Circle Time and Early Literacy

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Workshop Goals

Today you walk away with …

• Strategies and accommodations to include and engage students in circle time.

• Strategies and accommodations to develop literacy skills in circle time.

Common Concerns of Educators About Students with ASD in Circle Time

• Getting to Circle Time
• Staying in a Defined Area
• “Attending” and/or Participating in Activities
• Teacher Tolerance of Student with ASD’s Noises and/or Movement
Common Reasons Why Circle Time is Difficult for Students with ASD

- Is the Activity Meaningful to the Student?
- Amount of Time Requested to Engage in an Activity that may not be Interesting / Meaningful
- Lack of Visual Supports
- Over Stimulation of Senses
- Understanding of Transitions / Activity
- Access to Communication System(s)

Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time

Getting to Circle Time

- All Students Follow A Path
  - Footsteps on floor
  - Tunnel
  - Be Creative
- Peer Buddies
- Video Modeling and Social Stories
- Acclimate by Allowing Student to Watch from a Nearby Table While Doing a Preferred Activity

Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time

Preparation Strategies

- Social Stories
- Video Modeling
- Visual Schedules
- Preview Books in Advance or At Home
- Utilize Interests
- Use Books and Objects From Home
Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time

Sensory and Spatial Accommodations

- Fidget Toys
  - Substitute a musical instrument
- Bean Bag Chairs or Other Preferred Chair
- Carpet Squares / Tape on Floor
- Songs with Gross Motor Movements and Actions
- Accommodate for Sound, Tactile, Smells
  - Incorporate, Reduce, or Eliminate

Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time

Communication Accommodations

- Voice Output System or IPAD
- PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)
- Sign Language
- Gestures

Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time

Visual Accommodations

- Visual Schedules (Order of Activities)
  - Student can Physically Move Pictures in Schedule
- Mini Schedules (For Specific Activities)
- Song Cards (Picture of Song with Label)
Ideas for Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time

Visual Accommodations

- Mini-Pictures of Items Teacher is Using
- First – Then Cards
- Schedule of Week with Pictures of Activities for Specific Days

Ideas for Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time

Matching Activities

- Match Student Names to Pictures of Students
  - Match Picture of Student to Actual Student and Teachers Who have a Nametag in Front of Them
- Match Pictures/Words of Body Parts to Actual Body Parts of Student or Peers
- Match Animal Sounds to Animal Pictures (book)
  - What does the (dog, cat, pig) say?

Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time

Literacy Accommodations and Strategies

- Word Labels on Objects
- Use of Poems
- Slap Sound (when you slap the letter card say the sound)
- Touch/Feel Lips when Saying Sounds
- Prolong Sounds “rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr” instead of “rr”
Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time

Literacy Accommodations and Strategies

• Wear Nametags
• Exaggerate First Letter of Name Tags to Help Student Identify Name

Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time

Literacy Accommodations and Strategies

• Trace or Make Letters (Sounds) with Finger or Yarn While Saying Sound
• Sandpaper Letters (to teach sounds)

Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time

Literacy Accommodations and Strategies

• Use Exaggerated Emotion to Convey Meaning
• Short Books with Lots of Pictures
• Copy Pictures of Books to Use as Manipulative, Matching, Sequencing/Retelling
• Mini Copy of Book for Student
• CLOZE Procedure
**Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time**

**CLOZE Procedure**

- Students Receptively Choose Correct Word Card to Fill in a Sentence
- The [**DOG**] chased the cat.
- Good Morning, Good Morning, Good Morning to [**Sarah**]

**Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time**

**CLOZE Procedure**

- Students Verbally “Fill In” the Correct Word for a Familiar Song, Story, or Poem
- “Row, Row, Row your ______”
- The Itsy Bitsy Spider, Went _____ the Water Spout”

**Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time**

**General Strategies**

- Repeat Activities, Songs, Books
- Keep it Short (10 to 15 minutes)
  - Consider Presenting Familiar Activities for Portions of Circle Time that Students with ASD Participate
- Use the Same Opening and Closing Activities
- If it is Not Engaging, Modify, Delete, or Change
- Schedule Circle Time After Gross Motor Activity
Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time

General Strategies
• Students who Need the Most Structure Sit Directly Across from Teacher
• Sit Verbal Students Next to Less Verbal Students
• Allow for Choice of When to Leave Circle Time
  – Introduce Choice After 1st Activity, 2nd Activity, etc...
• Consider Food Reinforcer as a Result of an Activity

Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time

General Strategies
• Allow for Choice of Songs or Activities
• Introduce Numbers by Giving a High 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 to the Student Next to Them
• Use Puppets
• Rhyming

Engaging Activities to Incorporate into Circle Time

From http://teachmetotalk.com/2011/02/15/making-circle-time-successful/
• My favorite opening circle time song for toddlers is letting the children take turns hiding under a blanket and singing:
  • Where, oh where, oh where is (child’s name)?
  • Where, oh where, oh where is (child’s name)?
  • Where, oh where, oh where is (child’s name)?
  • Where can (name) be?
• Then help the child uncover and everyone says, “Boo.” This has been a big hit with every class I’ve ever introduced it to from about 15 months all the way through 3 year olds. It also helps children learn their friends’ names.
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