

Social Skill Intervention Strategies for Children with Autism

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Autism

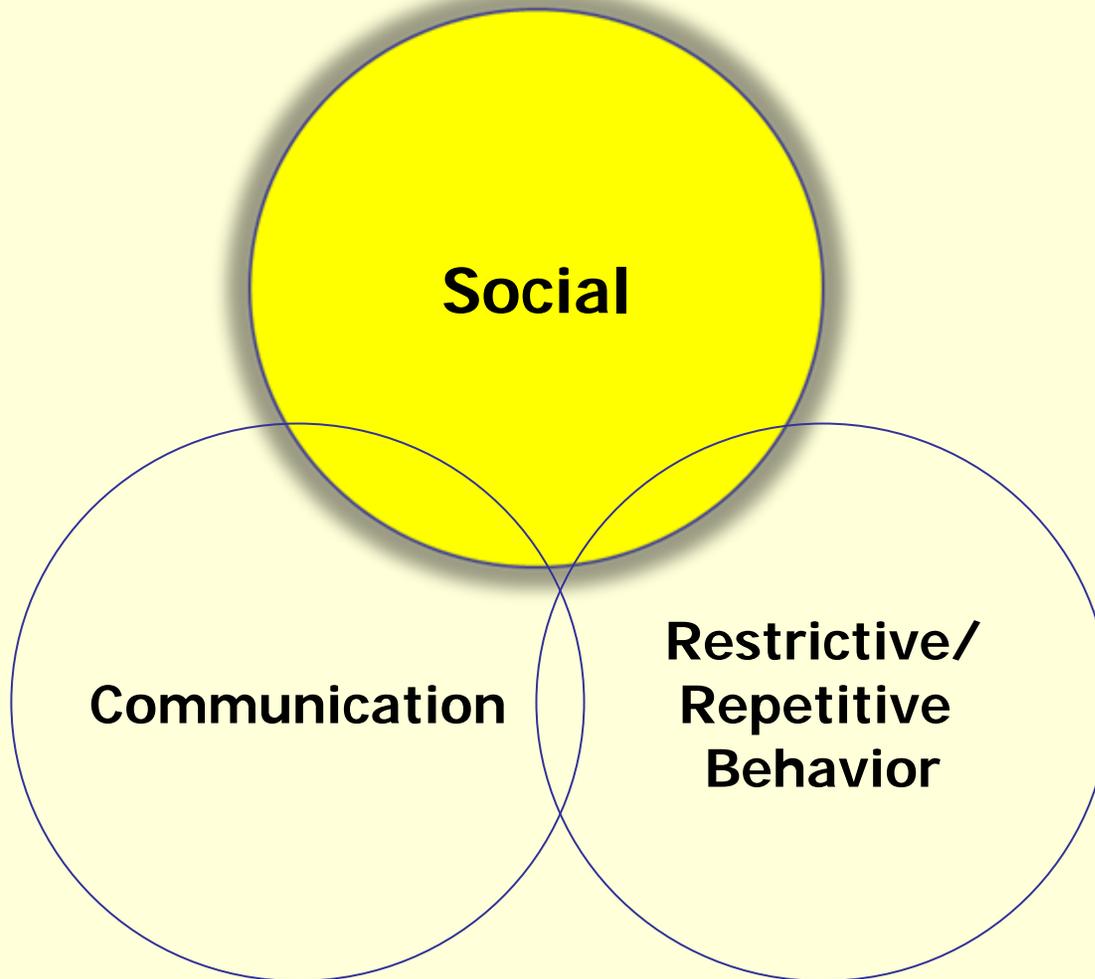
- Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs)
 - Most prevalent childhood developmental disorder in the U.S
 - 1 in 110 children are affected by ASD
- 1 in 110 children are affected by ASD
- Most prevalent developmental disorder in the US
- 4 males: 1 female
- In Arizona in 2002 the median age of diagnosis for autism was 5 years 3 months



Autism

- Autism is a pervasive developmental disorder in which excesses and deficits in behavior are observed that have a neurological basis.
- DSM-IV; 3 areas of impairment:
 - 1. Social interaction.
 - 2. Communication.
 - 3. Restricted and repetitive behavior.

