

BEFORE WORDS:
Evidenced Based Practices For Teaching Communication to Young Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Objectives

Participants will:

1. Identify at least three aspects of communication that are often challenging for young children with ASD.
2. Identify two priorities for intervention.
3. Name at least two evidenced based practices for supporting communication development.
4. Plan to incorporate at least one evidenced based practice into an intervention plan.



Stages of Language Development:
Prelinguistic

- Typically developing children between 12 and 18 months
- Early intentional communication using means other than words



Stages of Language Development: Early Language

- Typically developing between 12 to 18 and 24 to 36 months
- Children begin saying single words and combining them into simple multi-word combinations




Stages of Language Development: Basic to Advanced Language

- Typically developing for preschool and school-aged children
- Child progresses to the acquisition of full sentences and the ability to use language to accomplish a variety of social goals





Early Delays in The Development of Preverbal Communication

- Fewer communication acts
- Delayed development of pointing and other conventional gestures
- Decreased responsiveness to speech and hearing name called
- Restricted range of communicative purposes
- Lack of coordination of gaze, gestures and vocalization
- Limited play skills
- Limited ability to imitate actions and vocalizations



Priorities for Intervention

- Engagement and Reciprocity
- Elicit vocal production
- Imitation
- Joint attention
- Play
- Expressive skill
- Increase comprehension


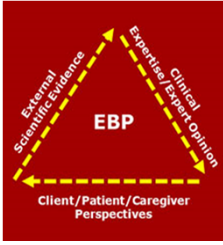


What Evidenced Based Practices Do You Currently Use to Teach Communication to Children With ASD?



Evidenced Based Practices at the Prelinguistic Level

1. Discrete Trial Intervention
2. Joint Attention Training
3. More Than Words
4. Milieu Communication Training
5. Picture Exchange Communication System



Discrete Trial Training (DTT)

- Involves dividing a target skill into a hierarchy of component skills
- Used when skill is best taught in small, repeated steps
- Often used in one to one sessions
- Teaching done in a planned, controlled and systematic way





Discrete Trial Training (DTT)

- Often used to specifically target increased vocal imitation and speech
- Can be used to teach early play and social skills
- Also used to teach specific pre-academic skills



Discrete Trial Training (DTT)

What skills do you prioritize that would work well in this teaching format...



Discrete Trial Training (DTT)

<p>Pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has been shown to be effective in improving both receptive and expressive language• Limitations can be minimized by planned generalization, use in social context and use in combination with other more naturalistic methods	<p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Might lead to a passive style of communication• Difficulties generalizing and maintaining behaviors
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Discrete Trial Training (DTT)

What training is needed?

Requires basic understanding of ABA principles:
Antecedent → Behavior → Consequence

Modeling and practice with someone experienced with the process if possible

Implementation steps available through the National Professional Development Center on ASD




Discrete Trial Training (DTT)

Joe is a three year old boy who communicates using gestures and vocalizations. Joe seems to enjoy sitting near other children during circle time activities, but he does not participate. The team has determined that an appropriate goal for Joe is to work on gross motor and vocal imitation.



How could DTT support this goal?

How would learned skills be applied to social interaction?



Joint Attention (JA) Training

- Difficulties with JA have been linked to limitations in language, play and social development
- Most studies indicate that there are not significant changes in joint attention following other treatments
- Joint Attention Training directly targets development of this skill




Joint Attention (JA) Training

- Designed to support joint attention, play and imitation as foundations for the emergence of language
- Research supports use for facilitating increased verbalization, reciprocal social interaction and generalization of skill to other contexts



Joint Attention (JA) Training

- Incorporates structured teaching and naturalistic strategies
- Response Training
 - ✓ Child is taught to respond to bids for JA
 - ✓ Showing, pointing and gaze shifting of adult
- Initiation Training
 - ✓ Child is taught to initiate bid for JA
 - ✓ Share vs. request



Joint Attention (JA) Training


What training is needed? Requires basic understanding of ABA principles:
Antecedent → Behavior → Consequence

Does this look familiar?

