Improving Social Skills for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

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Rory A. Panter, Psy.D.
Licensed Psychologist (NJ #4904)

Behavior Therapy Associates, P.A.
Somerset, New Jersey
(732) 873-1212
rpanter@BehaviorTherapyAssociates.com
www.BehaviorTherapyAssociates.com
The Problem

• Bobby is a 9 year-old child out on the playground.
• Each day he walks around the playground, sometimes picks up woodchips, or sits down on a bench. Sometimes he tries to join others but is never successful, because others say “no” or tease him, and he has poor self-control.
• Bobby really would like to play with other children but doesn’t know what to do.
Bobby (age 9)

• Bobby could be a child diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. He could have ADHD, a learning disability, executive functioning problems, or he may not have any diagnosis at all. He may be shy and lack self-esteem.

• He may be in a general education classroom or a special education classroom.

• Have you ever seen Bobby?

• What can be done to help him?
what is Bobby Missing? (or Common Deficits for Children with Social Skills Difficulties)

• Understanding of Social Cues
• Perspective taking and empathy (e.g., Theory of Mind)
• Eye contact
• Answering questions
• Turn-taking in conversation
• Organization and sequencing skills
• Concentration to stay on topic

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Video - Perspective Taking: “Sheldon’s Here”
Common Deficits

• Social / Pragmatic language
• Problem-solving
• Friendship making
• Self-control
• Anger management
• Appropriate expression of feelings and needs
• Hypersensitive to sounds, large/small rooms, close proximity to others, etc.
• Self-stimulatory behaviors
Disabilities/Difficulties common among children with social skills difficulties (focus is on ASD today)

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- ADHD
- Anxiety
- Learning Disabilities
- Communication Delays
- Cognitive Delays

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Functional Impact of Deficits

- Emotional regulation
- Common sense
- Athletic skills
- Academic difficulties
- Self-esteem
And a significant problem is found regarding:

...social relationships
Social Skills are learned early on in life
For children with developmental delays, social skills may be delayed.
Characteristics of Reciprocal Social Interactions

- Attend to verbal and nonverbal behavior
- Empathy
- Two-sided conversations
- Sensitive to others’ feelings, intentions and context
- Flexible
- Assertive
- Sophisticated (street smart)

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The challenge?

- In education, we have many, many goals and objectives.
- Social skills are only one component but there is little emphasis typically on teaching these skills.
- We commonly focus more on academic achievement (one class per day dedicated to each subject with homework assignments and materials).
- Social skills and academic achievement go hand in hand and really cannot be separated.

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Social Skills Training: Not as easy as it looks
Video - Friendship Algorithm
Social Skills: Major Characteristics

- Primarily acquired through learning (observation, modeling, rehearsal, & feedback)
- Comprise specific and discrete verbal and nonverbal behaviors
- Interactive by nature & entails effective & appropriate responsiveness.
- Social skill performance influenced by characteristics of environment.
- Deficits/excesses in social performance can be specified & targeted for intervention.

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What Is Social and Emotional Learning?

• Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults:
  • acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions
  • set and achieve positive goals
  • feel and show empathy for others
  • establish and maintain positive relationships
  • and make responsible decisions.

*http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/*
What Is Social and Emotional Learning?

- "SEL programming is based on the understanding that the best learning emerges in the context of supportive relationships that make learning challenging, engaging and meaningful.

*http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/*
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Core Competencies

- **Self-Management**: Managing emotions and behaviors to achieve one's goals
- **Self-Awareness**: Recognizing one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and challenges
- **Social Awareness**: Showing understanding and empathy for others
- **Relationship Skills**: Forming positive relationships, working in teams, dealing effectively with conflict
- **Responsible Decision-Making**: Making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior
The Hidden Curriculum:
Unwritten Rules that Students with Disabilities
Often Miss - By Brenda Myles
• “Richard Lavoie described the hidden curriculum as important social skills that everyone knows but no one is taught. This includes assumed rules, adult or student expectations, idioms, and metaphors. Understanding the hidden curriculum is difficult for everyone, but it is especially so when compounded with a deficit in social interactions.” (Myles, Council for Exceptional Children, undated, www.cec.sped.org)
Examples of the Hidden Curriculum
(From Myles, Council for Exceptional Children, undated, www.cec.sped.org):

• Treat all authority figures with respect (i.e., police, firefighters). You would not address a police officer like you would your brother.

