




Autis-memes™
 Guideposts for Therapy
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 1/25/2017

Why Autis-memes?

- ▶ Kim's Story
- ▶ We are so lucky to be given the opportunity to work with such unique and amazing individuals.

Why Autis-memes?

- ▶ The importance of a language intervention in a student with autism's life cannot be understated!

According to the DSM-V the diagnostic criteria for autism includes:
 Persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts...

(<https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/diagnosis/dsm-5-diagnostic-criteria>)



Functioning Levels

- Base Language**
 - Base level of language. Non-verbal or limited to labeling in order to get wants and needs met. Disability is apparent.
- Shared Language**
 - Language used to get needs met, respond, and engage with others. Abstract concepts and social rules are difficult to understand. Disability is easily noticed during interactions.
- Conversational Language**
 - Language used for social purposes but nuances of social interactions are problematic. Disability not obvious. May be considered "odd" or "rude".



Play!

According to Stuart Brown, M.D., Founder of the National Institute of Play:

"The ability to play is critical not only to being happy, but also to sustaining social relationships and being a creative, innovative person". He also points out that play is different for everyone....

Senior play researcher Jaak Panksepp has shown:

"active play selectively stimulates brain-derived neurotrophic factors (which stimulates nerve growth) in the amygdala (where emotions are processed) and the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (where executive decisions are processed).

Play!

► Teresa Cardon, M.A., CCC-SLP states:

"Play has an important role in children's physical, social, emotional, language, and cognitive development and reinforces neural connections. That is, children who are deprived of play display fewer neural connections, thereby causing a biological regression of brain growth (Brown, Sutterby, & Thompson 2001)



Play is **WORK!**

LIFFT Model™

L	Level	Determine child's level of play
I	Interest	Determine and include the child's interests including the types of toys.
F	Functional Communication	Determine the child's level of functional communication and the functional communication goal of the interaction.
F	Follow the Child's Lead	The child determines the flow of play. Adapt your interactions to the child.
T	Trust	Establish trust by honoring ALL appropriate communication whenever possible as quickly as possible.

Play is Work!-Level

- ▶ First things first!
- ▶ Baseline level of play

- ▶ Then,
- ▶ Target level of play

Play is Work!- Level

Solo	Moves away from peers or plays in general area with peers but doesn't interact.
Parallel/Side by Side	Plays side by side with peers. May engage in same activity but without interaction (animals, cars, swings, climbers).
Sharing	Shares materials/toys with others but does not play with them (Water/sensory tables, shovels/pails, trains, doll house, markers/drawing)
Interactive	Shares materials and interacts with peers (Trains with interaction, animals with interaction, drawing asking for colors/showing)
Organized Interactive (cooperative play)	Plays a game in which others have "turns" or "roles" (Tag, chase, make believe)
Structured games	Is able to follow rules and structure of formalized games (Four Square, Candyland, Soccer).

Play is Work!- Level

► Possible Goal:

Given a play context, Johnny will demonstrate the ability to (insert play level) in 4 out of 5 interactions as measured by observation.

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Play is Work! - Interest

► Interest sparks attention, attention sparks learning!

- Toys/games
- Activities

Play is Work! - Interest

Types of Toys

Pre-Toys	Peek-a-boo, Tickle, bubbles
Cause and Effect	Push buttons, pull knobs for effect (lights, noises)
Sensory	Manipulate with hands: Play-dough, water play
Go-Together	Puzzle, shape sorter, stackers.
Objects	Trains, cars, animals
Construction	Lego's, blocks, trains, marbleworks
Games with rules	Tag, Red Light Green Light, Go Fish, Sorry, etc.

Play is Work! - Interest

- ▶ Structure the play/game area.
- ▶ Make toys visible but out of reach or use visuals of available toys.
- ▶ Rotate toys on a regular basis.



Perseveration or Motivation?