Do you detect a theme?

Do you have experience using these principles in the work that you do?

(see references for learning more about this intervention model then try it!!)




Joint Attention Training

Mary is a two year, six month old girl. She has learned to request desired items by pointing and vocalizing and enjoys playing short interactive games with a ball or a toy car. Mary does not respond when adults try to direct her attention to an object, and she does not attempt to bring an adult's attention to an item of interest.


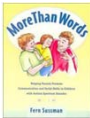
What skill could be directly targeted to increase joint attention?

What activities could support this goal?





More Than Words (MTW)

- Research supports parents as teachers to facilitate growth in communication and social responsiveness
- A child-centered intervention based on the idea that language develops in playful interactions where adults follow a child's lead
- Parent friendly program teaches specific interactive strategies
- Uses structure and predictability



More Than Words (MTW)



- Designed to support back and forth social communication, play and joint attention
- As a result of participation, parents increased use of targeted language teaching strategies and children increased vocabulary



More Than Words (MTW)




What training is needed?

- Recommended that program is facilitated by speech/language pathologist who has attended three day training
- Related programs for early interventionists
- Practical related strategies provided at website



Milieu Communication Training (MCT)

- Uses behavioral strategies such as task analysis, predictable structure and attention to antecedents and consequences
- Behavior principles applied in a naturalistic context
- Modifies the environment so that items and activities that interest the child require adult assistance
- Prelinguistic Milieu Teaching (PMT)
- Enhanced Milieu Teaching (EMT)



Milieu Communication Training (MCT)

- Follow the child's lead
 - ✓ Children learn best with things that interest them ☺
 - ✓ Observe and wait to discover what the child is attending to
- Place favorite item out of reach
- Use social games
 - ✓ Enhance motivation for adult and child
 - ✓ Games will vary in complexity





Milieu Communication Training (MCT)

- Teaching directed social communication and beginning verbal communication
- Supports the development of play, joint attention and imitation





Milieu Communication Training

What training is needed?
See JA Training ☺
Consider the ways that you are already using this type of approach, learn more about it and then use it purposefully and assess your progress!!






Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

- Teaches functional communication in a social context using tangible reward
- Built on successful exchanges and social interactions
- **Child initiated**
- Picture based (can also be used with objects)






Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

- Helps child learn to **direct communication** to another person at early stages of the development of communication
- Few prerequisites
 - ✓ A child can begin to use PECS at early stages of communication development
 - ✓ Child does not have to be able to imitate actions, look toward another person or sit quietly in a chair



Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)


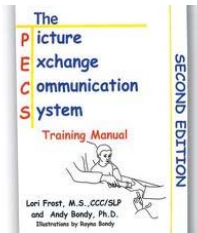
PECS has been associated with increased use of verbal language, use of untrained communication functions, gains in joint attention, eye contact and toy play and reduction of problem behaviors



Picture Exchange Communication System

What training is needed?


- Recommendation for professionals is for two day course provided by Pyramid Educational Consultants
- Begin with Phase 1 – program can be developed, modeled and supported by a colleague who has this training
- System needs to be taught to caregivers and used throughout the day




Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

Jim is a four year old boy who loves trains and outside play time. Jim is able to say some single words, but he often does not direct his language to another person.

Would PECS be a good approach for Jim?
How would you begin?





So...



What Evidenced Based Practices Do You Currently Use to Teach Communication to Children With ASD?




What Practices Do You Plan to Try Now?



Information and Referral Specialists at the Autism Programs

A state-wide information line for families, individuals with ASD, and providers seeking autism specific resources

- To contact the Information and Referral Specialists , call (505)272-1852, Toll free (800) 270-1861



Some Resources (also see reference list)

- Evidenced-Based Practices and Treatments for Children with Autism (Edited by Reichow, Doehring, Cicchetti, Volkmar)
- A Picture's Worth: PECS and Other Visual Communication Strategies in Autism by Andy Bondy and Lori Frost
- National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorder:
<http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/>
- www.hanen.org
- www.pecs-usa.com
- Kidtalk@vanderbilt.edu

