Considerations for Teaching Social Skills

Dover Area SD – Team Meeting Review

Teaching Social Skills: Rationale

- Research supports that a student's social incompetence relates to increased negative outcomes in the future (Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2004)

- Social behavior from 2-12 months of age (http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html)
  - Smiles at people
  - Starts to babble with expression
  - Responds to other people's emotions
  - Copies sounds and gestures of others
  - Attempts to get attention of others both vocally and non-vocally

Teaching Social Skills: Rationale

Early on children with autism without specific instruction/interventions:

- Do not look at others or engage them in activities
- They engage in repetitive behaviors that have little functionality
- They fail to engage in joint attention
- They do not watch others during play or imitate their peers
- Difficult time taking turns or waiting in social situations
- Without training may not mand for items or activities and do not respond to others mand directed to them (share a toy)

(Vince Carbone)

Considerations:

- Start instruction early, but its never too late!
- Include peers in the AS classroom and inclusion setting
- Teach in multiple settings for generalization
- Throughout the day in scheduled sessions and naturally occurring situations

Assessment

- Motivation:
  - Value of other people
  - Value of peers
  - Value of events valuable to others

- Language skills
  - Verbal behavior = social behavior
  - Competence with mands
  - Verbal repertoire (to include listener skills)
  - Rule governed behavior

- Social skills

Some Resources for Assessment

- Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP: Sundberg)
- Early Start Denver Model Curriculum Checklist for Young Children with Autism (Rogers and Dawson)
- Social Skills Solutions: A Hands on Manual (McKinnon and Krempa)
- Skills Streaming (McGinnis)

Core of ALL Social Skills: **Motivation**!

- Critical component in mand training, social skills training, and natural environment training

- If missing, at best, the outcome is imitation of meaningful behavior

- First step in teaching all social skills: establish value for what will become the social reinforcer

First Steps in Establishing Motivation

Conditioning

Process of delivering positive reinforcement during or immediately following a behavior/activity

- Over time the neutral or aversive activity/behavior/person acquires reinforcing properties because it has been 'paired' with reinforcement
- Does not require compliance with a demand
- The process can be used to condition adults, peers, environments, activities, etc. as potential reinforcers

SOCIAL SKILLS PROGRAMMING

General Guidelines Across Levels

CONDITIONING PEERS AS VALUABLE- Pair other children with reinforcement by having them give reinforcers to the learner non-contingently (as long as problem behavior/escape behavior is not occurring)

- **CONDITIONING ACTIVITIES AS VALUABLE-** Consider those activities that will be conducive to social interactions

- **MAND-** Once the children are effectively paired with reinforcement (the learner is now approaching the other children or no longer walking away from them and readily accepting reinforcers from peers), begin to have the learner mand for reinforcers that the other children hold.

- **RECEPTIVE INSTRUCTIONS-** When the learner is manding from the other children with no prompts needed, begin to have the other children ask the learner to do simple receptive directions that occur in play. For example: "Pass me the crayon" or "give me the red train"

General Guidelines Across Levels

- **MAND FOR ATTENTION**- Teach your child to mand for other children's attention to show them things. If the attention of other children is not reinforcing to your child, begin to pair other kids' attention with reinforcement.

- **INTERACTIVE PLAY-** Start to teach the children to engage in a game or activity together that they both enjoy and the learner needs little prompts to do. Examples of these are: board games, sand art, painting, water balloon activities, etc.

- **PRETEND PLAY-** Start to teach the children to act out pretend scenes from stories they have heard or movies they have watched. Once the children begin to act out stories spontaneously with no prompts needed, begin to reinforce any playing that occurs that is different from the original script.

Social Skills for Early Learner

- Conditioning attention as a reinforcer
- Develop and increase approach behavior through pairing and reinforcer identification
- Ongoing reinforcer identification/conditioning across categories (edibles, items, activities, actions, social)
- Joint Attention/Eye Contact
- Manding

Teaching Joint Attention/ Eye Contact

If social stimuli that function as reinforcers for behavior in most people, including children, do not do so for behavior in children with autism, a crucial step may be to establish such events as reinforcers. The following outline of a training procedure will focus on establishing others' eye contact, nodding, and smiling as reinforcers.

Role of Eye Contact

- It is critical to condition the response of the communication partner as a reinforcer for social behavior and thereby arrange the conditions under which typical children develop social responses

- It has also been suggested that poor eye contact may adversely affect the educational gains of children with autism due to the relationship between eye contact and attending to the teacher and instructional demands (Greer & Ross, 2007; Lovaas, 1977).