• Not all people you are unfamiliar with are strangers you can’t trust. You may not know your bus driver or your policeperson, but these are people who help you.

• What may be acceptable at your house may not be acceptable at a friend’s house. For example, although it is acceptable to put your feet up on the table at home, your friend’s mom may be upset if you do that in her home.

• It is impolite to interrupt someone who is talking unless it is an emergency. People are not always supposed to say what they are thinking.
We're in Great Shape for a Great Year!

- ahead of the game
- ear to the ground
- working our fingers to the bone
- armed with skills
- giving one another a hand
- a leg up on the competition
Redefining the Problem

• Identifying and targeting an alternate incompatible behavior

  • *most replacement behaviors in a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) involve developing the student’s functional communication skills and more appropriate social skills*

  • *some form of social skills training, therefore, needs to be in most BIP’s*
Replacement Behaviors

• John will improve his ability to comply with adult requests/demands in an appropriate manner and without demonstrating the target behaviors.

• John will improve his ability to develop positive social skills, including greeting and saying good-bye to adults and peers, sharing information, displaying appropriate conversation skills, and interactive play skills.

• John will improve his ability to remain calm and safe and communicate his feelings when he feels frustrated, embarrassed, upset, anxious, etc. within a situation across environments.

• John will improve his ability to request and accept assistance from staff members when he perceives that a task is challenging and/or when he feels uncomfortable within a situation.
Replacement Behaviors

• John will improve his ability to complete academic tasks independently for longer periods of time across subject areas.

• John will improve his ability to refrain from disturbing staff members and classmates by displaying a quiet voice, keeping his body to himself (i.e., maintaining personal space), and taking turns to speak.

• John will improve his ability to develop age-appropriate problem solving skills to appropriately identify the problem, express his feelings, brainstorm and evaluate potential solutions, choose a good solution and implement the solution.

• John will improve his ability to develop and display more mature, appropriate, and effective coping skills.

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Replacement Behaviors

- John will learn to and demonstrate the ability to use more positive self-statements, automatic thoughts, and verbalizations related to situations to minimize the likelihood that he subsequently feels frustrated, anxious, sad, overwhelmed, embarrassed or other negative emotions which historically have contributed to the target behaviors.

- John will learn and demonstrate appropriate ways to gain peers’ attention, while avoiding silly and disruptive comments and behaviors.

- John will improve his ability to accept assistance / coaching from adults and positive peer models to improve his behavior.
Redefining the Problem

• Social skill acquisition deficit
• Social skill performance deficit
• Deficit in generalizing social skill across environments
• Deficit in fluency (speed and accuracy)
Social Skills Training: Involves a Systematic Approach

• Train students to become effective observational learners
• Use role play and invite practice to improve skill potential
• Provide continuous feedback about the child’s performance
• Help develop methods of self-reinforcement
• Develop means for child to transfer training to the real world

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Incorporating Social-Emotional and Problem-Solving Curriculum & Strategies

Core Social Skills:

- Identifying and expressing emotions/feelings
- Perspective-taking and empathy (Theory of Mind)
- Social conversation
- Play skills
- Problem-solving
- Emotional/impulse control
- Anger management
- Hidden Curriculum

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Social Skills Training & Behavior Management: Incorporate Evidence-Based Approaches
(Wong, et al, 2014) *this is not a complete list

- Functional Behavior Assessment
- Functional communication training
- Modeling
- Naturalistic interventions
- Parent-implemented interventions
- Peer-mediated instruction and intervention
- Prompting
- Reinforcement systems
- Scripting
- Self-management
- Social narratives
- Video modeling
- Visual supports

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3-D Approach (Asher & Gordon, 1998)

- Discussion of social skills to develop
- Demonstration of skill and specific steps
- Doing (practice, role play, rehearsal, behavior specific feedback)
Expressing your Feeling

1. Stop and think of how your body feels.

2. Decide what to call the Feeling.

3. Think about your choices:
   a. Say to the person, “I feel ______.”
   b. Walk away for now.
   c. Get involved in an activity.

