPRISES.COM
sing to the tune "Do Your Ears Hang Low"

**Can you bake a cake?**

Can you cook a T-bone steak?

Can you make a chocolate sundae?

Can you make an ice cream shake?

Can you drink a cup of water?

Clean the dishes like you ought to?!

Can you bake a cake?
show you are listening

show you are listening

tell

tell

tell
I can give compliments to my teachers and friends.

A compliment is saying something nice.

We can say "you look nice today."

I can say "you are nice."

We can say "you are a good helper."

I can say "you are fun to be with."

saying nice things makes me feel good!

Conversation Record

ASK a Question: 🤔?

NOW, SAY or ASK TWO MORE THINGS!! say 🤗 or ask 🤔?

1. _______________________________ , ?

2. _______________________________ , ?

Date: __________ Who did you talk with? __________ Where ____________

(ex. Mom, teacher, friend) adapted Teach Me Language p. 18 by P. Gerrior
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I- STATEMENT FORM</th>
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<td>I feel____________</td>
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<td>when______________</td>
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<td>(State how you feel)</td>
<td>frustrated, upset, lonely,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>loved, accepted, badly, hurt</td>
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<td>When</td>
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<td>(State the problem)</td>
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<td>ex: You leave me behind and you don't answer my question...</td>
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<td>(state the reason why you feel that way)</td>
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<td>What I want or need is</td>
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<td>(state what you want or need)</td>
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(Adaptation of social skill strategy.) P. Gerrior
N. Gajewski et. al.
RULES FOR TALKING WITH FRIENDS

When you want to say something to someone, say their first name to get their attention.

"Hey Johnny............."

Always look at the person you are talking to.

Look to see if they are still watching you and showing they are listening.
Talk in turns!

Face the person you are talking to or turn your body towards them.

Always listen to what the other person is saying.

How do you show you are listening? By watching with your eyes.
By making comments and asking questions about what they are saying.

(Adaptation of M. Winner activity)  P. Gerrior
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