- One case study defined eye contact as movement by student's head and eyes so as to make direct contact with the eyes of the person from whom he was manding immediately prior to or simultaneous with the vocal mand response.

(Teaching Eye Contact to Children with Autism: A Conceptual Analysis and Single Case Study, Carbone 2013)

Joint Attention/ Eye-Contact Protocol

- Trainer and child are seated face-to-face at opposite sides of a table.
- Spread a few small edible reinforcers (or other reinforcer) around the table.
  - May run without table by offering item
- Any attempt from the child to take pieces/items from the table should be blocked.
- When the child makes eye contact, nod and smile before you let the child take one item.

Eye Contact
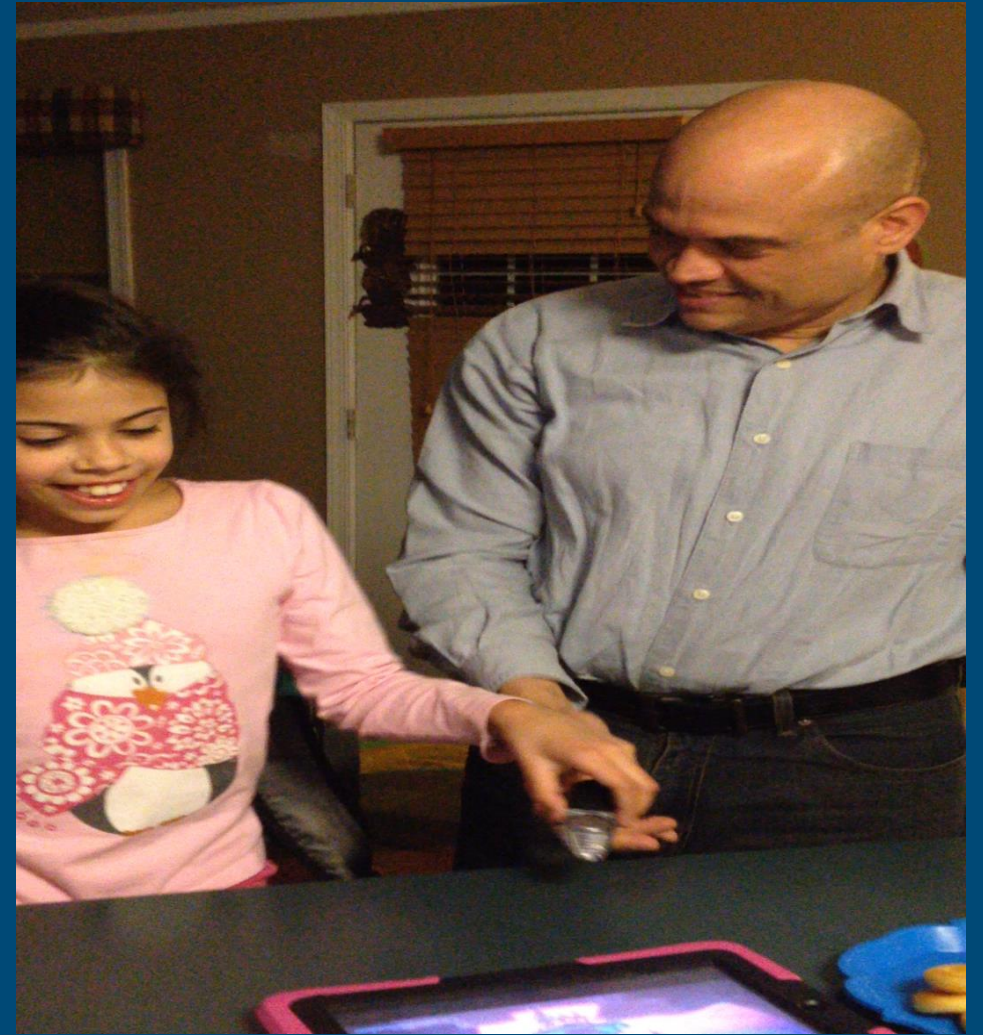
Mands & Other Language Skills

- After a basic mand repertoire is established it is important to broaden that skill set to more advanced mand repertoire with adults before moving into systematic programming with peers

- In reference to the other verbal operants it is critical to also build strong repetoires in tacting, tacting actions, tacting adjectives, tacting prepositions, etc.

- Without a strong tact repertoire it will be difficult for students to engage in meaningful conversations and exchanges involving a combination of mands, tacts, listener response, and intraverbals

Social Skills for Intermediate Learners

- Continue to build strong mand repertoire with adults using mands for actions, missing items, information, etc.

