



What is the  
Plan?

Supporting  
Social Skills  
Learning from  
Home

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# Objectives for Today

- Introduction
- Autism: Strengths and Weaknesses
- Social Skills
- Resources for Home
- Q&A

# Jennifer McGee, EdD, LPC



# Part I

## Obstacles in Learning

# Autism Spectrum Disorders

- ◉ Co-morbid conditions:
- ◉ OCD/Fixations
- ◉ ADD/ADHD
- ◉ Depression
- ◉ Anxiety Disorders
  
- ◉ Medications
- ◉ Physicians

# Depression/Anxiety

- Difficulties with social skills, language and obsessive behaviors become more problematic and may leave them vulnerable to teasing
- If the adolescent is aware of their diagnosis, they may have difficulty dealing with it or understanding it
- If the adolescent is not aware of their diagnosis, they may just have the sense that they know they are different and that forming relationships is something that is really difficult for them
- Individual and Family counseling is very important and necessary in dealing with these issues.
- Very high incidence of depression in this population

# Medications

- There is no universal medication prescribed for autism, add, adhd, etc.
- Often prescriptions are given based on the behaviors exhibited by the child
- Must be careful with dosage (higher doesn't always mean stronger effects, combinations, taking with food)
- Must be careful when going on and going off
- Not every kid requires medication, should be used in concert with other treatments



# Medications

- Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRI): block reuptake of serotonin so it stays in the gap, prolonging its' effect
  - Usually used for anxiety, OCD, and depression
  - Evidence of reduced serotonin with autism leading to sensory imbalances and melatonin regulation
  - Side effects: serotonin syndrome, anxiety, headaches, weight gain, etc.
  - Prozac (fluoxetine), Celexa (citalopram), Luvox (fluvoxamine), Zoloft (sertraline), Paxil (paroxetine), Lexapro (escitalopram)

# Medications

- Neuroleptics: act on dopamenergic system by blocking dopamine
  - Usually used for schizophrenics, who have high levels of dopamine
  - Use with autism is less justified, dopamine may already be diminished, may be effective for very disruptive behaviors because it quiets the child down
  - Side effects: dyskensia
  - Chlorpormazine (Largactil), Thioridazine (Melleril)
  - Haloperidol (Serenace, Haldol), Sulpiride (Dolmatil): at low dose may be good because can increase dopamine

# Medications

- Antipsychotic medications:
  - May decrease hyperactivity, behavioral problems, withdrawal, and aggression
  - Side effects include the following: agitation, anxiety, drowsiness, dizziness, headache, insomnia, sedation
  - Clozapine (Clozaril), risperidone (Risperdal), olanzapine (Zyprexa), and quetiapine (Seroquel)

# What is it like to have... ASD?

- “Imagine playing a computer game where around every corner is something you have to decipher before you can move on to the next level. Now imagine living that computer game day in and day out. Take a moment to feel how exhausting that would be. Picture how stressful it would be to never know what was next, what was going to jump out at you or what test might stump you and keep you in that spot for a long time. If you can envision this, then perhaps you can relate to what it must be like to have ASD. To have a life that is a constant game of strategy and endurance.”  
-Gail Hawkins, How to Find Work That Works for People with Asperger Syndrome

# Obstacles: Language

- They have good language skills, but use language in different ways
- Speech patterns may be unusual, lack inflection or have a rhythmic nature or it may be formal, but too loud or high pitched.
- They may not understand irony, sarcasm, or humor.
- They may not understand the give and take nature of a conversation.

# Obstacles: Learning

- Though they may be good in memorization, they may be weak in comprehension.
- They usually have difficulties with changes in routine.
- Interests in a particular subject may border on obsessive. While they have good rote memory skills, they have difficulty with abstract concepts.
- They have difficulty generalizing skills across settings.

# Example

Deron could list all the food items at McDonald's but could not verbally express what he wanted to order unless the server directly said, "May I take your order?" The question "What would you like?" did not include the code word "order" that Deron needed to retrieve the information.

# Obstacles: Theory of Mind

- Individuals have difficulty understanding how others feel and think. Problems with perspective taking or with viewing a situation from “someone else’s standpoint” is called a theory-of-mind problem.



# Theory of Mind Problems:

- Difficulty explaining own behaviors
- Difficulty understanding emotions
- Difficulty predicting how others feel or think
- Problems understanding the perspective of others
- Failure to understand that behavior impacts how others think and/or feel
- Problems with social conventions such as turn-taking, politeness, and social space
- (Gagnon, Elisa, 2001: Powercards)

# Example:

- My teacher says I'm rude, I think I am honest, I don't understand why I can't tell someone that they have bad breath, ugly hair, or to go away because I am busy.
- Joshua example- am I interrupting you?