Play is Work! - Interest

Perseveration vs. Motivation

- ▶ The term perseveration refers to repeating or "getting stuck" carrying out a behavior (e.g., putting in and taking out a puzzle piece) when it is no longer appropriate.
- <http://www.autismspeaks.org>
- Often confused with a focused interest. Often described as an "obsession"

Play is Work! - Interest

- ▶ We can use these!!!
- ▶ Denied "obsessions" can become stronger.
- ▶ Giving access to focused interests decreases anxiety.
- ▶ Can become a strength!!
- ▶ Part of what makes them special!
- ▶ We cannot choose motivators
- ▶ Get creative!!

Play is Work! - Interest

- ▶ What happens when focused interest is below the play level we are targeting?
- ▶ Bubbles - solo, side by side and we are targeting sharing/interactive.
 - ▶ Get Creative! One bubble bottle for 2 kids, 2 kids trying to hit a bubble "target".
 - ▶ Use as a reward instead of play item/activity.

Play is Work! - Interest

- ▶ Don't forget the great outdoors!
- ▶ Recess time - Social opportunities
- ▶ Have Fun!!

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TARGET FUNCTIONAL LANGUAGE



Play is Work! - Functional Communication

- ▶ First things First!
- ▶ Baseline level of language use.

- ▶ Second,
- ▶ Target level of language use.

Play is Work! - Functional Communication

Language Uses

Labeling/ Requesting	Protesting	Greeting	Describing	Initiating
Answering Questions/ Responding	Commenting	Directing	Asking Questions	Other

Play is Work! - Functional Communication

Levels of Prompting

Direct Verbal Model	The exact word or phrase is provided to the child for direct imitation.
Assisted Direct Verbal Model	Requires 2 people. One interventionist is communicative partner (no prompting). The second interventionist is positioned behind the child and provides direct verbal prompts for imitation.
Indirect Verbal Model	Verbal "hints" without supplying the answer (i.e., "This is a triangle and that is a _____").
Showing	Making motivating items visible or holding them up in child's line of vision.
Waiting	Giving the child processing time to independently communicate before providing any prompts. UNDERUSED!!!
Visual	Visual cues to help process questions, directions, etc. in order to provide correct response.

Play is Work! - Functional Communication

▶ **Labeling and Requesting**

- ▶ **AT LEAST 50** labels (spontaneously AND independently) before target phrases.
- ▶ Rethink "I want" as a goal. Try targeting the verb or descriptor.
- ▶ No more "More" !!
- ▶ Respond immediately with requested item. Praise after they receive it.

Cardon, Teresa A. *Initiations and Interactions: Early Intervention Techniques for Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders*. APC Publishing 2007.

Play is Work! - Functional Communication

▶ **Requesting/Labeling**

▶ Structured activities:

- ▶ Snack - small amounts for repetition.
- ▶ Craft - Set up so students have to ask you or peers for materials
- ▶ Circle/Group - Favorite songs/activities
- ▶ Individual sessions - "What book do you want?"

Play is Work! - Functional Communication

▶ **Initiation**

- ▶ Physical (touch, proximity), verbal ("Miss Kim"), eye contact.
- ▶ Start with one-word requests (Initiation is HARD!)
- ▶ Independent initiations do not include a request ("What do you want?") or directions ("Say, 'I want juice' .")
- ▶ Set up situations where you control their motivators.
- ▶ Turn off "helper instinct" and play dumb!

Cardon, Teresa A. *Initiations and Interactions: Early Intervention Techniques for Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders*. APC Publishing 2007.

Play is Work! - Functional Communication

- ▶ **Protesting**
 - ▶ Often a replacement for aggressive behavior (Hitting, pushing)
 - ▶ Make sure protest is honored as much as possible.

Play is Work! - Functional Communication

- ▶ **Greeting**
 - ▶ Around campus - stop, drop, and greet!!
 - ▶ Wait, then wait some more!
 - ▶ LOTS of attention and praise.
 - ▶ Start every session with students greeting you and each other.

Play is Work! - Functional Communication

- ▶ **Answering Questions/Responding**
 - ▶ Toys-Ask questions before handing over.
 - ▶ Personal Information
 - ▶ Videos and Books
 - ▶ Manipulatives - makes it interactive
 - ▶ Stop and go

Play is Work! - Functional Communication

▶ **Commenting**

- ▶ Play comments - "That was fun", "Wow!", "You are fast!"
- ▶ Should we tackle this at same time as other uses of language?
- ▶ Can teach rote comments. Will it generalize?
- ▶ Different for conversation level - MGW does a good job with this category of communicators.

