Socials Skills

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Introductions - Julie

- M.Ed. Early Childhood Special Education (expected June, 2014)
- 6 years experience working at the Experimental Education Unit in inclusive Preschool, Kindergarten, and ECEAP classrooms
Introductions - Bonnie

- M.Ed. Early Childhood Special Education, Candidate
- Currently teaching at Developmental Preschool in South Seattle

- Past Experience:
  - Preschool teacher in General Education Classroom
  - EEU with Julie
Why Are Social Skills Important?

- All environments are social and require use of “social skills”

- Children who fail to develop social skills are less likely to:
  - Complete school
  - Have a job
  - Become well-adjusted adults.

(Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998)
Negative Impacts of not Developing Appropriate Social Skills

- Unable to have friendships
- Teasing
- Unable to get a job

(Myles & Simpson, 2001)
The Need for Social Skills Instruction

- Most individuals have learned social skills through observation, reflection and interactions
- Generally social skills are not explicitly taught, but are intuitive
- Many students with disabilities do not learn these skills from environment, and need direct instruction
Outline of Presentation

Our aim is to present 3 ways of teaching social skills to young children:

1. Social Skills Curricula
2. Puppets
3. Social Narratives
Housekeeping

Please:
● Make sure that your phone is on silent
● Refrain from texting/checking email
● Save your questions for Q&A breaks, which we will have after each section
● Feel free to use the bathroom whenever you’d like
Social Skills Curricula

- **Skillstreaming Curriculum**
  - Traditional approach: discrete skill training

- **Social Thinking® Curriculum**
  - New approach: cognitive thinking

- “Bucket Filling”
Skills Streaming Curriculum

- Discretely teaches essential pro-social skills
- Three levels: Early Childhood, Elementary and Adolescence
- More information at: http://www.skillstreaming.com
Skillstreaming Curriculum

● Systematic Social Skill Instruction

● Four-part training approach
  ○ modeling
  ○ role-playing
  ○ performance feedback
  ○ generalization
Target Population for Curriculum

Age:
- Early Childhood
- Elementary
- Adolescence

- Withdrawn and aggressive children
- Typically developing children with periodic deficits in prosocial behaviour
- Children with learning disabilities
- Children with communication disorders
- Children with behaviour problems
Skill Outlines

● Skill outlines are one-page summaries for each skill
  ○ Skill steps
  ○ Guidelines for skill instruction
  ○ Suggested situations for modeling displays.

● Skill steps
  ○ guide students in practicing the skills
  ○ evaluate generalization
Skillstreaming Curriculum- Early Childhood

Skill Areas (40 skills)
- Beginning Social Skills
- School-Related Skills
- Friendship-Making Skills
- Dealing with Feelings
- Alternatives to Aggression
- Dealing with Stress
Example Skill Card
(found at: skillstreaming.com)

**Skill 1: Listening**

Steps

1. **Look**

   Discuss the importance of looking at the person who is talking. Point out that sometimes you may think someone isn’t listening, even though he or she really is. These steps are to show someone that you really are listening.

2. **Stay still.**

   Remind the children that staying still means keeping hands and feet still and not talking with friends.

3. **Think.**

   Encourage the children to think about what the person is saying, and be sure they understand if the person is asking them to do something.

**SUGGESTED MODELING SITUATIONS**

*School:* Your teacher tells you that you are to go to the art center; your teacher gives you instructions on how to do an activity.

*Home:* A parent is telling you plans for the weekend. *Peer group:* A friend is telling you a story.
Research Base

- Over 50 studies examining effectiveness of curriculum

- Research demonstrates that focusing on specific skills has been effective at teaching social skills

Example:

- Instruction in problem-solving, using self-control, accepting consequences, avoiding trouble resulted in significant increase in “work with” peers (Choi & Heckenlaible-Gotto, 1998).
Social Thinking® Curriculum

- Social Thinking®: “A Developmental Treatment Approach for Students with Social Learning/Social Pragmatic Challenges”

- More information can be found at: [www.socialthinking.com](http://www.socialthinking.com)
Targeted Population for Curriculum:

- Age: K-5th Grade
- Most effective for students with near-normal or above average intelligence
- Autism spectrum disorders (high-functioning)
- Social communication disorder
- ADHD
- Nonverbal learning disability (NLD) and similar diagnoses
- Children and adults experiencing social learning difficulties without specific diagnoses
Social Thinking® Curriculum

● “The social thinking curriculum supports the development of social skills for individuals for whom it is not a natural, those who lack intuitive processes to acquire these skills.” (socialthinking.com)

● Teaches the “why” in social interactions, not just discrete skills

● Focuses on Social Cognition
Social Cognition

- Process of making sense of other people and yourself
- Understanding and use of social knowledge
- Theory of Mind: perspective taking

(Baron-Cohen et al, 1985).
“You are a Social Detective!”

- “School Smarts/Social Smarts”
- “Expected Behavior”
- “Unexpected Behavior”
- “Being a Social Detective”

(Winner, Crook & Knopp, 2008)
“School Smarts/Social Smarts”

- People have different kinds of smarts
- School Smarts: help us learn things like math, reading
- Social Smarts:
  - help us know how to act around other people
  - help us understand that other people think about us

(Winner, Crook & Knopp, 2008)
“Expected Behavior”

- *Expected* behavior: what other people expect our body to do and our mouths to say

- Examples:
  - Playground: safe body, use nice words
  - Classroom: sit with group, have a safe body, listen with brain and eyes

- Results from doing the expected behavior: *other people have good thoughts about us*

(Winner, Crook & Knopp, 2008)
Turn and Talk

● Pick two or three different parts of your school day

● Clearly list out the expected behaviors for a child during that time
“Unexpected Behavior”

- **Unexpected Behavior**: not doing what is not socially expected
  - Examples:
  - Playground: use mean words, don’t take turns, sore loser
  - School: not listening and not paying attention to the teacher, wandering away from the group

Result from doing the unexpected: *other people have uncomfortable thoughts*

(Winner, Crook & Knopp, 2008)
“Being a Social Detective”

- Learning to identify expected and unexpected behavior

- Using our social smarts well

- Using this information to make a smart guess
  - ie, make a *smart guess* that someone who only looks at a book is unfriendly
  - *Wacky guess*: don’t use tools to decipher expected behavior or how others are thinking

(Winner, Crook & Knopp, 2008)
Research Base

- Beginning large multiple baseline single-subject design study of children with high functioning ASD

- Examining effectiveness of teaching Social Thinking®
  - Pre- to post- measures on verbal/nonverbal “expected” and “unexpected” behaviors
  - Results: significant increase in expected verbal, “listening/thinking with eyes” and “initiations, and decreases in “unexpected verbal and non-verbal”

Crooke, Hendrix, & Rachman, 2008
“Have You Filled a Bucket Today?”
By Carol McCloud
Illustrated by David Messing.
For Ages 4 - 9
Published: May 16, 2006 (SC),
For more information visit: http://www.bucketfillers101.com

“How Full is Your Bucket?”
By Tom Rath & Mary Reckmeyer & Maurie Manning”
For Ages 5-8
Publisher - Gallup Press, 04/2009
“Bucket Filling”

**Bucket:** mental and emotional self

**Full Buckets:**
- We feel happy and good about ourselves
- We can do things to fill others’ buckets and other people can help fill our bucket
Bucket Dipping

**Empty Buckets:**
- unhappy, feel bad about ourselves
- Bucket dipping: being unkind to others
Activity

- In groups of 3-4 discuss: what “fills” and “dips” your student’s buckets
References


Brief Report: Measuring the Effectiveness of Teaching Social Thinking to Children with Asperger Syndrome (AS) and High Functioning Autism (HFA) Pamela J. Crooke, Ryan E. Hendrix, Janine Y. Rachma. © Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2008


https://www.researchpress.com/books/716/skillstreaming-early-childhood
Questions?
Puppet Play
Impact of Social Skills

“Successful, independent interaction with age mates is a central predictor of later mental health and well being beginning during preschool and continuing through grade school”

(Denham, 1993)
Emotional Competence

Key Components:

1) Emotional Expressiveness
2) Emotion Knowledge
3) Emotion Regulation
Social Competence

- Social competence is increasingly recognized as vital to school readiness

- Children who are socially competent are better adjusted, get better grades and achieve more

(Carlton&Winsler, 1999; Birch&Ladd, 1997; Ladd 1990)
How Do We Use Puppets to Teach Emotional and Social Competence?
Why Puppets?