4. Act out your best choice...
3-D Approach
(Asher & Gordon, 1998)

3-D Approach is interactive between the teacher/leader and student/learner (most skills are taught through this approach)

- Discussion
- Demonstration
- Doing
3-D Approach

• **Discussion** of social skill to develop
  • Name of the skill
  • Rationale for the skill or importance
  • Specific steps outlined in clear fashion

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3-D Approach

• **Demonstration** of skill and specific steps
  • Model appropriately the steps involved
    • Check in with child to ensure comprehension
    • Have child show thumbs up/down to ensure he/she knows what skill looks like
  • Model inappropriate way of displaying skill
    • Check in with child to ensure comprehension
    • Have child show thumbs up/down to ensure he/she knows what skill looks like
3-D Approach

- **Doing** of skill
  - Child practices specific steps of skill
  - Teacher/leader and other children provide feedback
    - Thumbs up/down
    - Behavior specific verbal feedback
    - Child should continue practice until 100% correct
    - Role play frequently to increase fluency (accuracy and speed of demonstrating skill)
Example: Greeting Someone

• **Rationale:** Greeting someone is important so that you can meet new people, make more friends, and have someone to play with on the playground or in your neighborhood.
Example:
Greeting Someone

Discuss

• **Steps:**
  • Move close to the person
  • Make eye contact
  • Say hello and Say your name “Hi. My name is Rory.”
  • Ask them their name “What’s your name?”
  • Talk about something you like to do or where you go to school.
Greeting Someone

Demonstrate

- Adult models/shows child how to greet someone.
Greeting Someone

Do

• Practice greeting someone with adult coaching
Incorporating Social Problem-Solving when Teaching Social Skills
Can Teaching Discrete Social Skills cover all Problem Situations?

• 8-year old child gets off school bus. Every other day the child’s mom or dad is home waiting for him/her.

• Today the doors are locked, no one is home, and he/she does not have a key.

• Was this “problem” covered in the social skills group at school?
There is a “never-ending” list of Discrete Social Skills

Handling teasing, phone conversations, sitting still, paying attention, commenting, questioning, organization skills, asking for help, accepting help, giving and receiving compliments, following directions, independence, assertiveness, voice inflection, staying calm, starting and ending conversations, staying on topic, dating, greetings, empathy, sharing, handling transitions, …
Social Problem-Solving

• Traditionally, social skills training conceptualizes Social Skills (SS) impairments as narrow, discrete responses. This approach results in the generation of an endless list of discrete skills that are assessed for their presence or absence and are then targeted for instruction.

• It is important to conceptualize SS as a broader set of skills associated with social problem solving.
6 stages of information processing that children cycle through when evaluating a particular social situation:

1) **encode** (attend to and encode the relevant cues)
2) **interpret** (make a judgment about what is going on)
3) **clarify goals** (decide what their goal is in the particular situation)
4) **generate responses** (identify different behavioral strategies for attaining the decided upon goal)
5) **decide on the response** (evaluate the likelihood that each potential strategy will help reach their goal and choosing which strategy to implement)
6) **perform the response** (doing the chosen response)
Incorporating Social Problem-Solving when teaching Social Skills Training

Teaching a Problem-Solving Model

• Goal is to teach children to become independent problem-solvers

• Rather than focusing on teaching a specific behavioral skill, the focus is on teaching a social problem solving model that the learner would be able to use as a “toolbox.”

• The Social Problem-Solving approach offers the promise of helping the child to become a better problem solver, thereby promoting greater independence.