# Obstacles: Problem Solving

- Individuals have difficulty with problem solving skills as demonstrated by either:
- Lacking problem-solving skills
- Selecting the wrong problem –solving approach in a given situation
- Not knowing when to change from one problem-solving approach to another

# Example

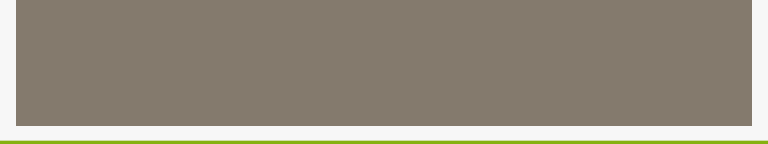
- KC has difficulty opening his locker. When the combination doesn't work, he just keeps trying over and over again. He doesn't know that after two or three unsuccessful attempts, he should try a different strategy such as asking a teacher or peer for help.

# Obstacles: Incidental Social Learning

- Individuals are poor incidental social learners, they do not pick up clues from the environment for appropriate behavior and if they learn social skills at all, they often do so without fully understanding their meaning and context.
- They have difficulty generalizing knowledge and skills
- Example: sit down restaurant

# Translate to difficulties in social skills

- Difficulty beginning projects- unsure where to start
- Difficulty empathizing with others' thoughts and feelings
- Difficulty relating to and interacting with the authority figures
- Difficulty interacting in a team environment
- Difficulty multi-tasking
- Reluctance to ask for help
- Abrupt manner in expressing thoughts and ideas

- 
- ◉ Difficulty seeing the full scope of a project
  - ◉ Difficulty with unstructured time
  - ◉ Difficulty with writing reports
  - ◉ Overly sensitive reactions to feedback
  - ◉ Low motivation to perform tasks of no immediate personal interest
  - ◉ Perfectionism
  - ◉ Poor manners
  - ◉ Stress, frustration, and anger reaction to change or interruption
  - ◉ Higher anxiety levels particularly when meeting new people or when encountering change or new situations

# Stress Management

- Obstacles, among other things, are causing stress...
- Can the individual recognize when they are feeling stressed (physical/emotional)?
- Can the individual recognize situations that may cause them stress?
- Does the individual have ways of dealing with stress?
- Do these skills need to be taught?



# Common Stress Triggers

- ◉ Being misunderstood
- ◉ Crowds
- ◉ Noise
- ◉ Confusion/chaos
- ◉ Unstructured time
- ◉ Social Situations
- ◉ Change
- ◉ Distractions such as a busy environment

# Part II

Working on social skills:  
where do you begin?

- Identify your skill

# Social Skills Profile

**SUPER SKILLS PROFILE OF SOCIAL DIFFICULTY (1 of 2)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Recorder: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to child: \_\_\_\_\_

Here are some social skills that people sometimes have difficulty with. Please mark the column you think applies to this child at present.

	Very Difficult	Difficult	Somewhat Difficult	Neither Difficult nor Easy	Somewhat Easy	Easy	Very Easy
<b>Fundamental Skills</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Eye Contact							
Correct Facial Expression							
Correct Voice Volume							
Correct Voice Tone							
Correct Timing							
<b>Social Initiation Skills</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Using Person's Name							
Using Farewells							
Greeting							
Introducing Self							
Asking for Help							
Giving a Compliment							
Starting a Conversation							
Joining a Conversation							
Ending a Conversation							
Exchanging Conversation							
Inviting Someone to Play							
Introducing Others							
Joining In							
Talking About Self							
Making a Complaint							
Asking Appropriate Questions							
Offering an Opinion							
Expressing Basic Feelings							
Expressing Complex Feelings							
<b>Social Response Skills</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Responding to Greeting							

Super Skills

Here are some social skills that people sometimes have difficulty with. Ple

	Very Difficult	Difficult	Son Di
<b>Fundamental Skills</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	
Eye Contact			
Correct Facial Expression			
Correct Voice Volume			
Correct Voice Tone			
Correct Timing			
<b>Social Initiation Skills</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	
Using Person's Name			
Using Farewells			
Greeting			
Introducing Self			
Asking for Help			
Giving a Compliment			
Starting a Conversation			
Joining a Conversation			
Ending a Conversation			
Exchanging Conversation			
Inviting Someone to Play			
Introducing Others			
Joining In			
Talking About Self			
Making a Complaint			
Asking Appropriate Questions			
Offering an Opinion			
Expressing Basic Feelings			
Expressing Complex Feelings			
<b>Social Response Skills</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	
Responding to Greeting			



