Functional Academics

Teach skills that allow students to succeed in school and beyond

Thursday, July 14 1:15-4:00 p.m.

CSI Team
Functional Curriculum

- Skills that emphasize daily living skills, community skills, recreation and leisure and employment need to be incorporated into the curriculum.

- Students in inclusive settings can follow the regular curriculum, but emphasis should be placed on those skills that are the most functional.
Functional Academics

- Functional academics
  - literacy (reading and writing)
  - basic math, time and money skills
- Self-care skills
  - domestics
  - recreation
  - community experiences
- Formal employment opportunities
  - beginning in middle school
Student strengths and interests

- Take advantage of in the classroom.
- For example, if a student demonstrates an interest in trains, have opportunities to read about trains, write about trains, do math problems about trains, etc.
- May lead to working for a Train Magazine writer or photographer
Common Elements for instruction

1. Curriculum content
   - attending
   - imitation
   - communication
   - play or leisure
   - social interaction

2. Supportive teaching and generalization environments
Common Elements (cont’d)

3. Predictability and routine
4. Functional approach to problem behaviors
5. Transition support
Attending Examples

- **Beginning:**
  - Sits in chair independently
  - Makes eye contact when name is called or when asked to look at someone

- **Intermediate:**
  - Sustains eye contact
  - Shifts attention when playing
  - Asks “what” when name is called

- **Advanced:**
  - Maintains eye contact during conversation
  - Maintains eye contact during group instruction
Imitation Examples

- **Beginning:**
  - Gross motor, fine motor movements
  - Actions with objects

- **Intermediate:**
  - Actions paired with sounds
  - Drawing
  - Sequences of movements and actions
  - Block patterns

- **Advanced:**
  - Complex sequences
  - Peer play and language
Communication – Receptive Examples

- Follows one-step directions
- Identifies body parts, objects, verbs
- Identifies attributes
- Answers wh- questions about objects and pictures
- Identifies what is missing
- Follows three step directions
- Identifies what is same, different
- Answers wh- questions about a topic
Communication – Expressive Examples

- Points to item
- Labels objects and pictures
- Answers yes or no
- Labels objects based on function
- Uses sentence stems
- Recalls past events
- Answers general knowledge questions
- Describes how to do something
Play Examples

- Plays with toys appropriately
- Takes a turn with toy or activity
- Stays engaged with toy or activity
- Plays with toys near peers
- Representational play with toys
- Symbolic play with toys
- Imaginary play with peers
Social Interaction Examples

- Initiates/reciprocates greetings
- Shows toys/items to peer
- Plays game with peer
- Requests assistance from peer
- Invites peer to join play
- Expresses empathy
- Follows changes in conversational topic
- Responds to nonverbal cues of listener
2. Supportive Teaching Environments

- Core skills first established here
- Highly structured
- Ratio is often 1:1, 1:2, or 1:3
- Decreased distractions
- Increased saliency and repetition of stimuli
- Use specific prompts and cues to support newly learned behavior
Some Examples of Highly Supportive Teaching Environments

- **One-on-one discrete trial teaching** (Young Autism Program)
- Typical activities combined with activities specifically designed for children with autism (LEAP)
- **Home-based treatment** (6 months); **Move to “Small Group” classroom** (1 year);
- **One-on-one teaching in environment very structured with visual cues** (TEACCH)
Strategies to Increase Support

- Use more small group instruction
- Organize environment through physical structure (e.g., pictures on shelves, clear boundaries, no excess visual clutter)
- Use more visual cues
- Repeat an activity that targets core skills
- Use toys/materials that facilitate skill use
Generalization Environments

- Decreased prompting
- Increased environmental complexity
- Behaviors practiced with additional peers and activities
- Presence of typically developing peers
- Emphasizes typical classroom activities and interactions
Strategies to Increase Generalization

- Plan when child will practice same behavior with different people, in different places, with different materials
- Involve peers in teaching the behavior
- Plan activities same-age peers would likely access
3. Strategies to Increase Predictability and Routine

Predictable Environment:

- Label items
- Label and define areas
- Use visuals to inform and remind
- Teach classroom routines
- Teach individual schedules if appropriate
Increasing Predictability cont’d

Transitions:
- Use visuals to help child predict
- Give plenty of warning prior to transition
- Teach how to do the transition before it occurs
- Give a transitional object
- Use familiar songs
- Teach interruptions in schedule
4. Strategies to Apply a Functional Approach to Problem Behavior

