Title of Presentation

Peer-Mediated Instruction and Intervention to Increase Social Skills within the General Education Setting

Abstract

It is well known that children with ASD have significant difficulties demonstrating and generalizing social/pragmatic skills within natural settings. Social skills training is an essential component for this population of learners. Traditional therapy addressing social skills is often done in a small group setting given structured lessons. Students make progress in the small group setting but have difficulty generalizing these same skills into larger group settings with their typical peers. Parents and professionals are always looking for ways target and carry over these skills at recess, lunch and cooperative group opportunities.

Peer-Mediated Intervention and Instruction can provide supports and strategies to help build social networks of peer models that become an active part of the intervention process. Paraprofessionals can also be trained to facilitate this intervention along with other school staff.

Learner Objectives

1. Identify problems with traditional therapy models for social language skills in autism.
2. Define Peer-Mediated Instruction and Intervention (PMII) as an evidenced based practice for targeting pragmatic skills within the school setting.
3. Identify social pragmatic skills to target in the natural setting.
4. Establish strategies, materials, and process guide for establishing and maintaining the PMII intervention within a school setting.

Description

This presentation will define and review an evidenced based intervention for improving social/pragmatic skills within the general education setting. Peer-Mediated Instruction and Intervention (PMII) can be used as an early intervention designed to increase social interactions between typically developing peers and students with ASD. PMII teaches peer models ways of engaging learners with ASD in positive meaningful social interactions. The goals of PMII are to teach typically developing peers ways to interact and communicate with their peers with ASD. This program promotes using positive peer interactions within a natural environment and helps to generalize skills (AFIRM Team, 2015). The typically developing peer models are carefully selected and trained to facilitate play and social interaction. Peer models can be
observed to provide explicit instructions (e.g., suggesting a game to play), provide subtle verbal cues (e.g., “It’s your turn.”), utilize picture cues (e.g., visual supports), or use gestures to keep the social interactions going (AFIRM Team, 2015). As the peers become increasing successful in engaging the child with ASD in social interactions, the adult facilitator decreases support. The goals of PMII include teaching skills for interacting and talking with children with ASD, increasing the frequency of interactions during play, teaching peer models ways to initiate with students with ASD across general education environments and promoting positive and natural interactions between typically developing peers and students with ASD. These skills can be hand selected from the child’s current IEP and customized to specific needs.

This presentation will address identifying problems and solutions for generalizing social skills within the general education setting. Definitions, strategies, and solutions related to Peer-Mediated Instruction and Intervention will be explained and demonstrated.

Bibliography


Autism Society of Baltimore-Chesapeake   www.baltimoreautismsociety.org

**Target Audience**

Educator – Beginner  
Educator – Advanced  
Families/Parents/Caregiver  
Related Service Providers (Speech-Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists)  
Social Workers/Counselors/Psychologists  
School Administrators  
Paraprofessionals

**Target Audience Cont.** (Highlight one or as many age groups your session will address.)

*My session will target issues related to the following:*

Childhood  
Adolescence  
Teen

**Presenter Name(s) and Affiliation(s)** (Please list your name and credentials as you would like them to appear in the program.)

Karen Dorbert, M.S., CCC-SLP  
Speech-Language Pathologist  
Gwen Furano, M. Ed., NCC  
School Counselor

**Brief Biography**

Karen Dorbert has been a speech-language pathologist for over twenty four years. She has experience working in three different school districts and within a clinic setting. Karen has experience providing comprehensive diagnostics and interventions to children ages two through teenage years. She currently works in Carroll County Public Schools and within a private clinic setting.

Gwen Furano has been an elementary school counselor for the past eleven years. Gwen is a nationally certified counselor. She has experience working with children in the classroom, small group setting and individually.
Both professionals are working towards earning a second masters degree in Special Education: Teacher as Leader in Autism Spectrum Disorder through Towson University.

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