

A young child with blonde hair is shown in profile, blowing bubbles. The background is a soft, greenish-yellow color with many bubbles of various sizes floating around. The text is overlaid on the upper and middle portions of the image.

Making Friends

Facilitating Social Skills for Children/Teens with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Cynthia La Brie Norall, Ph.D.

Clinical Director

**Comprehensive Autism Services
and Education, Inc. (CASE Inc.)**

Creator of Friends' Club ®

Author of Quirky Yes, Hopeless, No

www.casefamily.com



We will cover....

Why we need to teach social....

When we teach social....

What to teach when teaching social....

And a bit about understanding
their perspective of social....

A young child with light-colored hair is shown in profile, blowing bubbles. The child's mouth is open, and several bubbles are visible near their lips. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green with many more bubbles floating around. The overall mood is joyful and carefree.

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Asperger's Syndrome

High Functioning Autism

PDD-NOS



Autism is Described as..

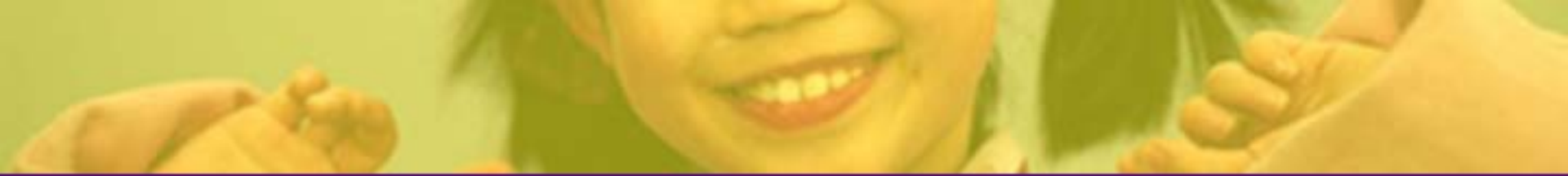
Social Impairments in:

- 1) use of multiple nonverbal behaviors to regulate social interaction
- 2) developmentally appropriate peer relationships
- 3) spontaneous sharing of enjoyment, interests, achievements with others
- 4) social or emotional reciprocity



“These children often show a surprising sensitivity to the personality of the teacher. However difficult they are under optimal conditions, they can be guided and taught, but only by those who give them true understanding and genuine affection, people who show kindness towards them, and yes, humor.”

Hans Asperger, 1944



Asperger's presents as a problem only when you add the social interaction into the equation...





Socially Successful People

- **Smile and laugh**
- **Greet others**
- **Extend invitations**
- **Converse**
- **Share**
- **Give compliments**

From Richard La Voie's video, "Last One Picked, First One Picked On"



Being Social

- Busy but not playing with anyone.
- See a room full of toys to play with; not people to play with.
- Seem much younger; often play with younger children or prefer adults.



Friendship

Cynthia: What is
a friend to you?

Max: A friend is
like family with a
different last
name.



Me: Do you want to have more friends?

J: "No."

Me: Why ?
know why."

J: "I don't

Me: Please think of a reason why.
might make bombs."

J: "They

Me: Bombs? Do you mean noises?

J: "Yes."

Me: So you don't want to make friends because they might
make loud noises like bombs?

J: "Yes."

Me: Why did you use the word 'bomb'?
they are very scary."

J: "Because

Me: Thank you for telling me. I like to know all about you.



Why we teach the social.....

If your child has difficulty with math, she/he can go play soccer with friends. You don't have to be able to do math to be able to play soccer. If your child can't spell he can play a videogame with a group of the neighborhood kids. But if your child has social skill problems he can't avoid that because every environment is social.

From Richard La Voie's video, "Last One Picked, First One Picked On"



To think about BEFORE
beginning a social program..

“Compliance as an Interaction”

- Sit/Be with me (social referencing)
- Quiet hands (objects vs. people)
- My Turn/Your Turn
- Engagement/Joint Attention
- Communicative Intent



Second, we are the social “interpreter”. We facilitate social interactions in order to gently guide, to mediate and to “give meaning” to the behaviors of the child with ASD to the peers with whom they will interact.



Third, take it in “little steps”.

- Starting with those of the same “species”
- Working within the natural context
- Teaching the child to “repair” in the setting
- Practice the skill with “allies”
- Put the encounter into a visual sequence



What should you do.....