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Independence:
“Give a person a fish and they eat for a day but teach them to fish and they eat for a lifetime”
Social Problem-Solving Approach

Systematic Teaching

- Teach Problem-Solving Skills
  - Teach children how to Problem-Solve in the same manner that one teaches any other skill...by discussing problem-solving steps, demonstrating them, and having children do / practice them
  - This systematic teaching of problem-solving helps children acquire skills so that they are better able to apply this “tool-box” within any social situation

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Social Problem-Solving

Is this Tool-Box really necessary?
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs incorporate Social Problem-Solving

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified 5 core social and emotional competencies that Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs should address:

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision making (social problem-solving)
Research on SEL Programs that incorporate Social Problem-Solving

• Results from 3 large-scale meta-analyses* regarding the efficacy of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs on elementary and middle school students found (among other positive results) that:
  • SEL programs improved students’ social-emotional skills, attitudes about self and others’ connection to school, positive social behavior, and academic performance;
  • SEL programs reduced students’ conduct problems and emotional distress;
  • SEL programs are among the most successful youth-development programs offered to school-age youth.

POWER-Solving®: Social Problem-Solving Curriculum
Michael C. Selbst, Ph.D., BCBA-D
Steven D. Gordon, Ph.D., ABPP (2012)

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POWER-Solving™
stepping stones to solving
life's everyday social problems

P Put your problem into words.
I was... and then...

O Observe and measure your feelings.

W Work out your goal. What is it?
How much do you want to reach it?

E Explore possible solutions. How might you reach your goal?
Choose the best solution.

R Review your plan. Did it work?
Reward yourself! Great job!
Power Solving Comic by: Logan V.W.

I was going to Hi Step and then there was traffic.

I was frustrated and my score was 0.

My goal was to find some way to pass the test.

And my score for motivation was 10!

Some solutions are:

- Try to go to sleep
- Play on my Nintendo GameBoy
- Listen to the radio

It was a success, because I played on my GameBoy.
The steps of POWER-Solving® include the following:

**P**ut the problem into words (I was _ and then _)

**O**bserve and measure your feelings

**W**ork out your goal and measure how much you want to reach your goal

**E**xplore and evaluate solutions so you can choose the best one

**R**eview your plan to see if it worked and then reward yourself

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**POWER-Solving®:**

**Stepping Stones to Solving Life’s Everyday Social Problems:**

**What is it?**

- A social problem-solving curriculum designed to teach children and adolescents to become independent problem-solvers via a hands-on, user-friendly, positive-practice, interactive approach.
• Through the use of child- and adolescent-friendly, engaging materials, which rely heavily on visual cues and supports, participants gain the “tools” necessary to successfully problem-solve.
Children and Adolescents are taught how to problem-solve first using their “toolbox” (i.e., the five steps of POWER-Solving®).

Subsequently, they can apply this “toolbox” to various challenging social situations, which allows them to develop and enhance their social-emotional skills.

The goal is for children and adolescents to learn valuable POWER-Solving® skills that they can apply to an infinite number of social situations throughout their lives.
Video of Child Using POWER-Solving
Video of Child Using POWER-Solving
Components of the POWER-Solving® Curriculum

- There are currently two levels of the POWER-Solving® Program:
  - Child (approximately grades K-6)
  - Adolescent (approximately grades 7-12).
- Each level includes a Student Workbook & Facilitator’s Guide

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Components of the POWER-Solving® Curriculum

- Facilitators may find it helpful to make modifications to the specific vocabulary and activities within the Student Workbooks based upon the individual strengths and needs of the students.
Components of the POWER-Solving® Curriculum

Current modules include:

Social Conversation
Starting the Conversation
Keeping the Conversation Going
Changing the Conversation Topic
Ending the Conversation Politely

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Components of the POWER-Solving® Curriculum

Current modules include:

Developing Friendships
Playing a Game
Asking for Help
Giving a Compliment
Accepting Others

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Components of the POWER-Solving® Curriculum

Current modules include:

Anger Management
Learning My Anger Triggers
Getting Calm
Staying Cool When Things Don’t Go My Way
Dealing with Teasing

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Components of the POWER-Solving® Curriculum

- Screening and ongoing assessment tools (ex: POWER-Solving® Rating Scale) assist facilitators in evaluating each participant’s performance level and identifying their strengths and needs. These tools also help facilitators determine appropriate social situations to which they can apply The POWER-Solving® Curriculum.
Components of the POWER-Solving® Curriculum

Activities and strategies are included to promote the generalization of learned skills across settings, including school, home, and the community.

