

Autism & PDDTM

Intermediate Social Skills Lessons

Communication

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Skill Areas: Social Skills/Language

Ages: 8 through 12

Grades: 3rd through 7th



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Printed in the U.S.A.

800-776-4332

ISBN 0-7606-0415-0

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Acknowledgment

We would like to thank all the wonderful parents and professionals who responded to our e-mail request for information on the special challenges facing preteens with autism.

Illustrations by Eulala Conner
Page Layout by Christine Buysse
Cover Design by Mike Paustian

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<i>after</i>	page 15
<i>another</i>	page 15
<i>change</i>	page 35
<i>different</i>	pages 11, 18
<i>feelings</i>	pages 32, 47
<i>first</i>	page 20

Introduction

A few years ago, we were working together to facilitate the inclusion of several children with autism in elementary classrooms. Behavior problems often occurred due to breakdowns in communication. Although the classrooms had been structured to aid inclusion, inappropriate behaviors repeatedly interrupted both social and academic learning. Typical behaviors included climbing on desktops, darting, squirting glue on tables, screaming, and having tantrums at breaks in routines.

We learned of Carol Gray's success with stories describing social situations to teach children with autism (*The New Social Story Book*, 1994). Based on those, we began writing shorter, one-page lessons with each sentence supported by one or more pictures. Our lessons targeted typical needs of preschool and early primary students.

As parents began to see how the lessons worked at school, they requested lessons concerning behaviors at home and in the community. In addition, the lessons were used successfully with children with other disabilities and with typically-developing children. *Autism & PDD: Primary Social Skills Lessons* (1999) was the culmination of the work we did with teachers and families of these students. This set of social skills lessons was followed by a set written for the needs of adolescents (*Autism & PDD: Adolescent Social Skills Lessons*, 2001).

We then began to hear over and over from parents and professionals we met at schools and conferences that we were leaving out a very important group of children: preteens. In an effort to target the needs of this age group, we used the Internet to solicit problems and specific social topics experienced by parents and professionals that needed to be taught to this age group. We had a tremendous response and many of the social skills lessons in these books are a result of those responses.

About the Books

The lessons are grouped into five separate books:

- Communication
- Controlling Behavior
- Healthy Habits
- Middle School
- Special Events & Activities

In each book, we have included two types of lessons: instructional and behavioral. The instructional lessons are intended to teach preteens what they need to say or do in social situations that are sometimes overwhelming (e.g., *When Others Fight*, page 45). The instructional lessons can be used as part of a social skills curriculum with small groups. The behavioral lessons target specific social problems that need to be stopped (e.g., *Inappropriate Greetings*, page 35).

The lessons are not intended to be used in the order presented, but chosen according to the needs of a particular individual.

As children mature, every stage of growth brings new challenges to communication. The lessons in *Communication* will help preteens know what is expected in social situations at school, at home, and in the community. You might find it helpful to incorporate role play after introducing a social skill lesson.

Modifying the Lessons

No two people are the same! Although the lessons are ready for use as they appear in the books, it will undoubtedly be necessary to make changes in some lessons to fit each preteen. For example:

- Use a photograph of the preteen in place of the generic preteen in the books.
- Edit text if necessary to make the lesson fit the individual situation.
- Fill in the blanks provided to individualize the lesson.
- Use pictures from the picture index at the back of each book, photographs, line drawings, or computer-generated art to modify lessons as needed.

Using the Lessons

Identify the skill to be taught. No student will need every lesson. Search for the source of the problem. Is it sensory? Is it a communication breakdown? Is the preteen sick? Some problems can be solved by ignoring the behavior or changing something in the environment. Limit the number of lessons presented at one time. Start with one or two. Wait until they are learned before introducing more lessons.

Choose the appropriate lesson and change the story as needed. Make two copies. Place one copy of the lesson in a notebook for the student. As skills are presented and learned, use the notebook for reviewing lessons and for sharing the lessons with other teachers, parents, and caregivers.

Use the second copy for direct instruction as follows:

1. Identify the time and place the social situation occurs. The *Tracking Multiple Behaviors* form, page 51, and/or the *Initial Behavior Analysis* form, page 53, will help you.
2. When you teach a new skill, the social lesson should immediately precede the targeted situation. For example, read *How to Shake Hands*, page 12, before practicing that skill.
3. Present the lesson. Sit with the student one-on-one in a quiet area and read the lesson aloud. Point to the pictures for emphasis. Read the lesson again. (You might also want to copy the lesson onto a chart for group instruction at a later time.)

4. A common error is reading through the lesson too quickly. Allow adequate processing time. Pause after reading each line. Wait and observe the student's reaction before proceeding.
5. Give the student a copy of the lesson. Keeping a notebook of lessons presented allows the student to review each lesson repeatedly and to refer to it when needed.

Document the lesson(s) taught using the *Record of Progress*, page 55, and/or the tracking forms on pages 57-60. These records can serve as documentation for IEP objectives and behavioral intervention.