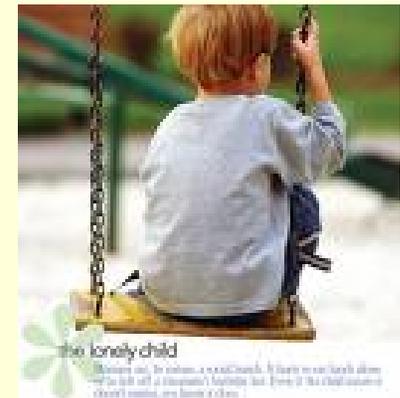
Autism Spectrum Disorders



Research on Social Development

- Without support, children with ASD may have difficulty:
 - Starting up a conversation
 - Invite kids over to play
 - Go to parties
 - Joining activities
 - Keeping up with the game or understanding the rules

- Lack of social relationships in childhood may lead to:
 - Decreased employment
 - Decreased independent living
 - Decreased life expectancy
 - Severe mental health problems
 (depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety)
 (Strain, 1991; Wing, 1981; Strain & Schwartz, 2001)



Relationships/Friendships

- Provide continuous, stable relationships with familiar peers
- Bolster self-worth, sense of belonging
- Provide companionship, affection, emotional support
- Create opportunities to share hopes, fears, and interests
- Help us learn about the social world outside our families and self

Skills Necessary for Friendship

- Sharing
- Ability to compromise
- Consider another person's perspective
- Companionship
- Empathy
- Conflict Resolution
- Reliability
- Ability to exchange feelings

(Asher, Parker, & Walker, 1998)



Research Related to ASD and Social Skill Development

- Physically integrating students alone may not be enough (Gresham, 1984; Kamps et al., 1998)
- Students with disabilities considered “least liked” (Sale & Carey, 1995)
- Incidence of peer victimization (Shtayermman, 2007; Little, 2002)
 - High levels of bullying
 - Peer shunning
 - Not invited to birthday parties
 - Eating alone at lunch
 - Picked last for teams

Research Directly Related to Recess, Lunch and Unstructured Time

- Increased (Nelson et al., 2007)
 - isolation
 - low engagement
- Less likely to initiate social interactions

(Hauck, Fein, Waterhouse, & Feinstein, 1995)

- May not respond (appropriately) to initiations by peers

(Lee, Odom, & Loftin, 2007)



The result...

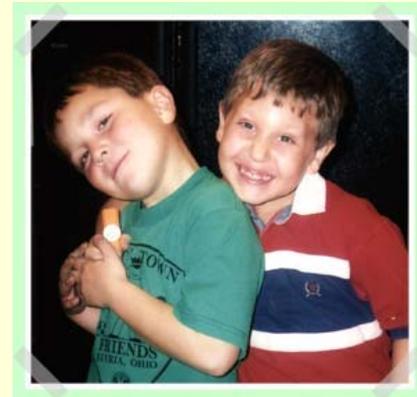


Social Skills- Intervention Approach

- Use treatment approaches based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis as appropriate for each child's needs
- Promote healthy relationships
- Peer sensitivity/disability awareness to promote awareness and understanding through student education and emersion

Effective Social Skills Interventions

- Occur across multiple naturalistic settings
(Bellini, Peters, Benner, & Hopf, 2007)
- Peer mediated
(Harper, Symon, & Frea, 2008; Kamps et al., 1992; Kohler et al., 2007; Owen-DeSchryver et al., 2008)
- Frequent
(Bellini, Peters, Benner, & Hopf, 2007; Strain & Schwartz, 2001)
- Motivating and child directed
(Kern et al., 1998; Koegel, Dyer, & Bell, 1987; Koegel et al., 2005)
- Include cooperative arrangements
(Kennedy & Itkonen, 1996; Koegel et al., 2005)
- Mutually reinforcing
(Koegel, Werner, Vismara, & Koegel, 2006)



