



Social Skills

By: Cailin McCollough Ockert, M.S., BCBA
The BISTÅ Center

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- What we do...
 - Provide 1:1 in-home ABA therapy
 - BCBA supervision
 - District Consultation Services
 - DTT
 - FBA
 - IEP Support
 - Weekly Social Skills Group (ages 7-10)

What? Social skills?



Nooo!!!

Social Skills Stigma

- Social skills are hard to teach!
 - Difficult to contrive situations
 - Difficult to “think on your toes”
 - “Socially appropriate” varies by person, culture, and groups of individuals – are there really “rules”?
 - Social skills involves teaching the “grey area”

Frustration

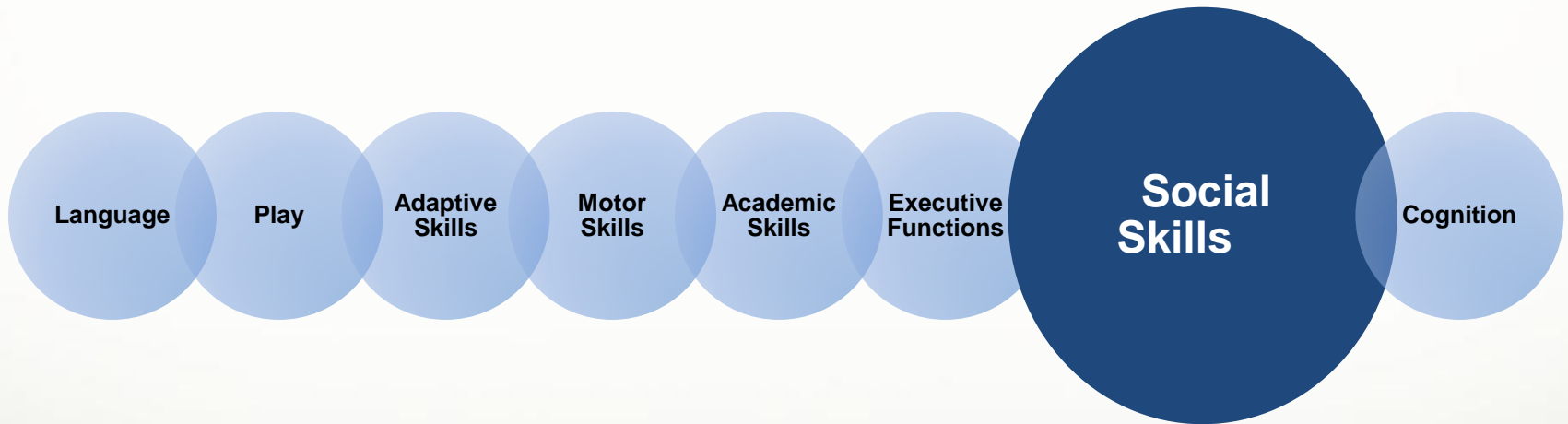
- Many parents are frustrated with the lack of social skills
 - Assessments
 - Programming & Curriculum
 - Experienced social skill providers
- Many parents feel as if there are “no services for a kid like mine”

Social skills...



Yes!! Now I know the pieces!

Developmental Domains



Social Skills Research

- Abundance of research on “Social Skills are important”, but not much on “HOW” to teach them.
 - Very limited program & curriculum research on higher level social skills such as:
 - Perspective taking
 - Rule Governed Behavior
 - Deception
 - Sarcasm
 - Inhibition
 - Problem Solving
 - Multi-tasking

Social Skills References

- Grosberg & Charlop (2010). Teaching Persistence in Social Initiations to High Functioning Children with Autism: A Portable Video Modeling Technology
- Reeve (2013). Promoting Generalization of Play and Social Skills in Individuals with Autism.
 - *Presented at ABAI Autism 2013
- Tarbox et al. (2013). Using ABA to Teach Cognitive Skills to Children with Autism.
 - *Presented at ABAI Autism 2013

Assessments & Programming

- TRIAD Social Skills Assessment (TSSA)
- Social Skills Solutions: A Hands-on manual for Teaching Social Skills to Children with Autism.
- Crafting Connections: Contemporary Applied Behavior Analysis for Enriching the Social Lives of Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Again, assessments that identify “What is missing”, but not “HOW” to teach what is missing.
 - *We have examples! Please see us after!