- Implement peer to peer mand sessions (structured/contrived setting)

- Transfer skills acquired in peer to peer mand sessions with a variety of peers in the natural environment (specialized classroom, general education settings, home, and community)

- Continue to expand reinforcers (age appropriateness)

Selecting Peers for Training

- When possible, target students that have previously shown interest in each other
- If there is no existing value in other peers, begin with conditioning the peers
- When working without typical peers, initially select reinforcers that are different for both.
- Ideal to have reverse inclusion opportunities in early phase

Peer to Peer Pairing

- Teacher will require peer buddy to approach student and deliver potential reinforcer – no additional demand requirement for student
  - Teacher will guide peer on how to differentially reinforce student based on approach and interaction
- Teacher will differentially reinforce peer for compliance

Peer to Peer Pairing Cont.

- Data Collection
  - Probe data:
    - Accepting from a peer
    - Giving to a peer
  - Frequency of prompted and unprompted:
    - Accepting from a peer
    - Giving to a peer

- Graphing
  - Frequency of prompted and unprompted

- Criteria for Mastery
  - Minimum = Three consecutive Yes cold probes on each target

Results of Peer to Peer Pairing
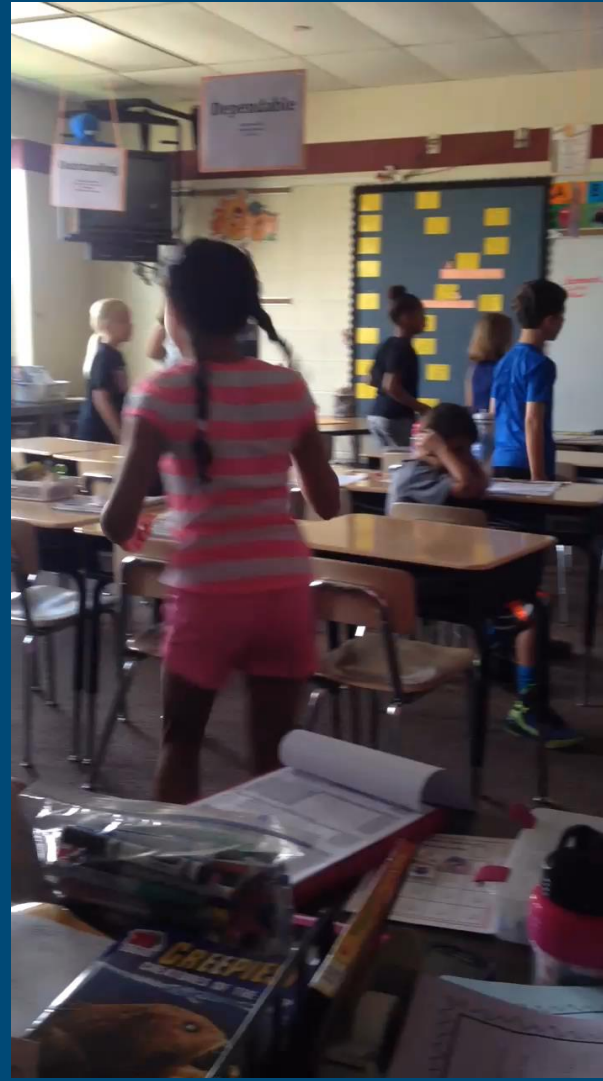
Basic Peer to Peer Manding Procedures

- Choose items students have high MO for and will want during sessions
- Control environment:
  - Place students so they have access to each others items, but cannot access their own
  - Students should face each other
  - Sanitize environment
- Reinforce students at a high rate for delivering items – fade instructor reinforcement as student behavior is shaped
- Instructors prompt and reinforce from behind providing very little interaction
- If the instructor needs to provide a prompt from behind (partial physical for delivery) or vocal/sign for the mand to the prompt should occur with limited interaction