Benefits For Those with ASD

- **Increased:**

- **Peer initiations**

(Kalyva & Avramidis, 2005; McGee et al., 1992; Owen-Des Schryver et al., 2008)

- **Reciprocal interaction (initiations & responses)**

(Harper, Symon & Frea, 2008; Kamps et al., 2002; Kalyva & Avramidis, 2005; Kohler et al., 1997; Kohler et al., 2007; McGee et al., 1992)

- **Peer acceptance**

(Kamps et al., 2002; McGee et al., 1992)

- **Participation in community or after school activities**

(Goldstein, Schneider, & Thiemann 2007)

- **Opportunities to practice and generalize skills**

(Laushey and Heflin, 2000)

- **Engagement**

(Kamps et al., 2002)

- **Decreased:**

- **Stigmatizing behaviors**

(Lee, Odom, & Loftin, 2007)

Social Skills: Supports Peer Sensitivity Training

Typical peers are supported so they develop skills and learn how to interact appropriately and, most importantly, develop meaningful relationships with dignity and respect as equal members of the school community.

Types of Social Interactions

- Observing (proximity to peers)
- Parallel Play
- Responding to initiations of peers
- Cooperative Play
- Initiating with peers

Observing (proximity to peers)

- Watching peers complete an activity
 - E.g. standing near or in the middle of a soccer game that is occurring without actually participating

Parallel Play

- Completing the same play activity as peers separately but within close proximity
 - E.g. drawing with chalk; digging in the dirt

Responding

- Responding (verbally or physically) to the initiation of a peer
 - E.g. A peer asks a child for a toy and the child gives the peer the toy
 - E.g. A peer asks a child what she wants to play and the child responds “game”

Cooperative Play

- Completing a play activity WITH peers
 - E.g. Digging a whole in the sand with peers
 - E.g. Taking turns playing hopscotch
 - E.g. Playing tag with peers
 - E.g. Talking to a peer about the soccer game they are watching

Initiating

- Starting a social interaction with peer(s)
 - E.g. Asking to join a game
 - E.g. Asking a peer if they want to play

Setting up a Social Skills Intervention Program

PLAYGROUND PROGRAM

Getting Started

1. Assess to identify strengths and deficits
2. Identify goals
3. Intervention
4. Collect data to monitor and evaluate progress
5. Teach across all settings (Generalization)

Recognize the Need

- Data-driven decision-making
- Assessment of student
 - Collect baseline data
- IEP
 - Specific goal
 - Specific service-delivery



Assessment for Social Skills Training

- Objectives:
 - To determine what social skills need to be addressed
 - To determine what would be the most effective teaching strategies
 - To determine the most effective teaching modalities

Assessment Strategies

- Teacher Checklist
- Parent Interview
- Student Interview
- Observation

IEP- Social Skills Goal

Should be individualized to the needs and abilities of each student contingent on baseline data.

Sample IEP Goal:

Student will interact with typical peers 85% of the time during recess, lunch and other less structured times of the day.

Sample Goals

- Child A
 - Increase appropriate initiations with peers:
 - Child A will appropriately initiate with two peers during a recess across three consecutive days.
 - Increase duration of engagement within large group activities
 - Child A will engage with five or more peers in a structured group activity (e.g. red light green light, soccer).
- Child B
 - Decrease prompts to engage in activities:
 - Child B will engage in an appropriate recess activity for ten minutes with no more than two prompts from an adult.
- Child C
 - Increase cooperative play with peers during group activities:
 - Child C will turn take with peers without displaying challenging behaviors 4 out of 5 opportunities for three consecutive days.
- Child D
 - Develop appropriate behavior when loses a game:
 - Child D will not display challenging behaviors after losing a game 4 out of 5 opportunities for three consecutive days.