Special Considerations

Pronouns can be difficult for some people with autism. We have used "I" extensively throughout the books as a way to help teach the pronoun. If pronoun use prevents comprehension of the lesson, substitute names in the text and/or use photographs in place of the "I" symbol.

Be sure to use words that the student is familiar with (e.g., *gym* vs. *P.E.*).

The lesson and pictures on one page may be overwhelming for some students. You can use a blank sheet of paper to mask the rest of the lesson as you read each line. The lessons can also be used to make a small book. Cut the lesson into sentence strips. Place each sentence with its accompanying pictures in the center of a sheet of paper. Staple the pages together to make a book.

These lessons can be easily adapted to a student's language and comprehension level. If necessary, delete words to shorten sentences. Some students may also need fewer pictures per sentence.

We hope that you will find these social skills lessons as effective as we have.

Pam and Nena

Greeting Others



Sometimes I see people I know.



I will try to say "Hi."



I need to say it so people will hear me.



They might say "Hi, _____ . How are you?"
(child's name)



I can say "Fine!"



It is friendly to say "Hi" to people I know.

Saying "Hi" to Siblings' Friends



Sometimes I see my _____ 's friend.
(brother/sister)



_____ wants to be friendly with me too.
(friend's name)



_____ might say "Hi" to me.
(friend's name)



I will try to look at _____.
(friend's name)



I will try to say "Hi."



It is good manners to speak to my _____ 's friend.
(brother/sister)

Smiling



People smile for different reasons.



Sometimes they smile when they are happy.



Sometimes they smile when they say "Hello."



If I see a smile, I can smile too.



It is friendly to smile at people.



I will try to smile when people smile at me.

How to Shake Hands



Sometimes when people meet they shake hands.



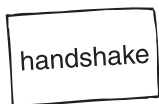
Sometimes they shake hands to say "Hello."



Someone might hold his or her hand out to me.



I can hold his or her hand and squeeze a little. Then I let go.



This is called a "handshake."



Shaking hands is a friendly way to say "Hello."

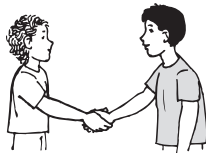
When to Shake Hands



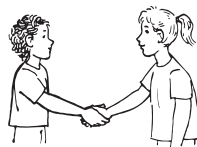
Shaking hands is when hands touch.



Shaking hands is a friendly way to say "Hello."



People shake hands with strangers when they meet them.



Sometimes people shake hands when they meet friends.



I can shake hands when I meet an adult.



I can shake hands to say "Hello."

Joining a Conversation



Sometimes I see people talking together.



This is called "having a conversation."



I want to talk too.



I will try not to interrupt the talking.



I can walk up to them. I need to wait and listen.



When someone looks at me, it is my turn to talk.

Listening to Others During a Conversation*



conversation

When people talk together, it is called a "conversation."



conversation

People take turns talking in a conversation.



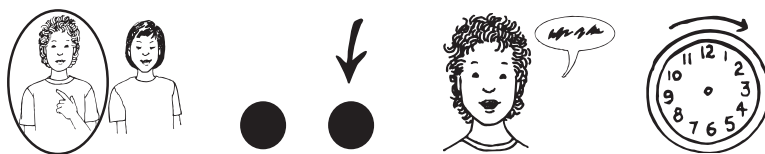
Sometimes I talk too much and other people don't get a turn.



I will try to wait until it is my turn to talk.



After I talk a little, someone else can talk.



I will have another turn to talk later.

*This skill needs to be modeled and practiced within a peer group.

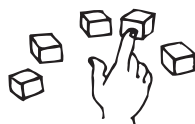
Ending a Conversation



Sometimes I am talking with people.



I don't want to talk anymore.



It is not a good choice to walk away.



I can say "I need to go now" or "See you later."

ending a
conversation

This is called "ending a conversation."



ending a
conversation

I will try to use words to end a conversation.

Talking to Children



Sometimes I see a child with an adult.



I want to know all about the child.



I don't need to ask the adult.



The child can answer questions.

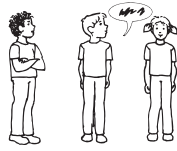


I will look at the child and say "What's your name?"

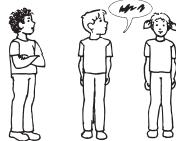


I can say "How old are you?"

Staying on Topic



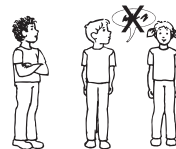
When people are talking together, I need to listen.



I can hear what they are talking about.



This is called the "topic."



If I say something different, people stop talking.



I will try to say something about the topic.



It is okay to listen and say nothing.

Asking a Friend to Play



Friends play together.