Sample Peer to Peer Manding

Sample Peer to Peer Manding
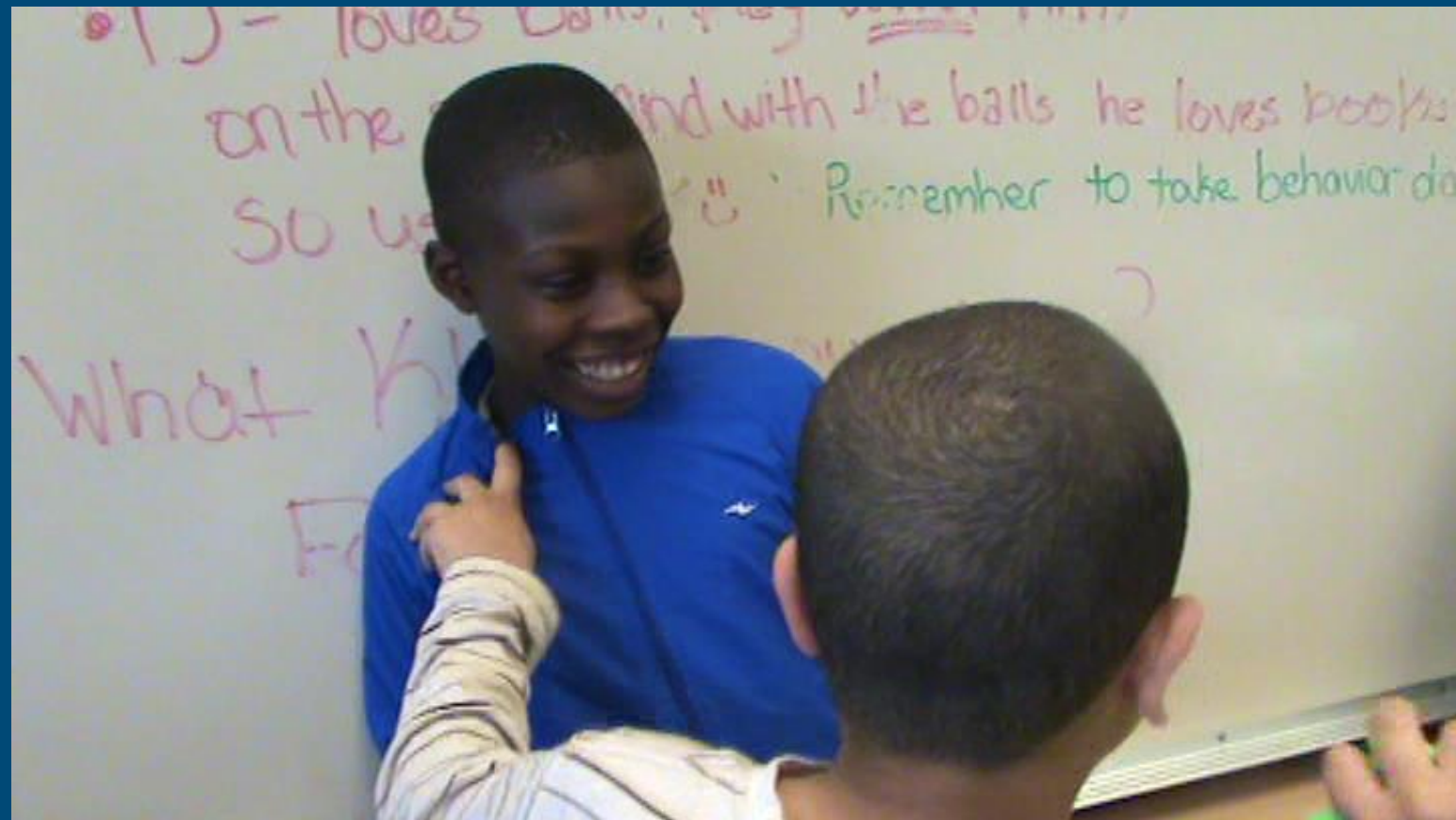
Fast Forward

About 480 students graduated Friday, May 31, 2019, from Central York High School. (Bil Bowden photos)

THE YORK DISPATCH

Sample Peer to Peer Manding

Fast Forward

Sample Peer to Peer Manding

Sample Peer to Peer Manding

Sample Peer to Peer Manding

Peer-Peer Mand Data Sheet

Student:						Date:
Accept from peer	Y N					
Mand from peer	Y N					Notes:
Gave to peer	Y N					
Accept from peer		Mands from Peer		Gives to Peer		
P	S	P	S	P	S	

Student:						Date:
Accept from peer	Y N					
Mand from peer	Y N					Notes:
Gave to peer	Y N					
Accept from peer		Mands from Peer		Gives to Peer		
P	S	P	S	P	S	

Outcomes

- Increase in social play skills
- Prerequisite skills for social skills instruction
- Increase in initiation of interaction with peers
- Increase in awareness of peers
- Less parallel play, more cooperative play
- Students share reinforcers with peers
- Students are observed as enjoying the company of their peers

Student: _____Observer: _____ Date: _____ Time: to _____ from _____

Cold Probe - **Responds to Peer   Y   N**   **Initiates with Peer   Y   N**   **Engages with Peer   Y   N**

Activity	Contrived Or Unplanned	Peer(s)/adult(s) participating	Individual (I) or Group (G)	Initiates +, -, NR	Reciprocates +, -, NR	Engages +, -, NR

Teaching Complex Social Skills

- It is important for learners to have acquired language skills to be able to follow rule governed behavior –this is critical in order to benefit from social skills instruction at higher levels

- Rule governed behavior: "behavior is controlled by verbal antecedents rather than more directly by its particular consequences" (Catania, Shimoff, & Matthews, 1989, p.119).