Social Skills Training- Examples of What to teach

- Sharing and turn taking
- Initiating interactions
- Responding appropriately to greetings and play initiations
- Bringing up appropriate topics and reciprocal conversations
- Attention to facial expressions and body language
- Respecting personal boundaries and space
- Eye contact
- Appropriate comments and questions
- Ask about others interests and listen

Taking Baseline

- Data Measures-Specific to goals of students
 - Social Initiations with peers (frequency)
 - Time engaged with peers (duration/percentage)
 - Responses to peer initiations (percentage)
- What is baseline?
 - Recording the current levels of each behavior being measured
 - Do not need to remove any supports provided on the playground; continue to provide same level of support on playground

Baseline



Steps for Effective Social Skills Intervention Program

Provide Structure

- Set up structured activity/prompt peers to invite target children to join
 - E.g. Set up red light green light
 - E.g. Help facilitate students picking teams for kickball
 - E.g. Use chalk to play Pictionary



Follow the Child's Lead

- First need to find out what the target students like to play
- Use preferred activities to create opportunities to play with peers
- Plan activities for the day with the flexibility of being able to follow the motivation of the targeted child
 - E.g. Student wants to play with a Frisbee so you set up Frisbee golf



Create Opportunities

- Provide opportunities within activity for children to interact with one another at the level appropriate for that child

- If a child prefers an activity, give that activity to a peer so the child can initiate with the peer



- If a child wants to play a game, put them in charge of the game so peers will initiate with that child

- Set up new activities similar to other preferred activities to expand play

- E.g. set up a cooperative arrangement within an activity building a castle in the sand box

Provide Support

- Contact target student within activity as needed
 - Within activity provide verbal and gestural prompts as needed to help the child complete the activity
 - Prompt the child to ask others to play a game (e.g. “we need more people to play, go ask three friends”)
 - Provide support to peers teaching them how to interact with peers with social deficits

- E.g. prompt them to ask a target peer to play



- E.g. prompt a peer to tell a target peer when it is their turn



- E.g. If a targeted peer does not respond to a child’s initiate, provide support to that child to keep asking until they get a response

REINFORCE GOOD BEHAVIORS

- Immediately reinforce (provide preferred item/praise, etc) appropriate social behaviors within activity for both target and typical students (within 5 sec of the behavior)
- Need to reinforce appropriate behavior of both the typical peers and the targeted child to increase behavior in the future
- When possible, want the reinforcement for their behavior to come from each other (natural contingencies)
 - E.g. Set up bean bag toss where asking your peer for the bean bag (behavior) gives you access to the bean bag (reinforcement)

Positive Practice

- Provide prompting for socially appropriate behavior as needed and set up opportunities to practice socially appropriate behavior for both target and typical students
 - E.g. If a child is taking a toy from a peer, set up the opportunity again and tell the child to ask the peer for the toy. When the child asks, have the peer give the toy to the child for a turn. Provide praise immediately to the peer and after the child takes his/her turn have him/her return the toy to the peer.