# **SUPER SKILLS PROFILE OF SOCIAL SKILLS**

	Very Difficult	Difficult	Somewhat Difficult
<b>Social Response Skills (cont.)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Responding to Compliments			
Listening			
Following Directions			
Making Short Comments			
Staying on the Topic			
Waiting			
Staying on Task			
Offering Help			
Giving Encouragement			
Reading Body Language			
Reading the Feelings of Others			
Dealing with Mistakes			
Dealing with Anger			
Refusing When Appropriate			
<b>Getting Along with Others</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking Turns			
Sharing			
Playing by the Rules			
Apologizing			
Being Fair			
Being a Good Sport			
Using Kind Talk			
Being Flexible			
Asking Permission			
Cooperating			
Dealing with "No"			
Compromising			
Dealing with a Problem			
Receiving a Suggestion			
Giving a Suggestion			
Letting Others Talk			
Showing Interest in Others			
Using Humor			
Disagreeing Politely			
Dealing with Teasing			

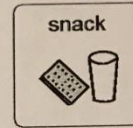
## Agenda



1

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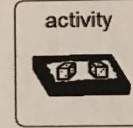
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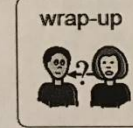
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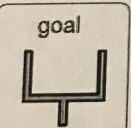
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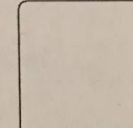
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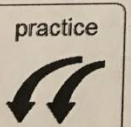
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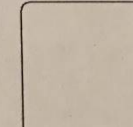
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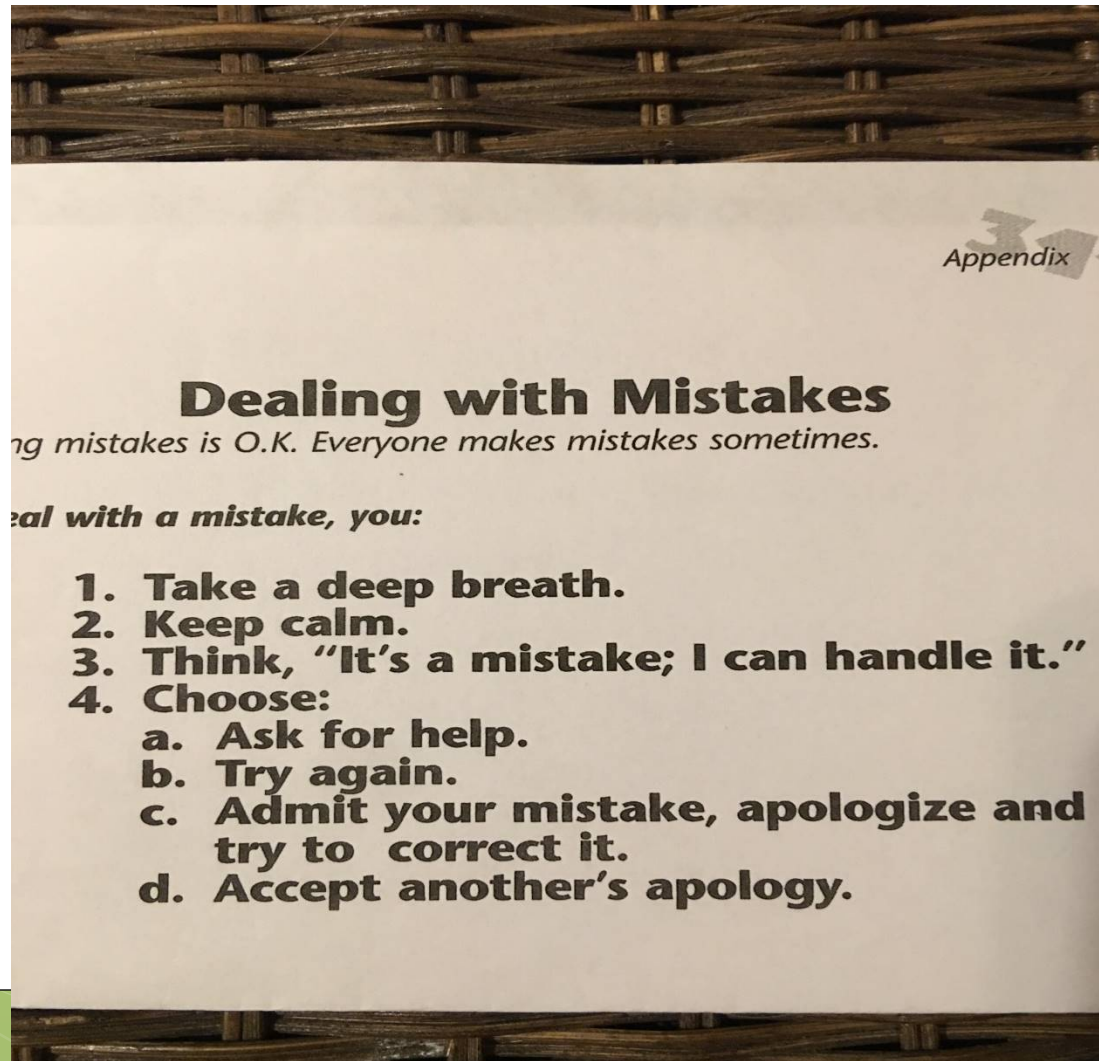
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# Identify steps to the skill