- If learners contact higher rates of reinforcement through behaviors that are not socially acceptable more efficiently than they may contact reinforcement for socially appropriate rule-following behavior, reviewing rules for behavior is not likely to result in improvement in socially appropriate behaviors. (Kittenbrink NAC 2016)

Teaching Complex Social Skills

- If students have language skills, but rule-governed behavior is not established as a generalized repertoire
  - Teach basic rules with specific prompting and differential reinforcement for rule-following and then fade differential reinforcement and have direct contingencies support maintenance of the behavior.

Behavioral Skills Training

- Research validated treatment package used to effectively teach a variety of skills to a variety of populations a variety of skills.
  - Core elements: instruction, modeling, rehearsal, feedback

(Buck, 2014)

Skillstreaming: McGinnis & Goldstein

- Addresses social skill needs of students who display aggression, immaturity, withdrawal, or other problem behaviors.

- Helps individuals develop competence in dealing with interpersonal conflicts, learn to use self-control, and contribute to a positive classroom atmosphere.

- Primarily designed to be carried out in group settings, such as schools.

Four Part Training Model

- Teacher Modeling
- Student Role Playing
- Group Performance Feedback
- Transfer Training (practicing the skills at home and in the community)

Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997

Skillstreaming: McGinnis & Goldstein

- ABA Principles:
  - Modeling
  - Examples and Non-Examples
  - Role Playing
  - Feedback
  - Shaping
  - Differential Reinforcement
  - Group Contingencies
  - Maintenance and Generalization

Considerations

- Is there MOTIVATION?

- Target appropriate skills
    - Consider age level
    - Consider developmental level
    - Teach functionally relevant social skills

- Observe same-aged peers in the classroom and other social settings within the school – also consider responding in home and community environments

Pre-Requisites

- Age-Appropriate Play Skills
- Manding Repertoire
- Mands for primary reinforcers, information and attention
- Echoic Repertoire
  - Imitate phrases, sentences, questions and statements
- Tacting Repertoire
  - Identifies problems
  - Labels and describes events or items presented in a scene
  - Labels emotions of others, internal events and emotions
  - Labels social interaction behavior
- Intraverbal Repertoire
  - Answers questions
  - Names previously observed activities
  - Tells about experiences/tells stories

Grouping Students

1. Shared skill deficiency

2. Shared characteristics (age, interests, live nearby, etc.)

9 Steps

1. Define the skill
2. Model the skill
3. Establish trainee skill need
4. Select role-player
5. Set up the role play
6. Conduct the role play
7. Provide performance feedback
8. Assign skill homework
9. Select next role-player

1. Define the Skill

- Be Brief (few minutes)
- Trainer-led discussion
- Review abstract meaning
- Review concrete examples
- Goal is that students understand what skill is about to be taught

2. Model the Skill

Variables that influence modeling effectiveness:
- Model is highly skilled
- Model is of high status
- Model controls rewards
- Model is same sex, age, and social status
- Model is friendly, helpful, and important
- Model is rewarded for the behaviors

Effective Modeling:

- Behaviors are clear and detailed
- Behaviors are in order from least to most difficult
- Enough repetition to 'overlearn'
- Behaviors modeled with as little irrelevant detail as possible
- Behaviors are performed by several models

3 Stages of Modeling

1. Attention

2. Retention

3. Reproduction

3. Establish Trainee Skill Need

- Have trainee describe where, when and with whom they would find skill useful

- Rule of Skillstreaming- EVERY trainee must role-play EVERY skill, NO Exception!

4. Select Role-Player

- Go with volunteers first

- May need to consider yourself or other competent adult first

5. Set up the Role-Play

- Main actor describes real-life situation and picks co-actor

- Pick co-actor that resembles real-life person

- Make as realistic as possible

6. Conduct the Role-Play

- Remind all participants of roles and responsibilities
  - Main actor follows behavioral steps
  - Co-actor stays in role of other person
  - Group observes and gives feedback

- Each session begins with 2 modeling vignettes, even if skill is not new

7. Provide Performance Feedback

- Brief feedback period follows each role-play
- Guidelines to be most effective:
  - Provide reinforcement only after role-plays that follow the behavioral steps
  - Provide reinforcement at earliest opportunity
  - Always reinforce co-actor for being helpful

8. Assign and Set Up Skill 'Homework' Practice

- Following successful role-plays, trainees are to try in their own real-life settings
  - Discuss person, day, and place to try with

- Imperative that situations are set up in real life circumstances, don't just hope it happens

- Start with easy behaviors and once mastered work to target behaviors (shaping)

- First part of session devoted to presenting and discussing homework

- When most of group demonstrates skill proficiency and success with homework, move onto another skill.