Intervention

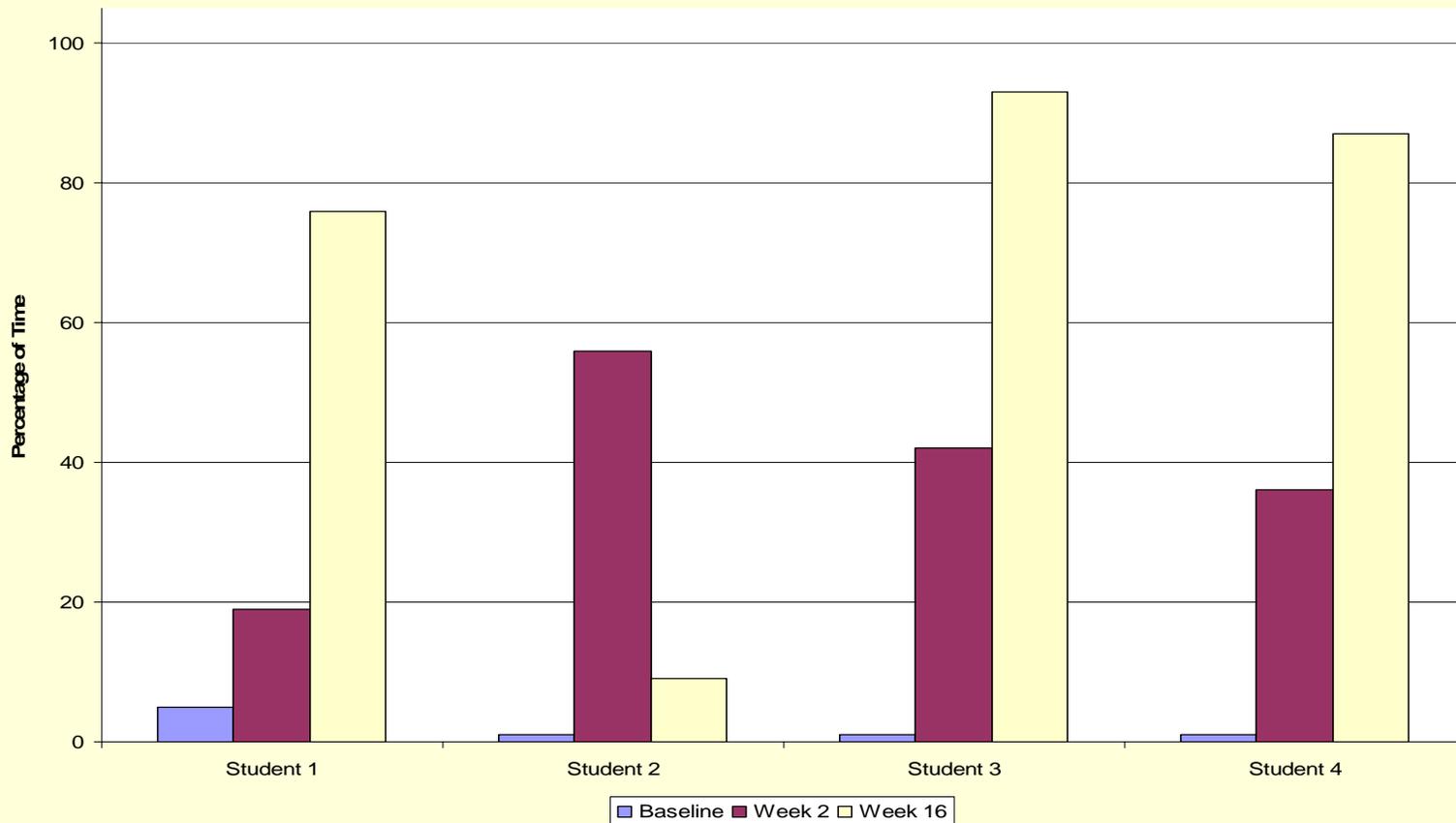


Results of Piloting Playground Program at Schools

Pilot Data Pilot Data Jan.- May 2008

Engagement with Peers during Recess

Time Engaged with Peers Kindergarten through 4th Grade

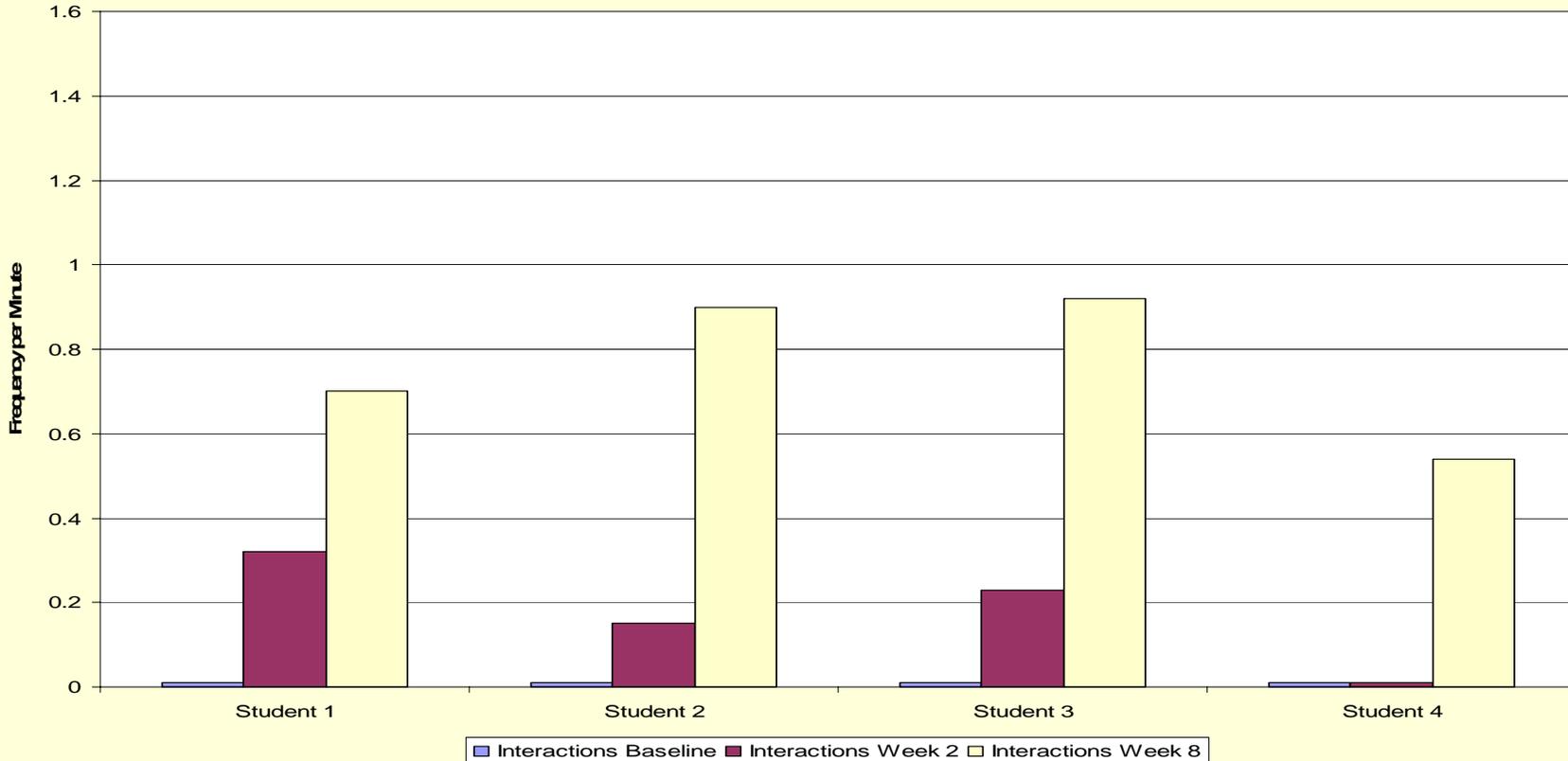


Pilot Data Pilot Data

Jan.- May 2008