Play is Work! - Functional Communication

▶ **Directing**

- ▶ Playing structured games
- ▶ Simon Says
- ▶ Red Light Green Light
- ▶ Teaching favorite lessons

Play is Work! - Functional Communication

▶ **Asking Questions**

- ▶ Play questions - "Can I play?", "Can I have the truck?", "What are you doing?", "What train do you want?"
- ▶ Guess who
- ▶ Jenga with questions to peers
- ▶ Restructure cards from games

Play is Work! - Functional Communication

► Possible Goal:

Given a play context, Johnny will demonstrate the ability to (insert use of language) given (insert level of prompting) in 4 out of 5 observations using observations.

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Follow the little leaders!



Play is Work! - Follow the Child's Lead

- ▶ Use the toys and activities they pick to target language goals.
- ▶ If they move, you move with them.
- ▶ Try to keep interactions face-to-face as much as possible.
- ▶ Have them pick videos, games, rewards during sessions.

Play is Work! - Follow the Child's Lead

- ▶ Adapt interactions to address goals with play materials
 - ▶ Labeling-Give and take, naming characters/items/actions in videos.
 - ▶ Describing/responding-"What color?", "What does a pig say?"
 - ▶ Initiating-avert eyes, turn back, move away
 - ▶ Directing/protesting-"My turn", "That's mine"
 - ▶ Asking Questions-familiar games/videos - be "teacher"; toy master

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Play is Work! - Trust

- ▶ BE AWARE-Always be on the lookout for the language/behavior you want!!
- ▶ For every one admonishment there should be AT LEAST 10-20 praises!!
- ▶ Look around - are we expecting them to act like others in their age group or little adults?
- ▶ They know if we like them or not. Find what makes them special!!
- ▶ Adjust expectations based on their day - Would you rather get 5 minutes of true attention and focus or 30 minutes of a melt down?

Play is Work! - Trust

- ▶ Perceived Control- Building trust between the therapist and child by giving the child some decision making power during interactions.
 - ▶ The way you frame instructions can give them a little control in an otherwise confusing world.
 - ▶ Choices, choices, choices
 - ▶ "Do you want to do 4 work folders or 3?"
 - ▶ Do you want to watch "For the Birds" or "Jack Jack Attack?"
 - ▶ "Are you upset? O.k. we will do 1 more and then you can blow bubbles."
 - ▶ "Will you give out green sticks to everyone who raises their hand?"

Play is Work! - Trust

- ▶ Take "no" out of your vocabulary!
- ▶ "Yes, you can play with the legos. You just need to do 3 works for me. Let's hurry so you can get to those legos!!"
- ▶ "Yes, you get to go home after P.E. - let's go look at the schedule so you can see."
- ▶ I can see you want to eat Johnny's snack but let's see what you have....(Then do something silly to divert attention)

DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY!!



Don't Take It Personally!

- ▶ Perspective Taking - By definition of their disability they have difficulty taking another's perspective.
- ▶ Executive Functioning - Don't have the problem solving/executive functioning abilities to understand the affect their behavior is having on others or consequences that may arise from their actions.

Don't Take It Personally!

- ▶ Using "cause and effect" behaviors that work.
 - ▶ Function of behavior
 - ▶ Antecedent - Behavior - Consequence
 - ▶ Training - Applied Behavior Analysis

Don't Take It Personally!

- ▶ Manipulation?
 - ▶ Describing behaviors as "manipulative" gives the impression of a planning process with an ability to infer an outcome while considering the effect the actions will have on the others and the situation.

Don't Take It Personally!

- ▶ Be Calm!!
 - ▶ Remembering that individuals with autism simply do not perceive situation and context the way we do can help us keep our cool.
 - ▶ It is our job to calmly teach replacement language - not punish maladaptive language.
 - ▶ A calm demeanor will also build trust - they are not "getting away" with anything.