## Steps To Success: How to receive a compliment

one

1

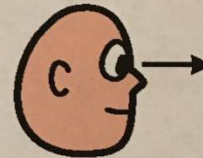
smile



two

2

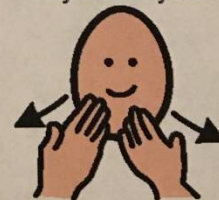
look



three

3

say thank you



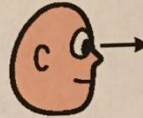


## Steps to Success: How to Give a Compliment

one

1

look



two

2

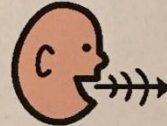
Use a friendly face



three

3

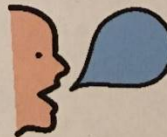
Use a sincere voice



four

4

say what you liked about what the person did



# Resources for teaching social skills

- Books
- Video modeling
- Scripting
- Emotional Regulation
- Stress management

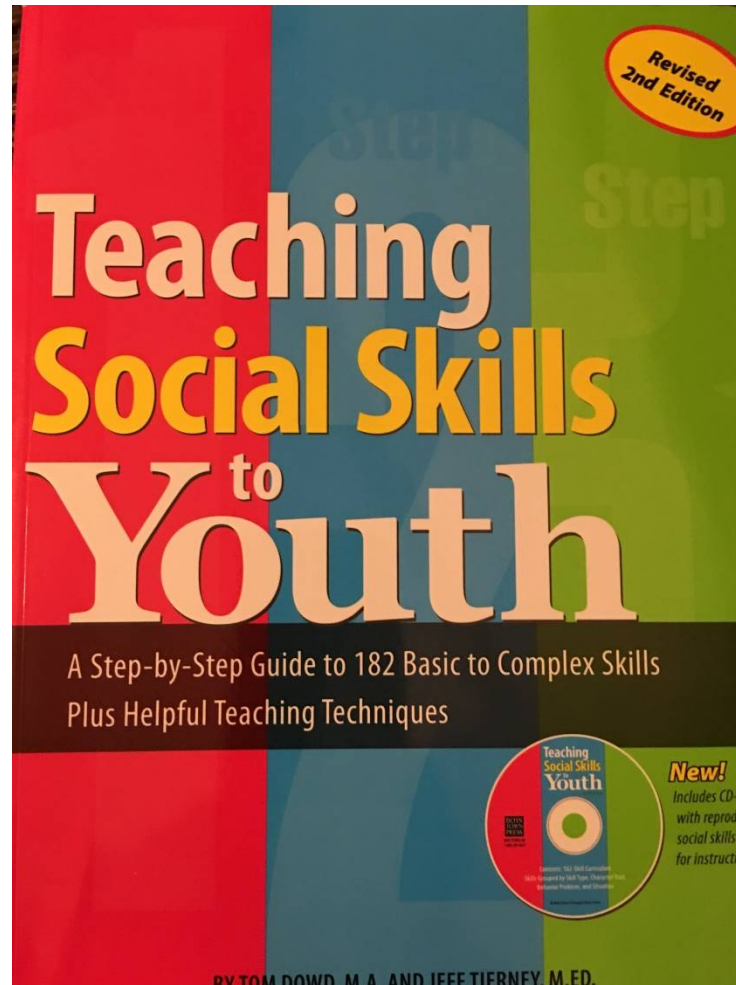
# **SUPER SKILLS**

***A Social Skills Group Program for Children with  
Asperger Syndrome, High-Functioning Autism and  
Related Challenges***

***Judith  
Coucounanis***

***Foreword by  
Brenda Smith  
Myles***





# Basic Skills

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## 1. Following instructions

1. Look at the person.
2. Say "Okay."
3. Do what you've been asked right away.
4. Check back.

## 2. Accepting "No" for an answer

1. Look at the person.
2. Say "Okay."
3. Stay calm.
4. If you disagree, ask later.

## 3. Talking with others

1. Look at the person.
2. Use a pleasant voice.
3. Ask questions.
4. Don't interrupt.

## 4. Introducing yourself

1. Look at the person. Smile.
2. Use a pleasant voice.
3. Offer a greeting. Say "Hi, my name is...."
4. Shake the person's hand.
5. When you leave, say "It was nice to meet you."