Interactions with Peers during Recess

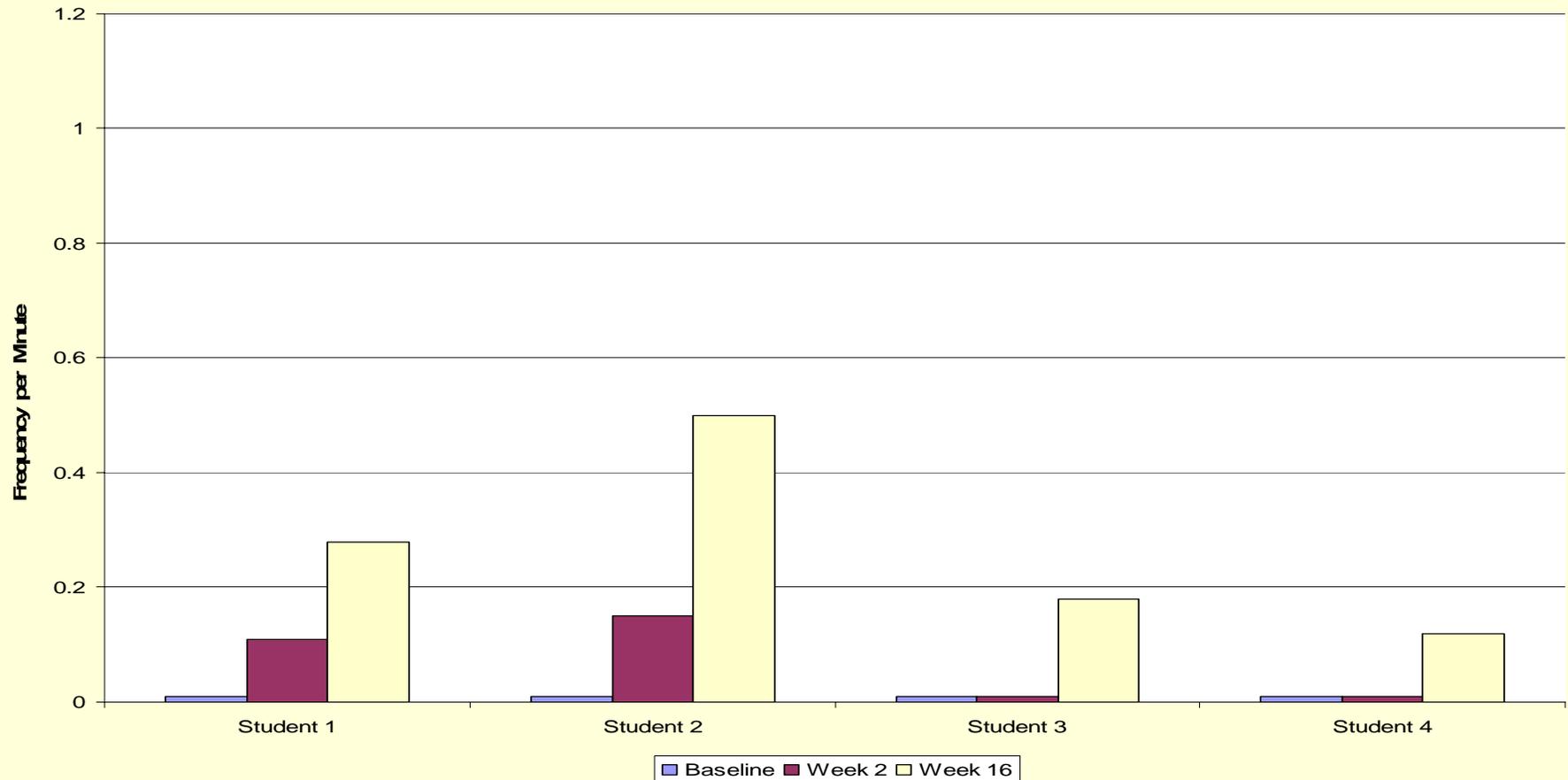
Interactions with Peers during Recess



Pilot Data Jan.- May 2008

Initiations with Peers on Playground

Social Initiations Kindergarten through 4th Grade



Additional Recommendations and Resources included in Handout

- Preschool and Elementary
- Middle and High School
- Research articles and Related Books for Social Skill Development and Communication Facilitation
- Resources with recommendations for structured play and activities

*See Additional Slides

SARRC Mission

SARRC's mission is to advance research and provide a lifetime of support for individuals with autism and their families.



