



Building Quality ABA Educational Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders



Phone: (03) 9375 2469

Fax: (03) 9375 7709

Website: www.autismpartnership.com.au

For presentation handouts go to the Autism Partnership website

→ Click on 'Resources' Link

→ Click on 'Presenters Notes'

Presented By: Kathleen Franks



Introductions

- Introductions
- Housekeeping
- Confidentiality
- Breaks
- Group Rules



Skill Building and Socialisation



What Are Social Skills?



Socialisation Process

- **Socialisation is a process**
 - Lessons learned across the life span
 - Not always the right lessons!
 - Wrong lesson → maladaptive behaviour
 - Mixed lesson → skills deficits
 - Don't pick up on lesson → not social learning
- **Social Behaviours have a function**
 - Attention seeking
 - Control
 - Avoidance/Escape
 - Communication
 - Self-stimulation
 - Frustration/ Stress Release





Why Intervene?

- **Teaching social skills leads to:**
 - Survival life skills
 - More independence
 - Better outcomes (social competence/ self-esteem)
 - Better coping skills
 - Less restrictive setting
 - “Unhappy children can’t learn”
 - Increased academic achievement
- **Social skills are responsive to intervention**
- **Intervene NOW . . .**
 - Effect of social deficits is cumulative & compounded
 - Harder to fix over time



Road Blocks

- Other areas are prioritised higher
- Philosophical opposition to changing a child’s ‘personality’
- Constraints of the system
- Staff feel they lack the skills
- Social skills are complex
- Behaviours get in the way
 - Behaviours occur because of skill deficits & excesses
 - Don’t avoid it, Don’t work around it . . .



Social Skills Framework

Considerations

- What comes first?
- How do social skills interrelate?
- Developmental Norms
- Pre-requisite Skills
- Organise Social Skills into Themes/ Domains



Social Skills Intervention

- For many children, social motivation is NOT sufficient
- Natural context – often lack requisite skills to learn the lessons
- Therefore:
 - Provide structure
 - Systematic plan
 - Contrived opportunities to practise



Reinforcement

“Anything that increases the probability that the behaviour will occur again.”

Where’s your motivation?
e.g. work for love or money?



Warning !!



Can’t assume what we do is ‘reinforcing’

“A reinforcer isn’t a reinforcer unless it is reinforcing”

i.e. actually *increases* behaviour



Little Man Tate - tokens



Guidelines of reinforcement

- ↪ Reinforcers should be CONTINGENT
- ↪ CATCH 'EM BEING GOOD (10:1)
- ↪ Initially reinforcement should occur immediately
- ↪ Initially reinforcement should be provided consistently
- ↪ Reinforcement should be faded as soon as possible
- ↪ Utilise differential reinforcement
- ↪ Use age-appropriate reinforcers
- ↪ Social reinforcement should be paired with tangibles



Developing Reinforcers

- ↪ Expose to item/activity
- ↪ Force rotation to increase variety
- ↪ Teach how to use and enjoy
- ↪ Pair neutral items with strong reinforcers
- ↪ Make yourself a part of the reinforcer
- ↪ SELL, SELL, SELL!!



Annie reinforcement building



INSPIRATION!!

- Steal these ideas!
- Steal other's ideas!
- Unpredictability and novelty greatly enhance reinforcement value!
- Don't be afraid to look 'silly'!
- ALWAYS THINK ABOUT DEVELOPMENT!



Various reinforcement clips



Token Economy

- ↪ A ticket or sticker that can be exchanged for a variety of reinforcing items or activities
- ↪ Way of delaying the time until student cashes in for reinforcement
- ↪ Have fun with development!



Most Important . . .

MORE TOKENS !!!!!



Intervention Plan

IDENTIFY DEFICIT(S) (areas needing work)

Observe the student in various environments to identify:

- Skills we want to increase to facilitate social interaction. E.g. eye contact
- Problematic behaviours we want to decrease that interfere with social interaction. E.g. bossing people around



Task Analysis

Break replacement skill into teachable parts. List in order from simple to complex

Micro task analysis.

Brainstorm: Joining in play



Intervention Plan

REPLACEMENT SKILL

(what does the child need to do instead?)

Think about WHY problematic behaviours are occurring.

E.g. if a child pushes their friend when they take their ball is it frustration release or communication?

This will be the difference between teaching stress management or assertion.



Task Analysis

Break replacement skill into teachable parts. List in order from simple to complex

Micro task analysis.

Brainstorm: Joining in play



TEACH IT *(define the intervention strategies)*

1:1 Taking the student aside and working with them directly to describe process, give rationale, demonstrate skill and determine reinforcement

Practice sessions Model the replacement skill, and set up role plays for the student to practice the skill, get feedback and experience reinforcement

Natural setting Can be used to either transfer the practiced skill into a natural setting OR to catch them being good and to reinforce skill 'in the moment'

Combination of strategies



Intervention Plan

REINFORCEMENT PLAN

What type of reinforcement will be used and at what frequency?

Tokens, praise, special privileges, games, breaks?

Immediate Vs Delayed?

How often?



