

## Preschool Inclusion Strategies for Students with ASD

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### Learning Objectives

- Participants will:
  1. be able to identify 3 levels of classroom implementation to support children with autism in their classrooms.
  2. learn key evidence-based strategies to target the social, communicative and behavioral needs of young children with autism in inclusive settings.
  3. be able to monitor children's ongoing progress and make programmatic changes based on a functional, easy to implement data system

- Given the state of knowledge, the question is not so much whether an individual child with autism can profit from inclusionary programming but whether the service system in question has put into place the necessary instructional supports to create a high-quality inclusion program.

▪ Strain, McGee & Kohler (2001)

### Values Embodied in Workshop

- Children and families have a right to receive science-based intervention.
- Intervention should conform to values and needs of families.
- Intervention should not do harm:
  - Stigmatize
  - Segregate
  - Negatively impact social relations
- Intervention(s) should be consistent with NAEYC and DEC recommended practices.

### Major Points

1. We know a LOT about general educational practices that are effective for ALL kids.
2. We are learning more every day about educational and behavioral practices that are effective for young children with autism (in general).
3. However, there is a big difference between
  - "best intervention practices for students with autism," and
  - "best educational practices for a *particular* student with autism"

### Often Obscured Facts About Children with Autism

1. There is no known cause.
2. Children with autism do not learn in a unique way(s)
3. There is no evidence that children are cured of autism.
4. Other than speech and language, the efficacy of other traditional "therapies" for children with autism is uncertain (see Simpson, 2005).

## Often Obscured Facts About Children with Autism, cont.

5. Drugs, diet, exercise, facilitated communication, brushing, weighted vests and related sensory experiences are of questionable utility (at present) (National Autism Center, 2009; Simpson, 2005; Stevenson & Carter, 2009).
6. The intervention paradigm of choice – *Behavioral Teaching (ABA)* – has little to do with one-to-one instruction or a certain number of hours of intervention (Prizant & Rubin, 1999; National Research Council, 2001).

## Often Obscured Facts About Children with Autism, cont.

7. To date there are no studies that have addressed whether one comprehensive behavioral approach is superior to another (Dawson & Osterling, 1997; National Research Council, 2001; Odom, et. Al, 2010).
  - Awaiting data from TEACCH/LEAP/study (Odom, et. Al.)
8. Children with autism do not spontaneously improve with time.

## What is ABA???

- Applied behavior analysis is the process of systematically applying interventions based upon the principles of learning theory to improve socially significant behaviors to a meaningful degree, and to demonstrate that the interventions employed are responsible for the improvement in behavior (Baer, Wolf & Risley, 1968).
- ...the development {and utilization} of functional assessment procedures and interventions, task analysis, and the emphasis on objective documentation of progress (Prizant & Rubin, 1999).

## Inclusion with Typically Developing Children – Why???

- Episodic exposure to peers = Zero behavior change. (McConnell, 2002)
- ASD with ASD = More ASD symptoms (McGee, Feldman & Morrier, 1997)
- Most widely effective social skills interventions rely on the presence of typical peers (McConnell, 2002)
- No entry criteria – Bring necessary supports to ensure success
- Intervention produces Day 1 effect
- Exposure to same age peers Necessary, but not sufficient (McConnell, 2002)

## Questions Regarding Intensity

- We see intensity and, ultimately, getting to quality outcomes as a result of multiple factors:
  - Opportunities to respond
  - Functionality of opportunities
  - Fidelity of intervention
  - Breadth of impact on child's entire ecology
  - Attention to generalization
  - Social validity of outcomes
- **Good Outcomes**

## Effective Programming Components



### Key Program Components for Inclusion of Children with Autism

- Transdisciplinary model of service delivery
- Targeting functional goals and objectives
- Using a broad array of evidence-based practices (PECS, PRT, Errorless Learning, Incidental Teaching, Peer-Mediated Intervention, PBIS)
- Embedding learning opportunities into typical preschool routines
- Providing necessary supports, adaptations and modifications for children to be successful
- Teaching typically-developing peers to facilitate the social and language skills of children with autism
- Ongoing, daily data collection used to drive intervention
- Structured parent skill training curriculum

### Foundation is High Quality EC Setting

#### Comprehensible / Structured Learning Environments

- Clarity, consistency and predictability of events in the student's environment.
  - "Structure" can be provided in any setting
  - Students with ASD often require adjunctive supports (e.g., visual schedules, First/Then boards, PECS and augmentative communication devices)

### Incorporate A Variety of Evidence-Based Practices

Utilization of strategies based on targeted goals, context, and adult experience/expertise.

- PECS, PRT, Incidental Teaching, Antecedent Package, Peer-Mediated Strategies, Errorless Learning, Structured Teaching, PBS (National Autism Center, 2009)
  - Determining Children's Preferences
  - Selection and Arrangement of Toys and Materials
  - Capitalizing on Child-Initiated Engagement
  - Providing Practice Opportunities within the Context of Engagement

### Naturalistic and Embedded Teaching is Utilized First

- Incidental ≠ Accidental
- Following child's lead and embedding learning in Meaningful Routines
- Exciting, Engaging Activities
- Comparative Studies on language acquisition:
  - 10 to 0 for Naturalistic Instruction!
    - Delprato (2001)

### Functional Approach to Problem Behavior

- Using individualized, assessment-based strategies to prevent the occurrence of problem behaviors through instruction, contingency management, and contextual modification
  - Functional Behavioral Assessment and Person-centered Planning
  - Comprehensive Behavior Support Plans
- Utilization of these strategies is not setting specific!

