Adapting Social Skills Programs to Meet the Needs of Children with Social Emotional Deficits in an Early Childhood Special Education Program

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Early Childhood Special Education Program
Purpose of our session

- Better understand
  - how to assess a child with social emotional needs
  - how to develop goals
  - how to collect data
  - how to implement programming
What does a child with social emotional needs look like?

- Every child is different
- Typically, they have age-appropriate speech and language skills
- May have fine motor weaknesses; tend to avoid fine motor tasks
- May have a current diagnosis of Anxiety, ADHD, OCD
- Typically, they have behaviors, such as hitting, kicking, screaming, avoiding a task, etc.
Assessment

* Where do you begin?
  * Collect background information (may be in the form of a parent interview, review of the child’s records)
  * Begin with an observation of the child in a natural environment with peers
  * May encounter a “honeymoon” period
    * If so, set-up the environment for a particular situation to occur
      * If a behavior occurs, provide an intervention
      * Evaluate the intervention
        * Did it work?
        * Why/why not?
Assessments to Use

* AEPS (Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System for Infants and Toddlers)
  * Edited by Diane Bricker
  * Available through Brookes Publishing Company
  * An activity based measurement tool that links assessment, intervention, and evaluation for children ages birth to 6 years of age.
  * Assess/Monitor 6 developmental areas
    * Fine Motor
    * Gross Motor
    * Cognitive
    * Adaptive
    * Social Communication
    * Social
  * Allows the school team to develop goals and objectives based on areas of need.
* Social Area:
  * Interaction with Others
    * 1. Interacts with others as play partners
    * 1.1. Responds to others in distress or need
    * 1.2 Establishes and maintains proximity to others
    * 1.3 Takes turns with others
    * 1.4 Initiates greetings to others who are familiar
    * 1.5 Responds to affective initiations from others
SEAM (Social Emotional Assessment Measure)
* Part of a research grant out of University of Oregon
* Composed of two different age intervals: infants with a developmental range of 3 to 18 months, and toddlers with a developmental range of 18 to 36 months
* Each item is followed by three response boxes: most of the time, sometimes, rarely or never plus a column to indicate concerns and one to indicate intervention goal.
After completing each benchmark, the team can use the form to indicate if the behavior is a concern and if the skill will be an intervention item.

Example from the Toddler Form:

1.3 Toddler initiates and responds when you communicate with her

- Comes when you gesture for her to follow (12-16 months).
- Answers your question with one word, such as “juice.” (16-18 months).
- Asks questions: “Where mama?” says, “Mama come” when she wants you to play (18-36 months).
- Asks many questions (e.g. “why, what, how”) (30-36 months).
Assessments to Use

- Checklists from a variety of resources
- Positive Behavior Support Plans
- Functional Behavior Intervention Plan
- What are some resources you have found to be useful when assessing social emotional skills?
Take information from the assessment and observation and prioritize areas of need

What is impacting the child the most with peer interactions and his/her ability to learn?

As a team, brainstorm goals/objectives

Collect baseline over a period of time, people, and environments (may indicate % of time, number of prompts, number of times, etc.)
Use a rubric to identify the specific targeted skills
Skills are listed in a progression
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targeted Skill</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shares toys and materials with peers upon request</td>
<td>When Johnny is in a situation where a peer has an object/material he wants and/or feels he needs, he is unable to wait for the materials. He will often say, “But I want it.” He will often try to give the child/adult a different item so that he is able to keep the object he wants (even when he does not need the object at that time).</td>
<td>During social situations, Johnny shares toys/materials with peers and/or provides an appropriate response (&quot;I'm playing with it with now. Maybe later&quot;) 60% of the time</td>
<td>During social situations, Johnny shares toys/materials with peers and/or provides an appropriate response (&quot;I'm playing with it with now. Maybe later&quot;) 70% of the time</td>
<td>During social situations, Johnny shares toys/materials with peers and/or provides an appropriate response (&quot;I'm playing with it with now. Maybe later&quot;) 80% of the time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Data Collection**