**ADVANCED – SKILL 121**

## **Negotiating with others**

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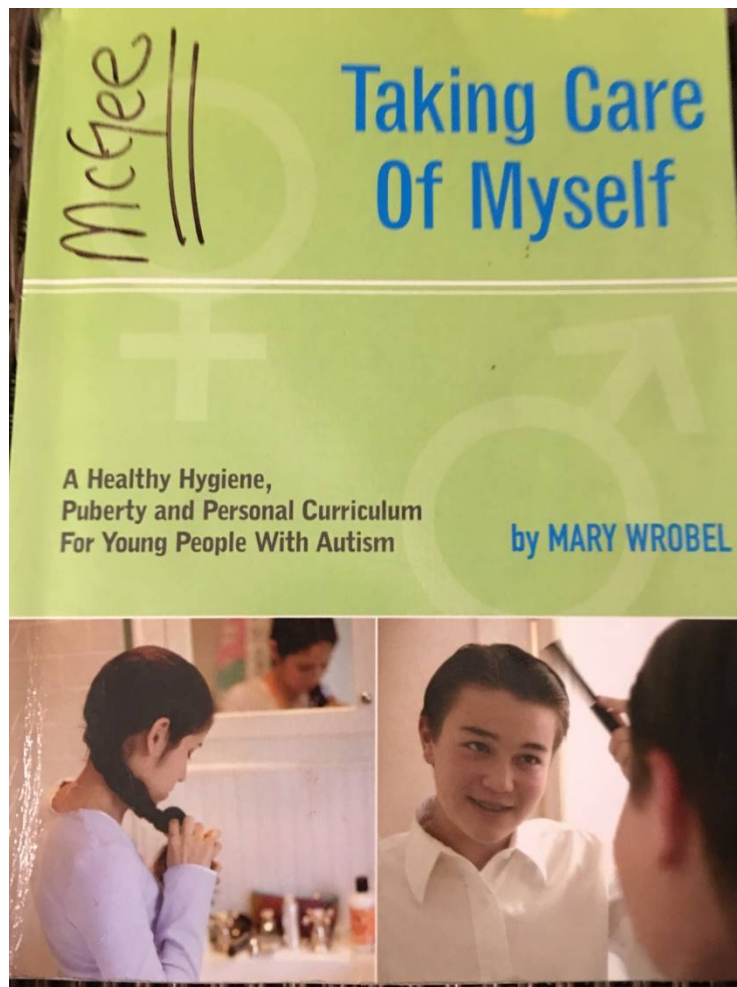
- 1.** Calmly explain your viewpoint to the other person.
- 2.** Listen to the other person's ideas.
- 3.** Offer an alternative or compromise that is mutually beneficial.
- 4.** Give rationales for opinions.
- 5.** Together choose the best alternative.
- 6.** Thank the person for listening.

**COMPLEX – SKILL 156**

## **Differentiating friends from acquaintances**

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- 1.** For each person you know, think about how long you have known him or her.
- 2.** Identify the activities you may engage in with each friend or acquaintance.
- 3.** Share personal information only with people you know as close friends.
- 4.** Avoid compromising situations (e.g., accepting rides, dating, drinking) with people you have known for only a short time.



Getting Started with this Curriculum .....  
 Steps for Developing a Successful Program .....  
 Voice Output Devices .....

## Unit 1 Hygiene .....

Teaching Hygiene .....  
 What's Dirty? .....  
 Washing My Hands .....  
 Taking Care of My Body .....  
 We Need to Take a Bath or Shower .....  
 I Can Take a Bath (sequence activity) .....  
 I Wash My Hair with Shampoo .....  
 I Can Take a Shower By Myself .....  
 We Brush Our Teeth .....  
 Sometimes I Need a Haircut .....  
 I Need to Comb and Brush My Hair .....  
 Blowing My Nose .....  
 Picking My Nose .....  
 Alex Uses the Toilet .....  
 I Use the Bathroom at School .....  
 Using Toilet Paper .....  
 Hygiene Cards- Question/Answer Activity .....

## Unit 2 Health .....

Teaching Health .....  
 Being Healthy .....  
 Eating Fruits and Vegetables .....  
 I Sleep at Night .....  
 Sometimes I Feel Sick .....  
 I Feel Sick (repeated line story) .....  
 Sometimes I Have Pain .....  
 Going to the Doctor .....



### Unit 3 Modesty . . . . .

Teaching Modesty . . . . .  
Being Naked . . . . .  
Where Can I Be Naked? . . . . .  
My Clothes Need to Stay On . . . . .  
Dressing Myself . . . . .  
My Private Areas . . . . .  
No Hands Down My Pants . . . . .  
People Need Privacy . . . . .