- A child’s engagement in tasks may be the most important feature of intervention in terms of positively impacting the child’s learning and development

- Puppets’ physical attributes, ability to portray emotions through exaggerated expressions and gestures, and their motivational value make them useful with many young children

(Salmon & Sainato, 2005)
Multi-Use Tool

- Multicultural
- Opportunities to Diversify Classroom
- Externalize Problems
- Can be used in Many Environments
How to Use Puppets in the Classroom

1. Develop a predictable routine surrounding puppets and their membership in the classroom
2. Tell the child the skill he or she is going to learn
3. Have the puppet perform the target behavior
4. Allow the child to practice with puppet model
5. Pair the child with a peer and allow child to perform the target skill
6. Praise and reinforce

(Matson, Fee, Coe, & Smith, 1991)
Yirmiya et al. (1992) demonstrated that after watching video segments of children experiencing different events and emotions, high-functioning children with autism were less able than their typically developing peers to label others’ emotional states, take the perspective of another person, and respond with empathy.

Thus, the researchers were interested in the possible effects of a social intervention about empathy.

Understanding and exhibiting empathy requires emotional competence. Acting with empathy requires social competence.

(Schrandt, Townsend, & Poulson, 2009)
Research

Susie was a 30-month-old girl with severe esotropia (i.e., crossed eyes). Teachers identified Susie as a socially isolated child, as she rarely interacted with her peers and usually played by herself. Susie conversed verbally with her caregivers; however, she interacted with her peers using non-verbal hand and body movements.

Susie is exhibiting social competence with her caregivers, why not with her peers?

(Gronna, Serna, Kennedy, & Prater, 1999)
The Incredible Years®:
Dina Dinosaur

- The Incredible Years® is a program intended to prevent and treat behavior problems while promoting social, emotional, and academic competence of young children.
- Developed by Carolyn Stratton-Webster, Ph.D.
- Focuses on parent, child, and teachers
- Uses puppets as major component of intervention delivery

1. **Apatosaurus Unit 1**: Wally and Dina Teach About School Rules
2. **Iguanodon Unit 2**: Dina Teaches about Doing Your Best in School
3. **Triceratops Unit 3**: Wally Teaches About Understanding & Detective Feelings
Incredible Years® Research

Significant increases in:

- children's appropriate cognitive problem-solving strategies
- prosocial conflict management strategies with peers,
- social competence and appropriate play skills

Significant decreases in:

- reduced conduct problems at home and school

(Joseph, & Strain, 2003)
Things to Remember

- Peer relationships serve as a salient context for children’s cognitive, social, emotional, and physiological development across the lifespan.

- Research findings suggest that in vivo rehearsal and reward of acquired social skills is required for generalization of those skills.

- Learning doesn’t happen in a vacuum! We must practice these skills in various situations with various people.
“Play for young children is not recreation activity...It is not leisure-time activity nor escape activity....Play is thinking time for young children. It is language time. Problem-solving time. It is memory time, planning time, investigating time. It is organization-of-ideas time, when the young child uses his mind and body and his social skills and all his powers in response to the stimuli he has met.”

(Hymes, 1968)
ACTIVITY: Puppet Personalities

Puppets are another member of your classroom or home. They follow the same rules and routines as everyone else. They struggle with the same things as your children and can like the same things your children like. They might be from different places in the world, have different family structures, abilities, or backgrounds.

Who would be a good addition to your classroom?
Questions?
References


Social Narratives

- Social Stories® was created in 1991 by Carol Gray.
- A Social Story® is a written or pictorial document which aids a person in social situations. The story depicts the situation, skill, or concept being addressed and subsequent social cues, norms or common responses.
What Does It Look Like?

1. Sometimes I feel frustrated or upset.
2. It's OK to feel frustrated but I need to stop and calm down.
3. My work doesn't need to be perfect. I just need to try my best.
4. When I am frustrated or upset I can tell Mrs. Ashley or Mrs. Holbrook and they can
Commenting

Sometimes when I talk to my friends, I talk too much.