Training Guidelines

- Order of skills in manual do not imply a sequence
  - Some skills start where others leave off, so some sequences are necessary

- Behavior steps are 'thinking' steps at times, when modeling or role-playing these it is crucial to enact these out loud.

Grouping Skills

- Single skills not always adequate
- After several months trainers need to shift from single new skills to selecting sequencing of skills
- Example sequences:
  - Dealing w/someone else's anger then Dealing with Fear then Standing up for your rights
  - Dealing w/accusation then Apologizing

Procedures

- Choose Skill
- Goal
  - When placed in novel social situations, the student will respond using appropriate voice, volume and tone, appropriate eye contact, and proper body positioning with 100% accuracy on cold probes across 5 consecutive school days.
- Criteria for Skill
  - 3 consecutive cold probes at 100% accuracy in training sessions with adults.
  - 3 consecutive cold probes with 100% accuracy in training sessions with peers.
  - 5 consecutive cold probes with 100% accuracy in novel generalized situations with peers.

Carbone Clinic, 2011

Procedures

- Baseline:
    - Baseline data is collected prior to teaching each target skill using 3 school days of cold probe data.

- Maintenance:
    - Maintenance trials are run once a week on all previously mastered social skills.
    - Data is collected and graphed on % of accurate responses on mastered targets.
    - If there are 3 days below 70% accuracy, the targeted skills will go back into teaching at the training level.

Carbone Clinic, 2011

Lesson

1. Modeling: Act out the situation for the learner following the lesson plan
   - Use another teacher to act out the situation if possible
   - If no other teacher is free, model only the student responses

2. .Explain what the learner should and shouldn't do
   - State the rules listed on the lesson plan to the learner
   - State the rules after modeling the situation and repeat following each instance of role playing if necessary

3. Demonstrate the correct responses
   - Show the learner what the correct responses look like

4. Role Play (Training Trials): Act out the situation with the learner
   - The learner practices the appropriate responses with you
   - Target skills should be role-played 5x per school day

5. Feedback
   - Tell the learner what they did correctly during the role playing and provide social praise
   - Tell the learner what they need to improve
     - Model appropriate responses
     - Restate what they should/shouldn't do

Carbone Clinic, 2011

Lesson Plan

Name:

Date:

SKILL AREA:

FUNCTIONAL DEFINITION:

Antecedent   Behavior   Consequence

OBJECTIVE: The student will _____ with 100% accuracy on cold probes across 5 consecutive school days. Accuracy will be determined based on the total possible points on the teacher scored rating scale.

1. Model the Situation for the Learner

2. Tell Learner: What to Do

3. Tell Learner: What Not to Do

4. Demonstrate Responses for Learner

5. Role Play the Situation with the Learner

6. Teacher Provides Learner with Feedback Regarding Practice Situations

Social Skills Lesson Plan

Name: _____   Date: _____

Skill Area: Stating a Conversation

Functional Definition: Student will begin a conversation with another person using appropriate voice, volume and tone, proper body positioning and posture, and appropriate eye contact as determined by the teacher using the set rating scale.

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
Student sees someone he would like to talk to	Student engages them in a conversation	Person responds to student's comments

Objective: Student will begin a conversation with another person with 100% accuracy on cold probes across 5 consecutive school days. Accuracy will be determined based on the total possible points on the teacher rating scale.

1. Model the situation for the learner
   - Choose someone who is not busy to talk with
   - Ask them how their weekend was or what they did in school
   - Wait for them to answer before you start talking again
   - Tell them about your weekend or your day.
   - Say "talk to you later" or "nice talking to you" when you are finished.
2. Tell the learner what to do
   - Talk to someone who is not busy
   - Look at them when you are talking
   - Listen to what the other person is saying
   - Wait for them to finish before you begin talking
   - Say "talk to you later" or "nice talking to you" when you are finished.
3. Tell learner what not to do
   - Don't look away when the person is talking
   - Don't start talking about something new or different
   - Don't start talking before the other person is finished
4. Demonstrate responses for the learner
5. Role play responses with learner
6. Provide feedback to learner about practice situations

Data Collection

- Training Level with Adults
  - Data will be collected the first contrived trial of the targeted response between the teacher and the learner
    o Data will be collected as a cold probe prior to teaching the skill
  - Record data using the Evaluation Criteria Rating Scales