### Unit 4 Growth and Development . . . . .

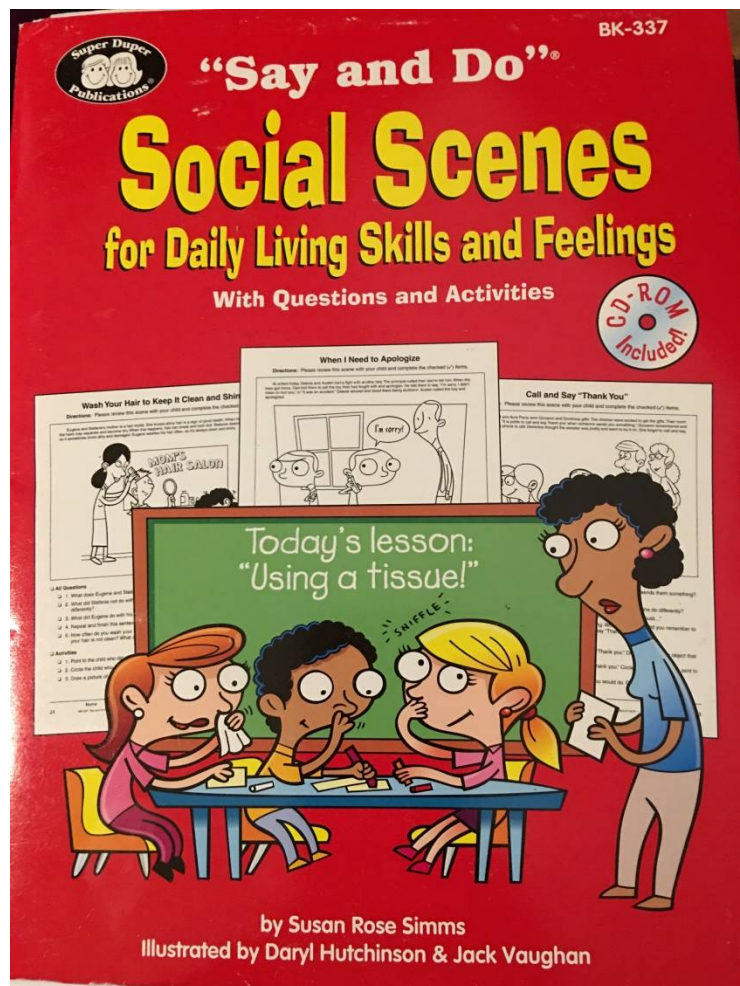
Teaching Growth and Development . . . . .  
Our Bodies are Growing and Changing  
    A story about female development . . . . .  
Our Bodies are Growing and Changing  
    A story about male development . . . . .  
I Need to Wear Deodorant . . . . .  
Wearing a Bra . . . . .  
Shaving My Face . . . . .  
Growth and Development Worksheets . . . . .

### Unit 5 Menstruation . . . . .

Teaching Menstruation . . . . .  
Getting My Period . . . . .  
Blood Will Come . . . . .  
I Wear Pads in My Panties . . . . .  
Changing Pads (sequencing activity) . . . . .  
Creating a Bathroom Folder . . . . .  
(Students) Period . . . . .  
Sometimes I Have Cramps . . . . .  
My Period is Private . . . . .

### Unit 6 Touching and Personal Safety . . . . .

Teaching about Touching and Personal Safety . . . . .  
Sometimes People Touch You . . . . .  
Touching Others . . . . .  
Can We Touch? (Activity Booklet) . . . . .  
Where Can People Touch Me?- Activities for boys and girls . . . . .  
My Touching Rules (A personalized story) . . . . .  
Talking About Sex and Private Areas . . . . .  
I Don't Know Strangers . . . . .  
It's Not OK to Hurt Me . . . . .  
Personal Safety Cards (Question/Answer activity) . . . . .  
My Sentences About Touching (Worksheet) . . . . .



### When I'm Confused

Directions: Please review this scene with your child and complete the checked (✓) items.

Mr. Clarkson is teaching Spanish. The students are having trouble understanding verbs. Mr. Clarkson tells the students that if they're confused, they can raise their hands or try sounding out the words quietly at their desks. Brandy tries sounding out the verbs. Keith raises his hand to tell Mr. Clarkson that he is confused. Wayne just gives up and puts his head on his desk.

**All Questions**

- ☐ 1. What did Mr. Clarkson tell the students they could do if they were feeling confused?
- ☐ 2. What is Brandy doing (point to girl)? What is Keith doing (point to boy on left)? Should they be doing this?
- ☐ 3. What is Wayne doing (point to boy on right)? Should he be doing this? What could he do differently?
- ☐ 4. Repeat and finish this sentence: "If I'm feeling confused, I can..."
- ☐ 5. Share a time when you were feeling confused. What did you do? How could you ask for help when you're confused?