Speech Teacher:

What two things would you do if there is a fire at your school?

Student with ASD:

- 1) get out of there
- 2) and never come back.



Friendship Skills: Toddlers

- Curiosity, parallel play, and imitation
- Hide their favorite toy from visitors
- Conflict resolved in physical force

From Tony Attwood's conferences



Friendship Skills: Preschool

An adult acting as a friend – as an equal

Recognition of turn taking

(Friend has toys the child wants)

Conflict resolved by a referee

From Tony Attwood's conferences



Playground Patch

- Teaching social skills on the playground
- Breaking the playground down into smaller steps
- Visual structures and support
- Encouraging “Friends Talk”
- Adult Facilitation, fade out



Friendship Skills: Elementary

- Reciprocity and being fair
- Like the same activities
- Knows the preferred activities of their friend
- Chooses someone who is popular
- Conflict – who started it; not how it finished

From Tony Attwood's conferences



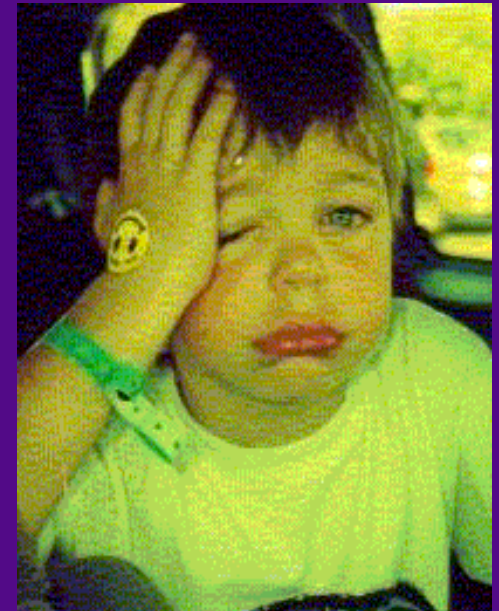
Pre Teen and Teens

- Aware of others opinions of them and how their words and actions effect the feeling of others (white lie)
- Need for companionship rather than functional play
- Cooperation more than competition between groups
- Share thoughts rather than toys/objects

From Tony Attwood's conferences

Processing Emotions

People thinkers process the emotion by making a guess at the meaning and then changing their behavior based on that cue. This is done in a fraction of a second.



"Aspie Stun Gun"





Mediating

When a difficult situation arises in the classroom or at lunch time, it is often necessary for an adult or peer to help the student with Asperger's Syndrome mediate the situation; without this mediation the situation can quickly escalate or become harmful to the student. Evan Wooton



When mediating, the first goal should be to cause no further anxiety or stress to the student. Individual needs will vary based on the student and the situation, but keep in mind that prolonged conversation, eye contact, or confrontation can cause high levels of sensory anxiety. Evan Wooton



Evan Wooton,
CASE, Inc.

Often times when faced with a situation or a problem, the teen with AS will simply attempt to figure it out on his own. This can lead to a level of independence, but when dealing with social situations or academics, the teen simply cannot make some of the leaps of logic necessary, thus his self-dependency becomes a hindrance.



A best case scenario would be for the student to have a friend that acts as a “ally” or an advocate.



Social Referencing Question:

Cynthia: Describe your mom.

John: She's nice.

Cynthia: What is your mom's favorite food to eat?

John: "I don't know, she never told me"



Reading others

.. involves so many subtle cues...and our friends don't always pick up on those cues. They get bogged down in details that may be irrelevant.



Perspective Taking:

- The 1st time is funny...
- The 2nd time is not so funny
- The 3rd time is annoying

Their Perspective

Alicia: "Joe", make a choice of a 5 or 10 for how many breathe and counts we will do.

Joe: Is any number a choice?

Alicia: A 5 or a 10 is a choice.

Joe: What about 11?

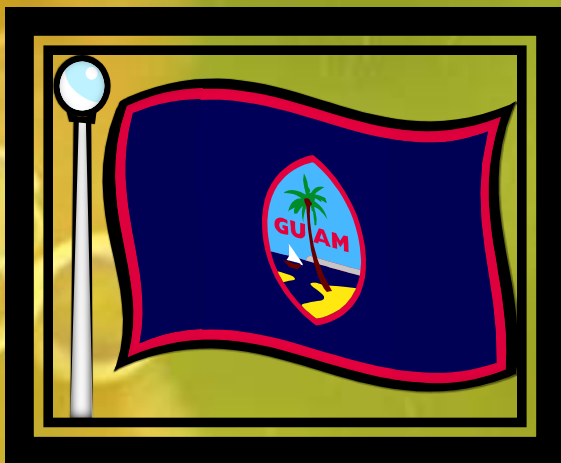
Alicia: Choose 5 or 10.

