Social Characteristics of Students with ASD

• Difficulties with basic social skills
  – Taking turns, greeting and responding to
    greetings, social niceties, initiating and
    maintaining conversations, appropriate
    play behaviors
  – Lack of empathy and perspective taking
    – Theory of Mind
  – Lack of joint attention
    – May not seek to share social experiences
    or enjoyment with others

• May lack motivation
  – May lead to inappropriate behaviors that
    function to avoid or escape social situations

• Difficulties with social communication skills
  – May not use language for social purposes
    • May only use communication when necessary
    • May not recognize nonverbal behaviors and
      other social cues
  – Lack of expression, clarity and variation in voice

tone

Why are we Talking about PRT?

• Documented as an evidence-based practice for students with ASD
• Naturalistic Teaching Strategy

What is PRT?

• Pivotal Response Training (PRT) utilizes the
  principles of applied behavior analysis to
  systematically target four key behaviors that
  are common core deficits for students with
  autism spectrum disorders.

• PRT has been demonstrated to be an effective intervention model for helping young children with autism develop social
  communication skills.

PRT as an Evidence-Based Intervention

• Empirically Supported Pivotal Response Interventions
  for Children with Autism (Koegel, Koegel, & Brookman, 2003)
• Autism Spectrum Disorders: Interventions and treatments for children and youth (Simpson, Miller, Osterling,
  Gruber, & Riddle, 2009)
• Educating Children with Autism, National Research
  Council, Committee on Public Education for Children
  With Autism Spectrum Disorders (2001)
• The National Standards Report on Autism Spectrum
  Disorders (2009)
• The Guide for Educating Students with Autism
  Spectrum Disorders (ASD) (Kansas State Department of
  Education, 2009)
Why was PRT created?

- PRT was developed to teach students with autism functional social-communication and adaptive/self-help skills within a natural teaching environment utilizing what is relevant and motivating to the learner.

The Goals of PRT

- Teach learners to respond to the many learning opportunities and social interactions that occur in the natural environment;
- Decrease learners’ needs for constant supervision and interaction with adults;
- Promote family involvement and improve the quality of life for all family members;
- Decrease the number of services delivered in separate settings that remove learners from the natural environment;
- Improve learners’ academic performance;
- Advance learners’ communication and language skills;
- Foster learners’ social interactions and friendships with typically developing peers;
- Reduce learners’ interfering behaviors (e.g., disruptive, repetitive, stereotypical);
- Move learners toward a typical developmental trajectory by teaching a diverse number of behaviors; and
- Broaden learners’ interests.

Who can use PRT?

- PRT research studies have reported benefits for children and youth between the ages of 2-16 years old
- 85-90% of children exposed to PRT motivational techniques prior to age 5 have developed functional speech as their primary communication modality

Where can PRT be implemented?

- Naturalistic settings/environments
  - Home
  - School
  - Community

Pivotal Behaviors

1. Motivation
2. Responding to Multiple Cues
3. Self-Management
4. Self-Initiations


Motivation

1. Establishing Learner Attention
2. Shared Control
3. Learner Choice
4. Vary Tasks and Responses
5. Intersperse Acquisition and Maintenance Tasks
6. Reinforce Response Attempts
7. Use Natural and Direct Reinforcers

Responding to Multiple Cues
1. Varying Stimuli and Increasing Cues
2. Scheduling the Reinforcement
   • R. L. Koegel, Schreibman, Britten, & Laitinen (1979) found that children with ASD overselected less when they moved to a variable ratio (presenting a reinforcer one out of every three responses, on average).

Self-Management
1. Preparing Self-Management System
2. Teaching Self-Management
3. Create Independence

Self-Initiations
• Paying attention.
• Providing learners with choices.
• Varying materials.
• Modeling appropriate social behavior.
• Reinforcing attempts.
• Encouraging conversation.
• Extending conversations:
  • Taking turns.
  • Narrating play.
  • Teaching responsivity to multiple cues.

The STAR Program
Developed by
Joel R. Arick
Lauren Coos
Ruth Falco
David A. Krug

The STAR Program
• Designed around documented needs from current research and the 2001 National Research Council report
• Utilizes three behavioral instructional strategies
  – Discrete trial training
  – Pivotal response training
  – Functional routines
• Provided lesson plans facilitate acquisition of skills across six content areas
  – Expressive language
  – Receptive language
  – Spontaneous language
  – Functional routines
  – Play and social interaction concepts

Let’s Take a Look at PRT in Action…
• View STAR program: Video Clip
PRT

- Discussion and Questions…

“When we teach playskills to children with ASD, we restore the gift of childhood, while providing foundational skills for generalized learning throughout life.”

—Melinda J. Smith