• Letters for the parent/guardian are included with each lesson.

• Student self-monitoring checklists are included in the Facilitator’s Guides and the Workbooks.

• A sample letter is included in the Facilitator Guides which can be used to inform families about the POWER-Solving® curriculum.

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Application of POWER-Solving®
Steps to a specific social situation

Playing with Others:
*Playing a Game*

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Step 1: Put The Problem Into Words

“I was trying to play a game with someone and then I realized I don’t really know what to do.”
Step 2: Observe and Measure My Feelings

- Excited
- Nervous
- Scared
Step 3: Work Out My Goal

- What is it?
- How much do I want to reach it?
Step 4: Explore and Evaluate Solutions and Choose The Best One

- I can play by myself
- I can walk away
- I can scream and hope that he or she will listen to me.
- I can play a game, have fun, and have other people play with me if I learn some rules and make good choices.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Is it Safe?</th>
<th>Is it Fair?</th>
<th>Will it solve the problem?</th>
<th>Will I reach my goal?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Play by myself</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Walk away</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Scream</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Learn the rules and then play</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>6)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Step 5: Review Plan To See If It Worked and Reward Yourself

Did my plan of Playing a Game help me to reach my goal of having fun and having other people play with me?

• Yes, it definitely worked. “Way to go!” “I’m proud of myself.” “I’ll keep practicing!”

• I’m not sure, so I need some help.

• No, it did not work and I need some more help.
Role Playing for Generalization to School, Home, Community

- Playing a board game during indoor recess
- Playing at your friend’s house
- Playing a game during playground time

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Staff using POWER-Solving
Successful Social Problem-Solving

- Teach Children to more independently Problem-Solve so they have a “tool-box” to bring to social situations
- Incorporate Video Modeling & Video Self-modeling
  - (meta-analyses by Bellini & Akullian, 2007; Wang & Spillane, 2009)
- Include Social Stories for children (Wang & Spillane, 2009)
Successful Social Problem-Solving

• Increase frequency of intervention (e.g., daily)
• Increase duration (e.g., entire academic year)
• Use a systematic and consistent approach
• Train to fluency
• Include peers who can serve as positive social, behavior and language models
• Prepare for novel situations
• Develop interventions for challenging behavior
• Collaboration and Communication among school personnel, family members, and any private providers

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Monitoring Progress

• Measure skills prior to, throughout, and following intervention (i.e., data collection to monitor progress)
  • Social Skills Scorecard / Rating Form for lunch and recess
  • Behavior Scorecard throughout the day
  • Probe Data: the first response of the day is recorded (+, -); If the skill is prompted (-) then it is re-taught throughout the day but no additional data is recorded until the following day; underlying principle is that effective teaching procedures will produce a correct response after repeated trials. We are seeking skill acquisition, which is demonstrated when the student displays the skill the following day independently (+); criterion may be 3 consecutive days of independently displaying skill.
Video - Broken Escalator: importance of problem-solving
Generalization of Learned Social Skills

Across settings, behavior, and time
Successful Social Problem-Solving

- *Develop a generalization plan*
  - Typical models
  - Prompting (using minimal prompting needed)
    - Guided Discovery (Socratic Approach): gradually fade prompts;
    - Ask child what he/she needs to do rather than tell him/her
      - e.g., “What do you do when someone is talking?” rather than “Please sit nicely and look at me.”
      - e.g., “What do you do when you want my help?” rather than “Please raise your hand”
SEL Curricula

- Social Decision Making / Social Problem Solving (Romasz-McDonald, Butler & Elias)
- POWER-Solving® (Selbst & Gordon)
- I Can Problem Solve (Myrna Shure)
- Second Step (Committee for Children)
- Social Thinking® and Superflex® (Michelle Garcia Winner)
- Skillstreaming (McGinnis & Goldstein)
- Social Skills Training for Children and Adolescents with Asperger Syndrome and Social-Communications Problems (Jed Baker)