Is this kid right for SS training?

- #1 – clear deficit in social skills across settings
 - Not socializing in school
 - Prefers to play alone
 - Easily frustrated with peers/siblings
 - Aggresses toward peers/siblings due to social deficits
 - Does not have any “friends”

When is SS training appropriate?

- #2 – Prerequisite skills are fluent
 - Basic language
 - manding, tacting, some intraverbals
 - Basic social skills – these can be taught first!
 - parallel play, turn-taking, sharing
 - Basic behavior management skills
 - identified management strategies

What Are Social Skills?

Social skills are ALL of the things we say and do when we interact with other people

Why Do We Teach Them?

A characteristic of Autism and other related disorders is behavioral deficits within the area of social skills

- Social skills helps us initiate and maintain positive social relationships
- Social skills help us identify our own behavior and other people's behavior
- Social skills allow us to cope in various environments

Academic Skills vs. Social Skills

- Which skill set will get you further in life?
- Most would argue that you need both to be successful in this world.

What Do We Know About Social Skills?

Social skills are:

- Learned from the environment
- A discrete set of behaviors
- Interactive (it takes TWO!!)
- Maintained by social reinforcement

What Are Social Skills We Teach?



Social Skills Across Ages



Factors of Social Skills Deficits

- Skill: lack of information, steps of the skill
- Performance: lack of ability to complete the skill
- Self-Control: lack of self-management skills
- Generalization: lack of the ability to use the skill in different settings/contexts or circumstances

Social Skills Setting Progression

- #1: 1:1 practice with discrete skill
 - Home services
 - DTT/NET
- #2: Practice new skill in small group setting
 - Siblings
 - Small group 1-3 kids (Speech therapy)
- #3: Larger Group Setting
 - Specific Social Group
 - Camp
- #4: Generalized
 - All settings (known and novel), consistently used

How Do We Teach Social Skills?

Using Applied Behavior Analysis!

1. Introduce the skill at a scheduled time
 2. Model and provide opportunity to practice the skill
 3. Provide behavior specific praise
 4. Use error correction/prompting/priming
 5. Monitor until mastery
- * We may need to break down a skill into parts if needed

Prompting

- How do we prompt social skills?
- Indirect Prompting vs. Direct Prompting
 - What is the difference?
 - Telling vs. leading
 - Why do we use indirect over direct?
 - We want our kids to be thinking in social situations and not becoming prompt dependent

Types of Prompting

- Directive
 - “Go ask James to play.”
- Leading questions/statements
 - “What should you do next?”
 - “I’ll bet Jimmy knows!”
- Relating situation to a similar past event
- Drawing or writing a visual representation
 - Social Comic Strips
 - Problem Solving Flow Charts
- Yes/No Questions
- Gestures and Facial Expressions

Act Like a Kid

- It is very important for parents and providers to understand the typical development of children.
- When playing with your child/client, respond as a peer would respond.
 - Exaggerated emotions
 - Exaggerated behaviors
 - Stubbornness
 - Boredom
 - Tunnel Vision/Egocentric topics
- Understanding what is popular with kids right now:
 - Boys?
 - Girls?

How Do We Know If A Social Skill Is Mastered?

When a client demonstrates the acquired social skill across settings, people and time and the stated mastery criterion

- Settings: home, school, church, boy scouts, mall, play ground, play date
- People: technicians, caregivers, peers, siblings, teachers, novel people
- Time: morning, afternoon, evening

Social Skills and Problem Behaviors

- A lack of social skills may lead to problem behaviors
 - Communication
 - Socialization with peers
 - Ridicule from others → outbursts, low self-esteem, more problem behaviors
- We may need to look at ALL skill deficits when discussing problem behaviors

For Parents

- Research Assessments & be a part of them
- Know the current research
- Try out groups with your child
- Observe groups that your child is a part of
- Ensure social skills is being addressed in programming regardless of skill level

Questions?

- Please contact should you have any questions after the presentation:
- cmccollough@bistacenter.org
- Please speak with me during the conference today!
- Thank you