Specific Programs

Problem Solving
Discrimination Training
Wait Program



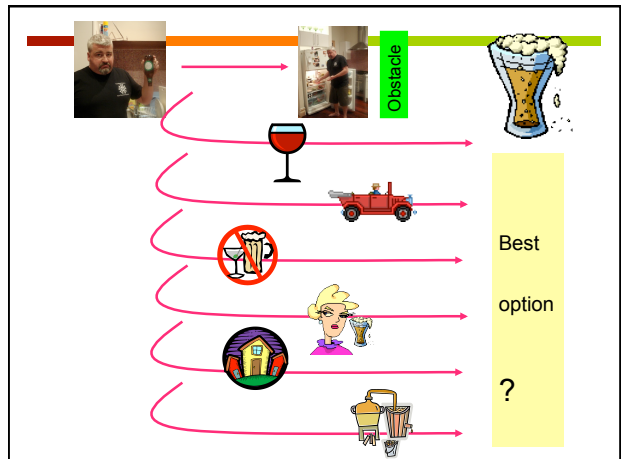
Problem Solving

Definition

A *problem* is a situation in which a person has a goal (implying motivation), and there is an obstacle to attaining that goal

Problem Solving is figuring out a way to resolve the problem

An illustration . . .



Problem-Solving & ASD

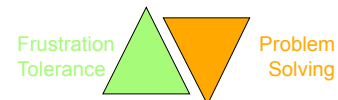
- ↪ Less persistent
- ↪ Less fluent at brainstorming multiple solutions
- ↪ Less able to evaluate best solution



Inter-relationships

Social Awareness

Problem Solving as a proactive strategy for Frustration Tolerance



Objectives

- ↪ Be persistent in the face of adversity
- ↪ Independently deal with problems
- ↪ Apply problem solving strategies across a variety of situations
- ↪ Generate multiple solutions to a problem
- ↪ Evaluate the best solution to a problem using reasoning & social understanding
- ↪ Use problem solving strategies in everyday life



Early Problem Solving Skills

- ↪ Is the foundation of a young student's learning and should start early in life so that they can create the appropriate pathways and build a catalogue of associations and knowledge that can be built upon later
- ↪ Can be learnt regardless of age and ability and will be used throughout a student's life
- ↪ Opportunities for problem solving should occur in the everyday context of a student's life, whether it be learning how to zip up a jacket or complete a puzzle
- ↪ Students imitate what they see, use trial and error and thinking skills



Early Problem Solving Skills Cont...

- By exploring, manipulating, and interacting, students can formulate ideas, try them out and then either accept or reject what they have learnt
- Making mistakes plays a part in the process of problem solving
- Through problem solving, student's make learning personal and meaningful



Discrimination Training

- Used to teach variety of skills ranging from basic language and academic skills to sophisticated social skills
- Teach child to discriminate between two items/responses
- Helps teach student the *process* of learning
 - Child learns to process reinforcement (chose the right item) and corrective feedback (chose the wrong item)
- Teaches deductive reasoning ("if it's not this one, it must be the other one")
- There is no formula for how to introduce this to a student – it's not a one size fits all approach



Examples of Discriminations

- Car v. Ball v. Shoe
- Looking v. Not Looking
- On topic v. Off topic conversation
- Say "Ball" v. Find Ball
- Flapping v. Hands Down
- Calm v. Angry



Skill Acquisition Teaching Discrimination

Systematic teaching of skills involves a number of steps:

- 1) Introduce 'targets' one at a time
- 2) Add an additional target
- 3) Check if student can discriminate (**discrimination training**)
- 4) Add further targets, one at a time & repeat process (**acquisition**)



Wait Program

1. Make a card that communicates the concept of "wait"
2. Create a situation in which the student wants an item
3. Give the student the wait card, slowly start getting the item
4. After seconds have the student return the card in exchange for the item
5. Reinforce the student for waiting
6. Gradually increase the time it takes you to get desired item



Prompting

Types of Prompts

- Verbal
- Visual
- Gesture
- Physical
- Modeling / Observational
- Within stimulus
- Positional



Jack Gesture and Finishing Prompts



Good classroom prompts

- Prompts which direct student's attention to teacher, environment, & peers
- Verbal →
 - "What did your teacher say?"
 - "Ask a friend"
- Observational →
 - "Do that"
 - "Copy him"
- Vicarious →
 - "I like how you used all the colours Johnny" (who's seated next to Tim)
- Subtle →
 - Move close to student and touch book to indicate to get back to work



Using Prompts to Teach

- Prompts should accompany or immediately follow the instruction
- Follow prompted trials with unprompted or reduced prompted trials
- Avoid inadvertent prompts

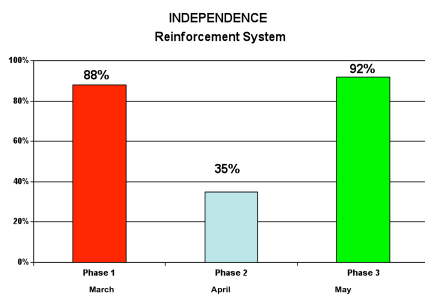
FADE PROMPTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!!



"Right there"



Fading prompts



Shifting Stimulus Control to Natural Cues

Example one: Eye Contact

1. "Look at me"
2. "Johnny"
3. Pause
4. Talking



Shifting Stimulus Control to Natural Cues

Example two: Eye Contact

1. "Say hi"
2. Being greeted
3. "look who's here!"
4. Person arrives