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Social Skills to Target

Feelings (feeling words, matching feelings to facial expressions, feeling statements)

Conversation Readiness (eye contact, facing one another, noticing one another)

Reciprocal Conversation (require conversation pre-requisites, comments, questions, turn-taking, changing topic)

Empathy, Perspective - Taking

Manners

Social Problem Solving

Anger Management and Impulse Control

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Conversation Skills

- Initiating conversation (take turns starting conversation on topic of interest and talk for 2 minutes, then increase time)
  - Maintaining conversation
    - Comments (That’s great; That happened to me too; Tell me more.”)
    - Questions (who, what, where, when, how, why)
  - Staying on topic
  - Changing topics (“I’d like to talk about something different now’’)
  - Ending a conversation
  - Eye contact (red light - green light game; follow my eyes)
  - Personal space (hula hoop/arm’s length)
Social Language: Comments / Questions

**COMMENTS**
- That's really great!
- I like to do that too!
- That must have been tough!
- Wow! Tell me more please!
- I remember when I...

**QUESTIONS**
- Where did you go?
- Who was there?
- What did you do next?
- How did you feel?
- What happened?
- Why did you do that?
Play Skills

- Coaching: Cue, Coach and Review
  - *Cue* (prompt or prepare) child prior to the situation what to expect, what social skills to use, reward if applicable
  - *Coach* throughout with behavior specific praise & gestures/visuals cues rather than verbal redirection
  - *Review* at the end via child’s self-appraisal and adult feedback
Scorecard for Playing a Game
from POWER-Solving® Curriculum (Selbst & Gordon, 2012)

• Did I:
  __Yes __ No  ask someone to play with me?
  __Yes __ No  agree which game to play?
  __Yes __ No  agree to the rules of the game?
  __Yes __ No  try my hardest?
  __Yes __ No  smile when I did something good?
  __Yes __ No  say “OK” when I messed up?
  __Yes __ No  say “Way to go” when the other person did something good?
  __Yes __ No  say “That’s OK” when the other person messed up?
  __Yes __ No  say “Good game” when the game was finished?

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Strategies to consider

• Feelings garden (wall with flowers that have various feeling faces; Velcro on the pedals for students to place photos of themselves on the feeling flower matching how they are feeling throughout the day)

• Feelings check-in upon arrival and throughout the day

• Feelings posters

• Feelings thermometer

• Watching video to identify character’s feelings and how they change
Strategies to consider

• Being a “feelings” detective during the day

• Feelings collages (different collages representing different emotions; different collages with situations reflecting different emotions)

• How is Your Engine Running? (ALERT Program - analogy to car or Winnie the Pooh)

• Social Narratives (e.g., Social Stories)
CHECK IN

5  
4  
3  
2  
1  

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Getting Calm

I can:

* put up STOP sign with my hand
* Count to 10 * take 10 deep 
  breaths
* Ask for a break
* Use feeling words
  "I feel sad when..."
  "I get hot when..."
Strategies to consider

• Problem-Solving situations
  • Finding items - if a student doesn't have a marker, pencil, white board, etc. he/she needs to find the item (everything is easily available in the classroom) or ask for help finding the item.
  • Opening/reaching high items - if a student needs an item opened or needs to reach a high item, he/she needs to figure out a way to open/reach the item (safely) or ask for help from an instructor.
  • Packing up to go home - if they don't have something (e.g., homework) they must ask for it and if they can't find something (e.g., jacket) they need to find it on their own.
  • Using "excuse me" when someone is in his/her way
Strategies to consider

Problem Solving Games / Activities

- *Hedbanz game* - asking questions to figure out what picture is on their own card
Strategies to consider

- Incorporate SEL through academics, music, art, physical education, movement activities, arrival, dismissal, during transitions, meals

- Theme Months (example)
  - September (Feelings)
  - October (Conversation Skills)
  - November (Asking for Help)
  - December (Getting Calm)
  - January (Problem-Solving)
Strategies to consider

- Catch Being Good Walls

Look Who We “Caught” Being Good!