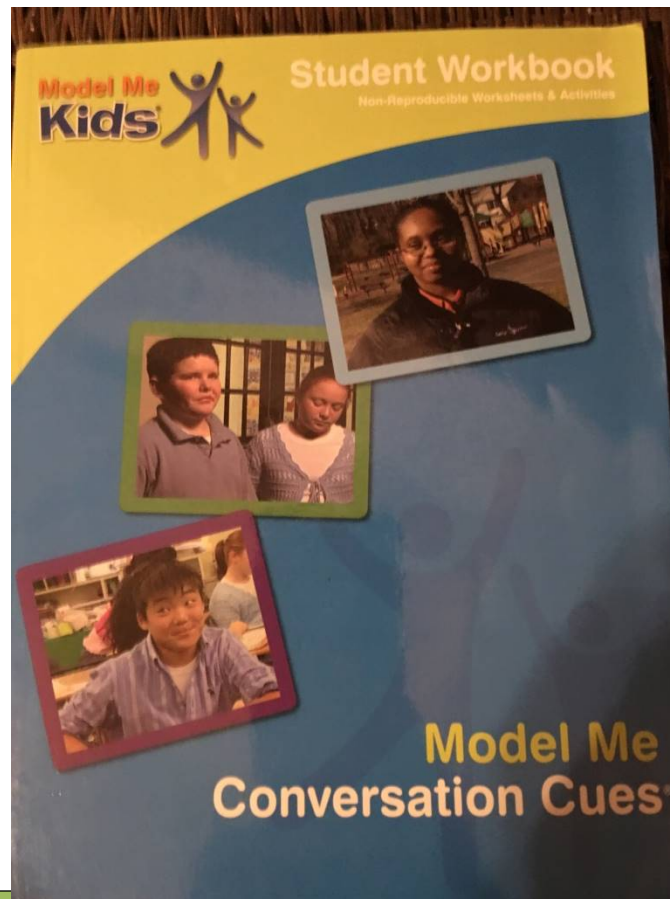
**Activities**

- ☐ 1. Point to a student who tried to get help in an appropriate way when he/she felt confused. Put an A+ on their desk.
- ☐ 2. Point to the student who did not try to get help when he/she was feeling confused. Draw his/her hand up so he/she can ask for help.
- ☐ 3. Draw a picture of yourself in this scene and tell what you would do. Color the picture.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Helper \_\_\_\_\_

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# Model Me Kids



# Teach the Behavior you expect

- 1. Begin with 2 to 5 simple rules.
- [?] *Example: Be respectful of others.*
- 2. Describe what the rules mean in specific terms.
- [?] *Respect means speaking in a normal tone of*
- *voice.*
- [?] *Respect means keeping your hands and feet to*  
*yourself.*

# Teach the Behavior you expect

- 3. Provide instruction about what to do instead.
  - [?] *State your expectations for behavior.*
  - [?] *Provide examples of expected behavior.*
- 4. Discuss and model the expected behaviors.
  - [?] *At home and in the actual locations.*
  - [?] *Re-teach regularly.*



# Teach the Behavior you expect

- 5. Be sure the expectation is positive.
- ☐ Positive: *“Once you have finished your chores, you may go to Mary’s house.”*
- X Negative: *“You cannot go to Mary’s house until the chores are finished.”*

# Positive Behavioral Interventions

- Child's behavior can change if parents:
- 1. TEACH the behaviors that are expected,
- 2. MODEL those behaviors,
- 3. Consistently RECOGNIZE and REWARD the behaviors when they occur, and
- 4. Consistently ENFORCE MEANINGFUL CONSEQUENCES for behavioral interventions.

# Positive Reinforcement

Teaching is not always enough to change behavior over the long haul.

- Students need to be recognized and rewarded when they are meeting the expectations that have been established.
- Positive recognition (rewards, other reinforcements, praise) must occur more frequently than negative recognition (at least a 4 to 1 ratio).
- Timer...we don't naturally give positive reinforcement



Cueing

Visuals

# Provide Instructions as cue



# Visual cue



# Visual cue

## **NIGHT TIME SCHEDULE**



Play game



brush teeth



wash hands



use toilet



eat dinner



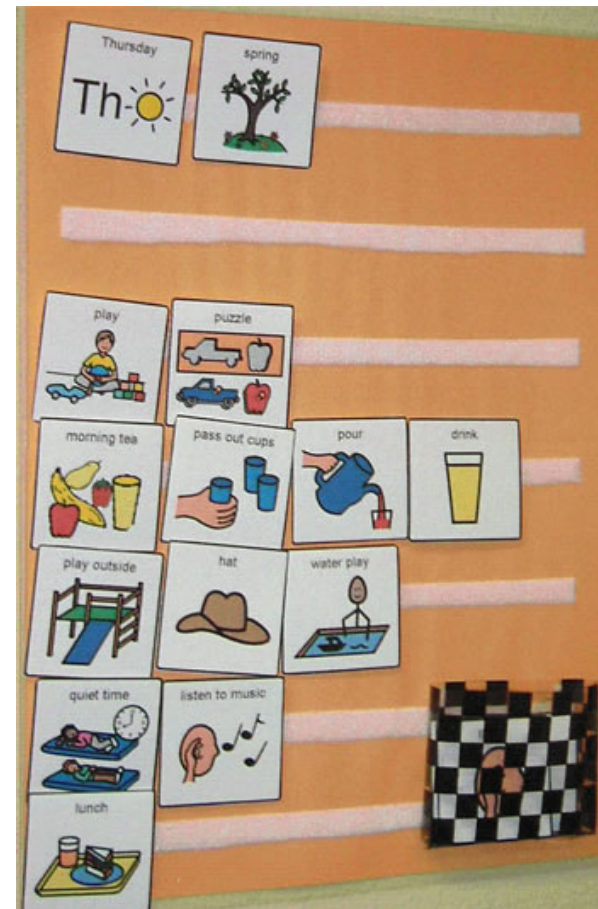
read story



do yoga



go to sleep



# Visual cue: Teaching Independence



# Visual cue



# Visual cue



Getting ready for school		
Things to do		Finished
Breakfast		
Medication		
Reader		
Get dressed		
Clean teeth		
Shoes and socks		
School bag		
Ready set Lets go!		