- Training Level with Peers
  - Data will be collected on the first contrived trial of the targeted response between a peer and the learner
    o Data will be collected as a cold probe prior to teaching the skill
  - Record data using the Evaluation Criteria Rating Scales

- Generalization Level
  - Data will be collected on the first contrived trial of the targeted response between a novel peer and the learner
    o Data will be collected as a cold probe prior to teacher the skill
  - Record data using the Evaluation Criteria Rating Scales

Carbone Clinic, 2011

Evaluation Criteria

Skill:_____ Date: _____

	No	Yes
Appropriate Voice Volume	1	2
Appropriate Voice Tone	1	2
Proper Body Posture & Position	1	2
Appropriate Eye Contact	1	2

	No	Yes
Appropriate Social Responses	1	2
Inappropriate Responses	2	1

TOTAL: _____/ 12 = _____%

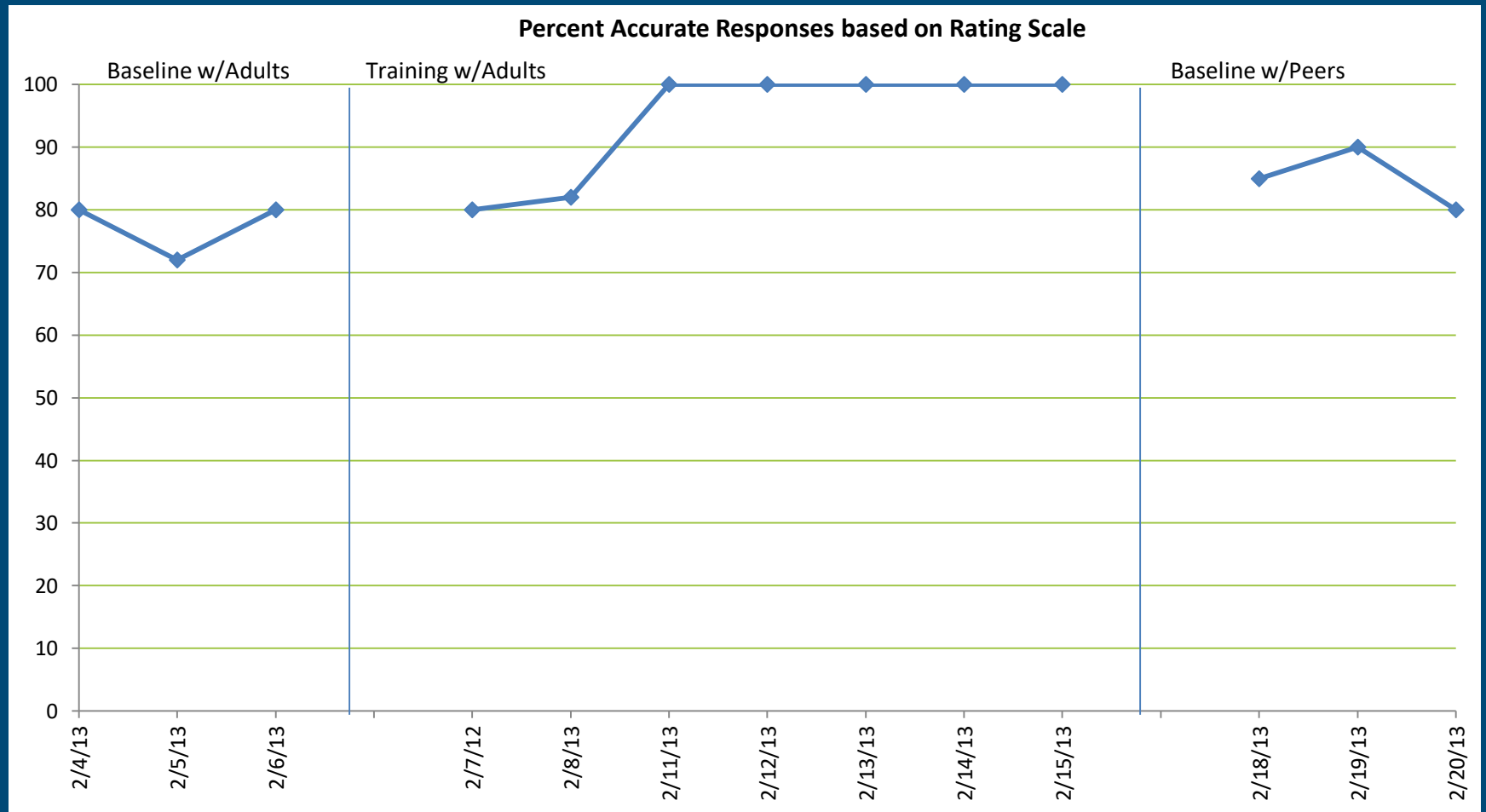Appropriate Responses:

TOTAL: _____

Graphing

- Graph the Percentage of Accurate responses based on the Social Rating Scale
  - Separate graph for each skill
  - Each graph should contain a baseline, training level, generalization level and maintenance with phase changes for each.