Recommended Readings Preschool & Elementary School

- Bishop, B. (2002). *My Friend With Autism*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons
- Edwards, A. (2002). *Taking Autism to School*. Wilkes-Barre, PA: JayJo Books
- Ely, L. (2004). *Looking After Louis*. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Company
- Gartenberg, Z.M. (1998). *Mori's Story: A Book About A Boy With Autism*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications Co.
- Hoopmann, K. (2001). *Of Mice and Aliens: An Asperger Adventure*. New York, NY: Jessica Kingsley Publisher
- Leedy, L. (1996) *How Humans Make Friends*. New York, NY: Holiday House

Recommended Readings

Preschool & Elementary School

cont.

Lowell, J. & Tuchel, T. (2005). *My Best Friend Will*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company

Ogaz, N. (2002). *Buster and the Amazing Daisy: Adventures with Asperger Syndrome*. New York, NY: Jessica Kingsley Publisher

Staub, D. (1998). *Delicate Threads: Friendships Between Children With & Without Special Needs In Inclusive Settings*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House

Thompson, M. (1996). *Andy and His Yellow Frisbee*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House

Twachtman-Cullen, D. *Trevor Trevor*. Higganum, CT: Starfish Specialty Press

Recommended Readings

Books for Middle and High School

Haddon, M. (2004). *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. New York, NY: Vintage and Anchor Books

Mukhopadhyay, T.R. (2000). *The Mind Tree: A Miraculous Child Breaks the Silence of Autism*. New York, NY: Arcade Publishing

Prince-Hughes, D. (2004). *Songs of the Gorilla Nation: My Journey Through Autism*. New York, NY: Harmony Books

Welton, J. (2004). *Can I Tell You About Asperger Syndrome? A Guide for Friends and Family*. New York, NY: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Recommended Reading Communication & Social Skill Development

Bellini, S. (2006). *Building Social Relationships*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Co.

Carter, E.W., Cushing, L.S., & Kennedy, C.H. (2008). *Peer Support Strategies for Improving All Students' Social Lives and Learning*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Coucouvannis, J. (2005). *Super Skills: A Social Skills Group Program for Children with Asperger Syndrome, High-Functioning Autism and Related Disorders*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Co.

Winner, M. G. (2008). *Thinking About You Thinking About Me, 2nd Ed.* San Jose, CA: Think Social Publishing, Inc.

Recommended Reading Communication & Social Skill Development cont.

Gray, C. (Ed.) (1993). *The Social Story Book*. Jenison, MI:
Jennison Public Schools

Janney, R. & Snell, M.E. (2006). *Social Relationships & Peer
Support, 2nd Ed.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Kluth, P. (2003). *"You're Going to Love This Kid!"*. Baltimore,
MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Koegel, L.K. & LaZebnik, C. (2004). *Overcoming Autism*. New
York, NY: Viking Press.

Recommended Reading Communication & Social Skill Development cont.

McAfee, J. (2002). *Navigating the Social World: A Curriculum for Individuals with Asperger's Syndrome, High Functioning Autism and Related Disorders*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons, Inc.

Quill, K. (Ed.) (2000). *Do-Watch-Listen-Say: Social and Communication Intervention for Children with Autism*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Smith Myles, B., Trautman, M. & Schelvan, R. (2004). *The Hidden Curriculum: Practical Solutions for Understanding Unstated Rules in Social Situations*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Co.

Wolfberg, P. (1999). *Play and Imagination in Children with Autism*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Recommended Resources

Activities

- Kaplan, M. (Producer). *The boy inside* [Motion picture].
(Available from Fanlight Productions, 4196 Washington Street,
Boston, MA 02131)
- Lowell, J. & Tuchel, T. (2005). *My best friend Will*. Shawnee
Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company
- McGinnity, K. & Negri, N. (2005). *Walk awhile in my autism*.
Cambridge, WI: Cambridge Book Review Press
- Sima, P. (2004) *Jumbo book of games*. Westminster, CA: Teacher
Created Resources