I need to let my friends have a chance to talk.

After I give my friend a turn to talk, I need to say something to show that I was listening. This is respectful and polite.

I can say things like "me too" or "cool" or "that sounds like fun." When I comment, my friend will know I was listening.

When I comment on what my friends are saying, they will be happy!
This is Alex. He is a teenager. He knows that teenagers help out at home. He likes to help his mom. He helps by setting the table.

Alex puts the knife and spoon on the right side and the fork on the left side.

Alex is happy that he can help his mom by setting the table. He is proud that he can help his family.
It is important to enter quietly so he does not disturb others from their work – that is not cool.
Why are Social Narratives Effective?

1. **Visuals:** preferred modality for individuals with ASD, Down Syndrome, and many other disabilities

2. **Permanent:** allows child to access the narrative repeatedly

3. Focus on the needs of the child

4. Focus on what people are thinking and doing

5. Written in a predictable format using a specific formula

(Smith, 2001)
Research

- Norris & Dattilo, 1999

- Examined the effect of social story intervention on social interactions

- Participant: 8-year-old girl, Jennifer
  - Diagnosed with Autism
  - Attended an inclusive second-grade classroom.
● Intervention
  ○ Jennifer read a **social story** 15 minutes before lunch
  ○ **Inappropriate** social interactions and **appropriate** alternative behaviors.
  ○ **Observed** inappropriate and appropriate social interactions during lunch

● Results: Inappropriate social interactions during lunch decreased by approximately 50% from the first day to the last day of intervention.

Norris & Dattilo, 1999
Research

- Sansosti & Powell-Smith, 2006

- Research: What is the effect of individualized social story interventions on the social behavior of three children with Asperger Syndrome (AS)?

- Participants: Three elementary-aged boys, ages 9 years 9 months to 11 years 6 months with AS
Intervention:

- Child read and review personalized social story two times a day with caregiver
- Social stories addressed one social behavior
  - Sportsmanship
  - Maintaining conversation
  - Joining in

Results:

- Significant increase in the social behavior of two of the three participants when the treatment was implemented.
- The two approached levels of performance that were similar to that of their comparison peers

Sansosti & Powell-Smith, 2006
When to Use a Social Narrative

- When a child lacks social skills such as understanding personal space, interruptions, using an inside voice
- When a child does not adhere to appropriate cues
- When a child needs review/reminder of expected behaviors
- When a child does not understand home/classroom routines, transitions, or other routines
Let’s Make a Social Narrative
How to Make a Social Narrative

1) Create a list or outline of the steps in the routine or procedure the child needs work or reinforcement on, like behavior in the hall, using the bathroom, starting work, asking for help, etc.

1. Wet toothbrush
2. Toothpaste on brush
3. Brush teeth
4. Spit in sink
5. Rinse toothbrush
How to Make a Social Narrative

2) For each step of the process, develop a simple sentence to explain the step, for example “open your desk and get your book out”, or “walk to the door and knock”, etc

“I turn on the water and get my toothbrush wet.”
How to Make a Social Narrative

3) Next to each step and sentence, utilize a picture to represent the action, either a generic image or graphic, or an actual picture of the student performing that step.
How to Make a Social Narrative

4) When the social story is complete, review it with the child daily before they perform that routine, procedure, or activity
5) After the child learns the social story, have them review it on their own before they perform that routine, procedure, or activity.
How to Make a Social Narrative

6) You may slowly fade the use of the social story as the child consistently perform the task correctly.
One More Example

Begin video at 1:30
ACTIVITY: Make Your Own Social Narrative

1) Fold your paper into fourths and make an illustrated story, like the 1st video
or
2) Write out a social story in prose, like the 2nd video.

**Remember the age, interests, and needs of your target child!**
Questions?
References


http://www.thegraycenter.org/social-stories
Major Take Aways

We hope you have left this session having learned more about:

- What social skills are and why they are important to teach
- Available social skills curricula
- How and why to use puppets as an intervention tool
- How using social narratives are quick, easy, and effective interventions