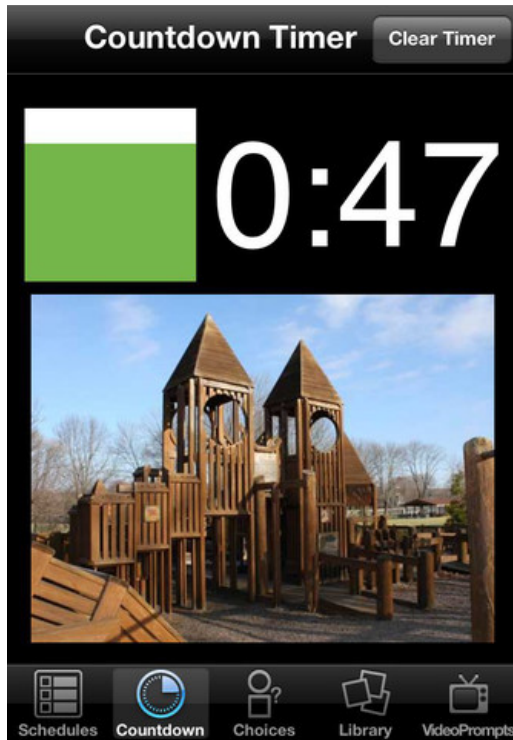
### Reading

1. Read pages 1-5 in the book  
Five Silly Fishermen
2. Write 3 new reading words in your  
reading journal



### Wednesday

- Play
- ~~Work~~
- Work
- Snack
- Outside
- Work
- Work
- Lunch
- Bathroom, brush teeth
- Wash the table
- Work
- Go Home



# Strengths=Interventions

## Routine, Organization, Schedules

- Individuals with Asperger's respond best to a regular, organized routine.
- Charts and pictures help visualize the day and to prepare for any changes or transitions in advance.
- Schedules help an individual to anticipate what will happen during the day or shift.
- This can help to lessen anxiety and also provides a defined endpoint or goal.

# General Interventions

- 1. Make changes in the environment
- 2. Provide opportunities to make choices.
- 3. Modify the behavior you trying to teach
- 4. Provide reinforcement for appropriate behavior.
- 5. Teach appropriate pro-social behaviors.

# Strengths=Interventions

## Unique Learning Styles

- Strong rote learning skills: Lists
- Strong memorization skills
- Strong visualization skills (pictures)
- Strong ability to focus intensively
- Use Task Analysis to break down skills being worked on.
- A common mistake is that people do not give enough information to a person with AS
- Interview teacher, parent, and individual to learn unique learning style and allow the individual to use the learning style.

# Teaching Example:

- Vocational Skills

# What to do if I need help or have a question at work:

- 1. Sometimes I need help or have a question at work
- 2. Go to a safe person at work
- 3. Say “Excuse me, could you please help me?” and then tell the person what I need help with OR say “Excuse me, I have a question” and ask my question

# A Safe Person at Work

- 1. A safe person at work could be a co-worker
- 2. A safe person could be my boss
- 3. A safe person at work could help me with questions about work
- 4. A safe person at work can help me when I don't feel safe at work
- 5. I talk to my safe person at work about things that happen at work



# Work Information:

- 1. Name of Workplace
- 2. Address of Workplace
- 3. Workplace phone number
- 4. My Supervisor's name
- 5. My Supervisor's phone number
- 6. My job coach's name
- 7. My job coach's phone number

# Ideas for Work Checklists

- 1. I want to keep my job and keep getting paid
- 2. Sometimes it helps to have a work checklist so I get everything done
- 3. I can ask a support person for help making my checklist
- 4. I can keep it on a clipboard at work or make copies for my wallet

# Intervention

- Be direct in your communication
- Make expectations clear
- Make consequences clear
- Be consistent

# Intervention Strategies

- Scripting: pre-determined dialogues
- Role-play: Practice a “real event”
- Video-modeling
- Follow the rules, a work “rulebook”
- Flow chart or If/Then chart
- Anchor: a non-verbal cue for a particular response

# What we learned:

- ◉ Make Rules
- ◉ Increase Positive Reinforcement
- ◉ Pick high priority skill
- ◉ Clear expectations
- ◉ Clear consequences
- ◉ BE CONSISTANT