- Use Functional Behavior Assessment
- Focus on prevention
- Teach alternative appropriate behaviors
- Increase children’s interest and engagement in classroom activities
- Provide choices
- Target skills for independence
5. Strategies to Support Transitions

- Begin preparations in advance
- If possible, visit and/or communicate with sending/receiving class
- Encourage families to visit placements
- Discuss continuum of inclusion with team and families
- Target “survival skills”
“Survival Skills”

- Assess what skills might be needed in other environments and in life
- Skills may include:
  - taking turns, following directions, sitting quietly, walking in line, using different bathrooms, communicating basic needs, raising hand to get teacher’s attention, picking up toys

Powers (1992)
Lessons within Lessons

The goal is to teach a Reading lesson on Main Topic

- You are also teaching listening skills,
- Learning is happening through peer modeling
- Social skills are being practiced as students take turns and raise their hands instead of interrupting.
Supporting Academics

- Task Completion
  - Task Analysis
  - Work systems for some tasks
  - Intermittent reinforcement for on task behavior
  - Provide visuals along with verbal
  - Provide information on what will be covered and how long it will take through picture schedules, outlines, etc.
  - Intermittent planned breaks
Five Year Vision

- Classroom Staff
- Classroom environment
- Schedules
- Visual supports
- Sensory
- Group and Individual Instruction
- Behavior and Preference lists
- Data (IEP)
Classroom Staff

- Develop knowledge base together - Autism 101
- Communicate
- Understand why, what and how
- Be risk takers, do not be afraid to take chances
- Be a Team, talk about individual concerns
Classroom Environment

- Inventory what you have
- Room Plan, where and What
- Structure
- Dividers
Schedules

- Classroom
- Individual
Both Schedules

• Classroom
  8:00 a.m. Routine
  8:30 circle
  9:00 P.E./Music/Art
  10:00 Tasks
  10:30 Snack/Recess
  11:00 Tasks
  11:45 Lunch

• Individual a.m. routine
  greetings and cubby-
  check schedule
  breakfast-
  check schedule
  Potty
  Check schedule
  free choice-
  check schedule

• Circle
Routine Task strips within individual schedule

- **Cubby**
  - enter room
  - go to cubby
  - coat off – teach
  - hang up
- **check schedule cue**

- **Breakfast**
  - Placemat – teach
  - eat – teach
  - cleanup – teach
- **check schedule cue**
Sequence of routine visual task

- Clean up routine
  sponge
  faucet
  squeeze
  wipe
  put away placement

- Wash hands routine
  - __________
  - __________
Sensory Breaks

- Timed
- Taught to transition
- Preferred
- Kid specific

- Stacking
More Sensory Breaks

- Bouncing
- Rocking
And more sensory breaks

- Being alone
- Blocking out noise
Instruction

• Group

• Individual
Instructional Independent sample

- Taught to mastery during individual 1:1 or small group time
- Includes other imbedded IEP goals
  - VMI
  - Fine Motor
  - Time on Task

- Working independently
Positive Behavior Support

- List of personal preferences
- Maximize greed
- Ratio 4:1
- Be Consistent

- Cherrios
- Cucumbers
- Tearing & Flapping Kleenex
- Rice Tub
- Rocking Chair
- Brushing (arm)
- Swinging
- Mr. Potato Head
- Play dough
- ? in progress
Data

- Based up on IEP G & O
- Functional Performance Assessments
- Functional Behavior Observations
PLOP Your Turn

- Five-year old, wears diapers, stuffs mouth to feed self with hands, drinks from a sippy cup, unable to dress or undress self, holds hands of adult to transition, wanders around, keeps hands to self, when agitated places flat palm of hand to lips – loads up spit and flings hand, drops to floor screaming, demonstrates eye contact, does not demonstrate play skills, self-help skills, lacks expressive and receptive communication system, does not respond to name, does not demonstrate interest in other children or toys, to get attention – flings spit, hums, handflap and walks on toes in a circular motion around adults, prefers adult attention, likes weighted vest, does not sit in chair, will take adult hand upon request, “Take my hand.”
Make a Plan

- Structured environment
- Schedules
- Visual supports
- Sensory
- Instruction
- Behavior and Preference lists
- Data (IEP)
Resources

-Gretchen Schmidt, M.Ed. Bethel School District

-Glenna Clouse

-Autism Outreach Project