Carbone Clinic, 2011

Sample Skills

	Target	Date Introduced	Date Mastered	Date Generalized	Retention Check(s)
1	**Listening**				
2	***Starting a Conversation***				
3	***Having a Conversation***				
4	***Asking a Question***				
5	***Saying Thank You***				
6	***Introducing Yourself***				
7	***Introducing Other People***				
8	***Giving a Compliment***				
9	***Asking for Help***				
10	***Joining IN***				
11	***Giving Instructions***				
12	***Following Instructions***				
13	***Apologizing***				
14	***Convincing Others***				
15	***Knowing Your Feelings***				
16	***Expressing Your Feelings***				
17	***Understanding the Feelings of Others***				
18	***Dealing with Someone Else's Anger***				
19	***Expressing Affection***				
20	***Dealing with Fear***				
21	***Rewarding Yourself***				
22	***Asking Permission***				
23	***Sharing Something***				
24	***Helping Others***				
25	***Negotiating***				

Treatment Fidelity

		YES	NO	N/A
Organization	1. Does instructor choose appropriate skill to target?			

	2. Does instructor prepare Social Skill Lesson Plan with the following components?
	  a. Skill area? Y N
	  b. Functional definition (ABC)? Y N
	  c. Objective? Y N
	  d. What will be modeled for learner? Y N
	  e. List of what to do to when performing the skill? Y N
	  f. List of what not to do when performing the skill? Y N
	  g. Homework plan, if applicable? Y N			

	3. Does instructor have evaluation criteria with the following components?
	  a. Goal objectives listed (ex: appropriate voice/volume, eye contact, etc.)? Y N
	  b. Appropriate social responses with check system? Y N			

Instructional Delivery	4. Does instructor baseline skill at the appropriate level (adults, peers, novel situations) for 3 days prior to teaching lesson, using the Evaluation Criteria Rating Form?
	  a. Rates each goal objective (appropriate voice/volume, eye contact, etc.)? Y N
	  b. Indicates appropriate and inappropriate social responses using + and -? Y N
	  c. Rates appropriate and inappropriate social responses? Y N
	  d. Adds up score and calculates percentage? Y N			

	5. Does instructor run a cold probe of the skill at the appropriate level (adults, peers, novel situations) prior to teaching lesson?
	  a. Rates each goal objective (appropriate voice/volume, eye contact, etc.)? Y N
	  b. Indicates appropriate and inappropriate social responses using + and -? Y N
	  c. Rates appropriate and inappropriate social responses? Y N
	  d. Adds up score and calculates percentage? Y N			

	6. Does instructor model: act out situation for learner?			
	7. Does instructor explain what the learner should do?			
	8. Does the instructor add up score and calculates percentage?			
	9. Does instructor explain what the learner should not do?			
	10. Does instructor demonstrate the correct response?			
	11. Does instructor require the learner to act out the situation?			

	12. Does the instructor provide feedback to the learner?
	  a. Tells the learner what he did correctly during the role playing situation? Y N
	  b. Tells the learner what he needs to improve? Y N
	  c. Models appropriate responses (if needed)? Y N
	  d. Restates what he should/shouldn't do? Y N			

	13. Does instructor provide social praise and, if necessary, other forms of reinforcement (e.g., tokens, edibles, tangibles)?			
	14. Does positive reinforcer compete with negative reinforcement or automatic reinforcement?			

Notes:

___ / **14**

Percentage of Y's:

Reminders

- Make sure there is MOTIVATION
- Use appropriate reinforcers
- Target appropriate skills
- Use peers that the student is interested in interacting with
- Spend time training peers to help with training sessions and probes
- Get permission from teachers and parents of peers that are helping

Summary of Social Skills

- Social skills are complex-use an assessment to guide programming and decisions
- Social skills require specific teaching and should not be left up to chance
- Specific prerequisite skills are necessary prior to starting a structure curriculum
- Social skills instruction is necessary and should start early BUT it is never too late!
- Teach systematic at first and then move to the natural environment
- Keep in mind age appropriateness and value of the reinforcers
- HAVE FUN !