## Framework for Intervention and Program Modifications



## Keys to Effective Utilization of Staff

1. **Transdisciplinary Process**
2. **Communication**
3. **Arrangement of Adults**
4. **Daily Responsibilities**

## Basic Classroom Organization

- Consistent Daily Schedule
- Routines within Routines...
- Clear Behavioral Expectations within and across activities.
- Environmental Arrangement
  - Classroom wide, within Centers, within Activities
- Organization of materials (center and toy rotations)

## Classroom Modifications:

- Enhanced Visuals
  - Circle time materials
  - Art project display
  - Cues on floor
  - Big books, props, acting out story
- Curriculum Adaptations
  - Creative ways of embedding general preschool goals (e.g., colors, shapes, preliteracy, prenumeracy, sequencing, patterning)
- Implementation of Peer-Mediated Social Skills Instruction

## Visual Supports



## Visual Supports



## Increasing Participation & Engagement at Large Group

- Incorporate movement throughout Group Time
- Use props and materials
- Balance child and adult directed activities
- Create a point of focus (easel and posters)
- Vary your tone and volume
- Keep a consistent and clear sequence of activities (routines within routines)
- Play with seating arrangement

■ Beware of the “Dead Person” approach!

## Visual Supports



## Peer-Mediated Social Skill Interventions

- Why be so concerned about social skills?
- Teaching typically-developing children to be persistent with social overtures
- Embedding social interaction opportunities throughout the preschool day

## Selecting Skills to Teach: Specific Behaviors that Lead to Friendships

- Typical Child Interactions
  - Play Organizers
  - Shares
  - Assists
  - Affection
- Getting to Friendship!
  - Lengthy Encounters
  - Reciprocity

## How to Teach Social Skills

1. Direct group instruction
2. Providing natural opportunities to practice the targeted skill
3. Prompting children to use the targeted skill
4. Reinforcing the behavior when it happens

## Group Social Skills Instruction



## Individualized Modifications

- Communication Systems
  - PECs, Big Mac, Dino Vox,
- Transition Tools
  - Picture schedules, transition objects
  - Use across the day and within activities (Visual schedule specific to center time)
- Seating arrangements/supports (cube chairs, stadium seats, etc) and bungies/fidget toys, etc.
- Work Systems
- Individualized Use of Reinforcement

## Transition Supports



## Visual Schedules



## Work Systems

Bringing the child to “work baskets” vs. bringing the “work baskets” to the child.



Goal is to incorporate work systems into existing activities.

## Data-Based Decision Making

## Data-Driven Instruction

- Starts with Functional Goals
- Monday dictates Tuesday – Tuesday dictates Wednesday
- Review Time – Modification Protocol
- IEP goals and other behaviors as well
- Offers continuous monitoring for intervention agents and consumers

## What are you Measuring???

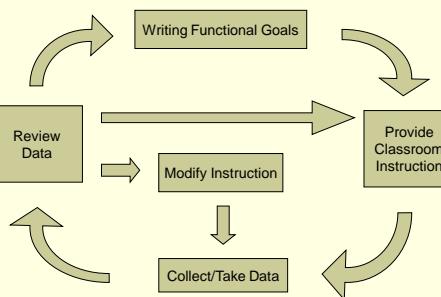
- Data is only effective if it measures what you want it to measure.
  - Our data system is based on the theory that every child will participate.
  - Data collected is how much prompting and assistance is provided for child to respond.
- 4 – Independence  
3 – Visual model, specific direction, gesture  
2 – Partial physical assistance  
1 – Full physical assistance

Objective Date	Data Collection Form														
	2/1	2/2	2/3	2/4	2/5	2/6	2/7	2/8	2/9	2/10	2/11	2/12	2/13	2/14	2/15
Alex will respond to one-step directions within a routine: "Stand up"	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Level: 1 Criteria: 6/6	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Alex will use pictures to request food	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Level: 1 Criteria: 6/6	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Alex will accept an item offered from a peer	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Level: 1 Criteria: 6/6	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Alex will transition from one activity to another	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Level: 1 Criteria: 6/6	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Alex will clean up after snack (throw away napkin and cup, wipe mouth)	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Level: 1 Criteria: 6/6	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND

4 = Child performs skill independently or when given a group direction. No adult intervention is needed.  
 3 = Adult provides/guided physical or verbal assistance to perform skill.  
 2 = Adult provides partial physical guidance to enable child to do some independently.  
 1 = Adult provided 100% physical (hand over hand) assistance to complete skill.  
 ND = Not applicable/child ignores adult's cues/says "No".  
 ND = No data for that session

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## Data Process



## Questions/Comments

- Training materials available through Teacher's Toolbox Publishing [www.ttoolbox.com](http://www.ttoolbox.com)



- "Like" us on Facebook (LEAP Preschool Model)

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