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Situation in a Hat

**Situation in a Hat Role Play:** trigger situations listed on cards and placed in a hat for children to choose one at a time. Discuss the situation, state the problem, state the feeling (“I feel ___”), discuss possible solutions, choose a solution and put the solution in place; act out the situation from start to finish and provide behavior specific feedback.

- “I’m getting ready for school and I can’t find my homework.”
- “I want to go to soccer and I can’t find my cleats.”
- “I really want to buy a snack and I forgot my money.”
Social Stories™ (Carol Gray)

- **descriptive sentences**: provide basic information
- **directive sentences**: direct the form the behavior should take
- **perspective-taking sentences**: provide information about the feelings of self and/or others
- **Social Stories** can be combined with photographs and Mayer-Johnson pictures

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Playing with Friends

My name is _________________ and I am ___ years old. I go to school at _____________________.

There are lots of fun toys and kids to play with at school. During free play time I get to choose where I want to play. Some of my favorite places to play are ___________________ and _____________________.

During free play it is OK to play alone sometimes, but it is also a good time to play with friends.

To play with a friend I can look around the room to find a kid to play with.

I can carefully watch what my friend is doing. Then I can find a toy that is the same and do the same thing as my friend.

I can also ask my friend to play something different with me like, "Do you want to play with blocks?" If my friend says 'yes' we can go play! If my friend says, 'no thanks' I can find someone else to ask.

It's fun to play with friends!
Michael’s Birthday

Today is Michael’s birthday. He is eight years old. Michael is my friend. Michael gave cupcakes to my class at lunchtime. I did not eat the whole cupcake, but I licked some icing off of it to be nice to Michael. Michael is happy when I am nice to him.

I do not always like Michael. He gets bossy sometimes. He tells me what to do and what not to do. When I am mad at Michael I feel like hitting and pinching him. If I hit or pinch Michael, he will be sad and may think I’m not his friend. I may also lose some recess or have to talk to Dr. Smith.

When I feel like hitting or pinching Michael I will walk away to a spot that is calm and stay away from Michael until I am in control. I can also talk to Mrs. Jones and Miss Gordon when I have mad feelings. I am glad to get some help because Michael is my friend.
I go to Stepping Stone Summer Camp. When I come in the morning, I can choose to make good choices.

Making good choices includes keeping my hands to myself.

Mr. Steve is one of my counselors. My counselors and my parents want to help me make good choices.

When I feel myself getting upset or frustrated, I will try to take a break. This may help me to keep my hands to myself.

If I take a break on my own, I can earn bonus points. If I need help remembering, my teachers may say “Do you need a break?” or “It’s time to take a break.”

I can keep my hands to myself and get lots of stickers and bonus points. I can earn the elevator and at home I can play video games.

My teachers and friends will be happy when I make good choices. My family will be happy.
Social Skills
Games/Resources

- Childswork Childsplay
  (www.childswork.com 1-800-962-1141):
- Super Duper Publications
  (www.superduperinc.com
   1-800-277-8737)
- Linguisystems (linguisystems.com)
Reinforcement
Reinforcement (motivate! motivate!)

• Why Reinforcement?
  • Need to reduce high rate of problem behavior so that Social Skills Training can be effective
  • Increases the likelihood that a behavior will be performed
  • Creates a positive association with the task
  • Creates a positive association with the person
  • Increases the likelihood of habit formation

• It may be necessary to rotate or change reinforcers frequently (incorporate preference assessments)
Positive Note Home

• Your child, ________________________________, has received this note home as a result of positive behavior today at _________________________________ School. Your child’s behavior exemplifies the type of behavior that we aspire to in our school. Congratulations!