Joe: What about...

Alicia: We'll write our choice down.

Joe: a 5, then.

We need to teach about our
Social partner's belief system...





In Making Friends there is a lot that we take for granted that children and teens with ASD want to learn and need to have us teach them.



Hidden Curriculum

Includes:

- ✓ **the setting**
- ✓ **the audience**
- ✓ **processing emotions**
- ✓ **awareness of belief systems**
- ✓ **contributing to the conversation**



Being Left Out....

Personally I've never felt left out, but that does not mean that others haven't. From what I hear being left out can make a person feel lonely and sad. But I have never felt lonely and sad, why? I don't know I just don't care that I don't have a lot of friends. In fact, I only have one friend and that friend has more friends, some of which I haven't even met. And yet I still feel happy because I don't want anymore friends. Another thing is that during elementary school P.E. everybody was playing and having fun. You'd think that would make me feel left out, but no I still felt happy even though I was watching everybody from the sidelines.



The reason why I don't feel lonely and sad is probably because I'm always thinking of something else. I'm always thinking of what I'd seen earlier that day. What I saw on the internet or something. It's just that I'm always thinking of something that'll keep me occupied.

~Anonymous



What I've learned about teaching the social.....

First, our role is not to turn a child with ASD into a “social butterfly”. It's to help the child/teen connect with another peer, maybe two.



Asking Questions

Asking a question is an important part of being socially successful. Example: If I were to go to Lisa and say, “Lisa, would you please find out from Bob what we’re having for dinner?” Lisa would go to Bob and say what? “What are we having for dinner?” She would take my statement, “Find out what we’re having for dinner” and turn it into a question and ask Bob the question, “What are we having for dinner?”

From Richard La Voie’s video, “Last One Picked, First One Picked On”



Friends' Club:

A Social Understanding Group

- Our formula: “Time with your own species.”
A Balance of
empathy, support,
mediation,
education,
boundaries, and
practice



Leaders and Co leaders

- Flexibility
- Breaking each social skill down
- Practice through games, role playing, activities and conversation
- As a leader, you have to accept that things do not go as planned.
- As a co leader, you have to be on your toes at all times.



A Safe Haven

- Eliminate social stress
- A place where they are understood
- Aspie's memory
- Why no Nerotypicals?
- High Functioning and Asperger's Syndrome



“Themed Activities”

- In Friends’ Club we study 6 different themes per year. Each year is different.
- They vary from Friendship building to Cooperation to Bullies and so on.
- Our curriculum, if that is what you want to call, has progressed through the years. This year, we tried something different, “Drama.”



Example Themed Activities

- Friendship
- Hygiene
- Sportsmanship
- Humor
- Party Planning



Friendship

Themed Activity:

- Friendship Bingo
- Friendship Jeopardy
- Show Me, Don't Tell Me
- Friendship Cookie

Sensory:

- Friendship Band
- Name, Name, Goose

Self Regulation:

- Tool Box
- Geckos
- Asking for a break
- Breathe and Count



Show Me Don't Tell Me: Friendly Greetings

- Friends go up in pairs to front of group
- They are given the “where” & “who” of a scene
- They then act out a Friendly Greeting appropriate to that where & who.

Example: where: rodeo, who: rodeo clown & cowboy, friendly

greeting: “Howdy, is this your first rodeo?” “Howdy. No, this is not my first rodeo.”

Focus: greeting “level 1” friend/person with appropriate gestures/words

Evaluation: How did the situation effect how you greeted a person?
Is it easier to greet or respond to a greeting?

Friendship Cookie recipe:

3 cups of Kindness
1 cup of nice chocolate
4 Chocolate

5 cups of bully-curing sugar
Honor
Ghips

3 Strawberry of honesty



Hygiene

Themed Activities:

- Wheel of Good Hygiene
- Hygiene Lessons
- Sample Products
- Commercials



Commercials

- Materials: variety of hygiene products; optional: commercial story board

Directions:

Get in small groups or pairs

Pick a hygiene product

Make a Commercial about it! Be sure to include: Name of product; 1-3 features/selling points; slogan/button to close commercial (i.e. "Don't pick your nose, pick up these tissues today!") NOTE: Depending on your group you may want to have them fill out the attached story board for their commercials OR you have put a simple script on the board (see below) & have them fill in the blanks.