* Data schedule
  * Monthly Calendar
  * Each child is rotated on a weekly basis
  * Data collection occurs on all goals, on the same day, one time per week
  * All staff members collect data for all goals/objectives
  * Training of paraprofessionals
    * Typically occurs at the beginning of the year
    * Each goal is explained, along with the data sheet
    * Review periodically, as goals/objectives change
### Data Collection: Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targeted Skill</th>
<th>Date: _____</th>
<th>Date: _____</th>
<th>Date: _____</th>
<th>Date: _____</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shares toys and/or materials with peers upon request</td>
<td>Shares toys/materials (+/-)</td>
<td>Shares toys/materials (+/-)</td>
<td>Shares toys/materials (+/-)</td>
<td>Shares toys/materials (+/-)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of prompts:</td>
<td>Number of prompts:</td>
<td>Number of prompts:</td>
<td>Number of prompts:</td>
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<td>% of time:</td>
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<td>% of time:</td>
<td>% of time:</td>
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</table>
## Overall Progress Note

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<td>1-4-11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1-12-11</td>
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<td>1-20-11</td>
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<td>Average:</td>
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<td>1.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Score on Rubric</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>
A variety of social skill programs are on the market; may need to make adaptations depending on the needs of your students

- Early Social Behavior Books
- Social Thinking Program
- Tucker Turtle
- Body Thermometer
- Volume Thermometer
- Social Stories
- Books targeting emotions
- Classroom created activities
Early Social Behavior Books

- *Early Social Behavior Books*
  - By Nita Everly
  - Can be purchased through LinguiSystems
  - Series of 11 books, targeting social skills for children ages three to six years
  - Children interact with the book, respond to questions
  - Provides teaching instructions and a list of follow-up activities
  - Can create materials to accompany the book
Created by Michelle Garcia Winner

Teaching strategy that focuses on helping children understand that what they do impacts how others respond to them.

Using the terminology “Red Thoughts/Blue Thoughts” helps to reinforce the social skills that are appropriate. Knowing that we can change what others think about us by changing our behavior.

Terminology used: Blue Thoughts, Red Thoughts, Expected Behavior, Unexpected Behavior, Whole Body Listening, Body in Group
Social Thinking

* Blue Thoughts: Thoughts we have about others that make us feel happy, calm, and comfortable (“I’m having a blue thought about you because you are sharing”). Avoid using the words “good” instead focus on describing what the child is doing.

* Red Thoughts: Thoughts we have about others that make us feel anxious, angry, sad, or uncomfortable (“I’m having a red thought about you because you hit”). “Avoid using the word “bad.”
Social Thinking

- Unexpected Behavior: Not following the rules for any given situation; people have RED thoughts about us when we do things that are unexpected
- Whole Body Listening: Listening with your brain, eyes, ears, heart... every part of your body
- Body in Group: We face our bodies (eyes, faces, arms, legs) toward the group to show we are part of a group. We keep our thoughts on what is going on in our group to show we are part of the group.
- Focus on constantly reinforcing positive social behavior (use a blue visual). Catch kids “being good.”
- When you tell the child you are having a red thought about them, as soon as they change their behavior, positively reinforce by saying, “Now, I’m having a blue thought because you are X.”
Explaining to students that, when sitting, a listening body is

- Sitting still (may be criss-cross, in a chair)
- Eyes are on the teacher
- Voice is quiet
- Hands are in lap/by their side/on the table

Prior to the group, say to the class, “Show me a listening body.”

Say to students in all situations (hallway, etc)

- Students respond; appear to understand
Tucker Turtle

- Created by Rochelle Lentini (March 2005)
- “Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think.”
- A scripted story to teach “turtle technique”
- A method of teaching young children strategies for coping with anger, disappointment, and frustration
- Can access the materials at www.challengingbehavior.org
Scope and Sequence

- Depends on the needs of your students
- Brainstorm with the classroom team to determine needs that impact student interaction with peers and/or learning
- Begin with “Red Thoughts/Blue Thoughts” activity
  - This concept is reiterated on a daily basis
- May teach about feelings, sharing, responding to unexpected events, “That’s okay. Maybe next time.”
Barriers

• Requires consistency
• Requires team approach
• Requires time
• Materials may be expensive
• Requires family support/involvement

• What can be done to avoid these barriers?
Resources

* Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
  * http://www.ecmhc.org/tutorials/strengthening/index.html

* Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development
  * http://gucchd.georgetown.edu/

* Project Launch
  * http://projectlaunch.promoteprevent.org/resources/center-early-childhood-mental-health-consultation-web-site

* Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
  * http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/index.html

* Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Development
  * http://www.challengingbehavior.org/

* Center for Evidence based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behaviors

* Social emotional Book list