• Your child exhibited strong behavior:
  • following directions    helping the teacher
  • helping another student    great homework
  • outstanding participation    excellent test or quiz
Quick Tips

• Provide daily success for the students
• Encourage and reinforce positive self-statements
• Be active rather than passive: find out how to address the student’s needs and promote strengths
• View educating the student with a disability as an opportunity to become a more effective teacher rather than a “problem I have to cope with”

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Social Autopsies (Myles & Adreon, 2001)

• Designed to get students to objectively analyze their social mistakes/difficulties

• Questions to ask while problem-solving
  • What happened?
  • What was the social error?
  • Who was hurt by the social error?
  • What should be done to correct the error?
  • What could be done next time?
Three most important things

• Structure

• Structure

• Structure
Roles and Responsibilities for Teachers and Paraprofessionals

• This should be derived collaboratively among the teacher(s), Child Study Team members, and paraprofessionals with input from Principal and related service providers

• Responsibilities are multifaceted
Roles and Responsibilities

• Supervision of students: safety first
• Knowledgeable of students’ IEP goals and objects
• Knowledgeable of the schedule and prompting to facilitate transitions
• Gradually fading prompts to promote greater independence among students
• Shadow by supporting & guiding, not hovering
Roles and Responsibilities

• You do not have to justify your position by always “doing” something; oftentimes observing, praising behavior, and recording data is much more effective than looking for opportunities to correct behavior.

• Remember that it is not necessary nor appropriate to “correct” all negative or extraneous behaviors (e.g., out of seat, calling out, hand flapping, whining).
Roles and Responsibilities

• In the mainstream classroom, it is permissible and oftentimes appropriate to monitor other students, while maintaining an “eye” on the target student to effectively fade one’s level of support.

• Paraprofessionals need to maintain ongoing communication with the regular and special education teachers to ensure their role is clear, effective, and understood by all staff members.

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Roles and Responsibilities

• If and when one’s role and/or responsibilities become unclear or different from one’s expectations, it is best to discuss this at a designated time with the classroom teacher(s) first. Again, it is best to be proactive and have at least weekly discussions regarding everybody’s expectations and the effectiveness of the paraprofessional’s approach.
Role Play

- Coaching During Lunch / Recess
Video - Play Dates
What can you do?

- Do notice and reward appropriate social interactions (e.g., children talking and playing, problem solving, non-aggressive interactions) – give behavior specific praise “Great job asking your classmate to play!”

- Do teach alternative responses and behaviors (what to do instead)

- Do help the children to understand the impact of one’s behavior on another person (role play is helpful)

- Do help improve students’ self-esteem and confidence
What can you do?

• Classroom discussions about what is going well and what difficulties exist in the cafeteria, playground, etc.

• Use of role play as a planned way to practice/rehearse appropriate ways to invite a friend to play, to accept when others ask if they can play, to start a conversation, etc. Problem situations can become learning opportunities.

• A “Positive Peer Culture” should exist in which recognition is given for pro-social behaviors
  • Praise, awards, certificates, reward activities


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Many of the Strategies in this Power Point are from the following book:  
*The Behavior Problems Resource Kit: Forms and Procedures for Identification, Measurement, and Intervention* by Dr. Michael J. Asher, Dr. Steven B. Gordon, Dr. Michael C. Selbst, and Dr. Mark Cooperberg  
http://www.researchpress.com/product/item/5560/  
*to order: 800-519-2707*

- All grade levels. This user-friendly resource provides over 50 reproducible forms and numerous intervention procedures founded in evidence-based research and standards. These forms and procedures have been developed and successfully applied in clinical work with children and adolescents having a wide range of diagnoses, including AD/HD, autism spectrum disorders, mood disorders, oppositional defiant disorders, and anxiety disorders.
POWER-Solving®: Stepping Stones to Solving Life's Everyday Social Problems

is a social problem-solving curriculum designed to teach children and adolescents to become independent problem-solvers via a hands-on, user-friendly, positive-practice, interactive approach. They are taught how to problem-solve first using their “toolbox” (i.e., the five steps of POWER-Solving®). Subsequently, they can apply this “toolbox” to various challenging social situations, which allows them to develop and enhance their social-emotional skills. The goal is for children and adolescents to learn valuable POWER-Solving® skills that they can apply to an infinite number of social situations throughout their lives.

For more information or to order the POWER-Solving® Curriculum, please visit www.POWER-Solving.com or contact Dr. Selbst or Dr. Gordon at social@power-solving.com or call 732-873-1212.

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