SIMPLE SCRIPT:

Have you tried _____? (Product name)

It's great!

It _____ & _____. (2 features)

You just _____. (Demo use)

So, pick some _____ today! (Product name again)

Evaluation: Discuss what they came up with.

- Relate to outside FC: "Who was your audience?" "Why do these products promote via commercials?"



COMMERCIAL Story Board:

- Names: Product or Event: Details:
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- Storyboard:
- Attention Product Details Example



Sportsmanship

- Building Together: “It takes a Village”
- Two person games
- You Tube Videos on Sportsmanship
- Books
- “Keep it Going”: Creating a Video of how to respond to a bad sport in as a good sport
- “Up in the Air”: Everyone working together to keep the ball in the air.



It Takes a Village

Focus: Contributing to a team effort

Materials: Lego or Lincoln Logs or something similar (play-dough?)

- Tell group they are going to work together to build something made up of many parts: a car, a house, a town, a person, etc. pick whatever you think your group would buy into.
- Come up with a list of features/components that will need to be included:
- (i.e. Car: floorboard, front wheels, back wheels, hood, trunk, doors, windows, steering wheel, etc.)
- Then have friends decide (or Leader assign) an element to each person
- Friends make their part and work to put together the larger item.

Evaluation: What was your contribution? How did you add value to the team?

- How did doing this as a team make it easier or more enjoyable? What would have made it better?



Humor

- Mean vs Friendly Teasing
- Back and Forth Banter
- Idioms
- A Play on Words
- “Pass The Mic”
- You Tube Clips: “Slapstick” Humor
- Joke Books
- High 5 Mags
- Highlights



Act out Idioms

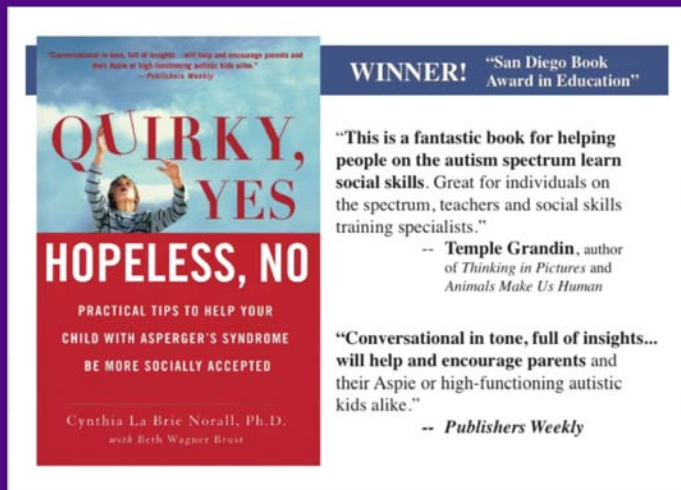
Focus: What did you say vs. What did you Mean?

Materials: List of idioms (Can be same from worksheet or What's up)

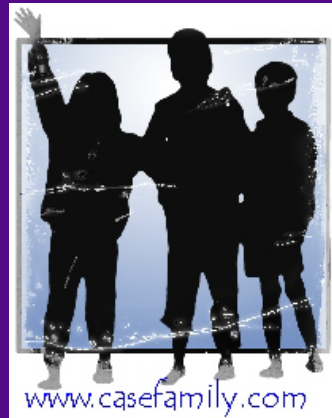
Directions:

1. This piggy-backs on the Idiom Worksheet
2. Work as a group or in pairs.
3. Have them act out the idiom literally (i.e. “pulling my leg”) and then explain or act out what it figuratively means (i.e. “you’re tricking me”) *These don’t have to be film-ready, they can be casual & quick, improvisation style
4. The goal is to make clear why a literal understanding of these phrases is ridiculous.
5. Also, this is a good chance to remind the Friends about audience awareness & consideration

Quirky, Yes – Hopeless, No



- Realizing they are not perfect
- Learning to be accepted
- 85 Tips that parents, professionals, teachers can teach
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