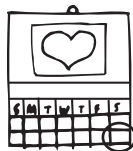
Sometimes I want to play with _____ .
(friend's name)



I need to look at _____ and say "Do you want to play _____?"
(friend's name) (name of game)



My friend may say "No."



It's okay. I can ask another day.



My friend may say "Yes." Then we can play!

Taking Turns in a Game



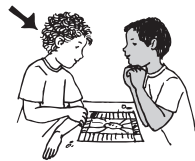
When people play games, they take turns.



Someone will go first.



It might be me. It might not be me.



If two people are playing, I will be next.



If more people are playing, I will wait until it is my turn.



People go in order clockwise.

Receiving a Compliment



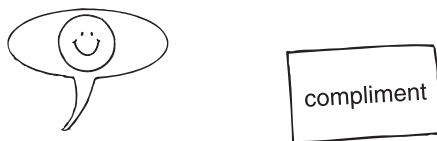
Sometimes people say nice things to me.



Someone might say "You look nice today."



Someone might say "You did a good job."



This is called a "compliment."



I will try to say "Thank you."



It is nice to hear compliments.

When to Hug



People who know each other sometimes hug.



They hug when they are happy or when they like each other.



I hug people in my family.



I will try not to hug people at school.



I will try not to hug strangers.



It is okay to hug people in my family when I am _____ .
(emotion)

How to Give a Hug



Hugs are when bodies touch.



People hug when they are happy or when they like each other.



To give a hug, stand face to face with bodies touching.



Put your arms around the other person's body.



The other person will put his or her arms around your body.



You both squeeze. Then you let go and step back.

Saying "I Love You"



"I love you" is a special thing to say.



It is okay to say "I love you" to people in my family.



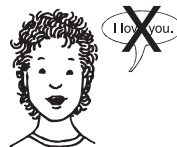
I will try not to say "I love you" to everyone.



I can say "I love you" when I say good night.



If someone tells me "I love you," I can say "I love you too."



I will try not to say "I love you" too many times.

Using the Phone: Saying "Hello" and "Goodbye"



When the phone rings, I pick it up.



I say "Hello."



The caller might talk to me. I can listen.



I can talk to the caller.



When we are finished talking, I say "Goodbye."



Then I can hang up the phone.

Using the Phone: Taking a Message



I can answer the phone.



Sometimes the call is for another person.



_____ might be busy.
(person)



I can say "I'm sorry. _____ can't come to the phone."
(person)

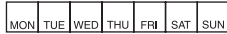
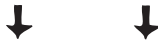


I can say "Can I take a message?"



I will write down what the person says.

Feeling Happy



All people feel happy sometimes.



People smile when they feel happy.



Sometimes I smile and feel happy too.



(person/item/event*)

makes me feel happy.



(person/item/event*)

makes me feel happy too.



It is a good feeling to be happy.

*Indicate what makes the child happy such as a family member (person), family pet (item), or going to school (event).

Feeling Sad



All people feel sad sometimes.



People may cry or frown when they feel sad.



_____ makes me feel sad.
(person/item/event*)



_____ makes me feel sad too.
(person/item/event*)



It is okay to feel sad sometimes.



I will feel happy again.

*Indicate what makes the child sad such as a sick grandparent (person), photographs of a deceased family pet (item), or a friend moving away (event).

Feeling Angry**



All people feel angry sometimes.



mad

Angry can also be called "mad."

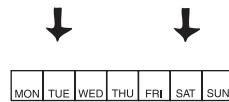


People may frown or talk loud. Their faces look red.



_____ makes me feel angry.

(person/event*)



It is okay to feel angry sometimes.



I will feel happy again.

*Indicate what makes the child angry such as another student (person) or losing a favorite book (event).

** Use the *Anger Choice Sheet* on page 49 when teaching this lesson.

Feeling Excited



All people feel excited sometimes.



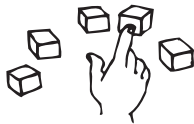
They may laugh, smile, or clap their hands.



_____ makes me feel excited.
(person/event*)



Sometimes when I feel excited I _____.
(inappropriate behavior)



This is not a good choice because it bothers people.



I will try to _____ when I feel excited.
(appropriate behavior)

*Indicate what makes the child excited such as a teacher (person) or going to the circus (event).

Feeling Disappointed



All people feel disappointed sometimes.



People feel disappointed when they don't get what they want.



They may cry or frown when they feel disappointed.



I feel disappointed when _____ .
(event*)



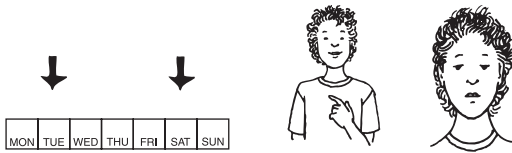
It is okay to feel disappointed sometimes.



I will feel happy again.

*Indicate an event that makes the child disappointed such as missing a favorite TV show or not being able to go somewhere.

Feeling Tired



Sometimes I feel tired.



When I feel tired, I want to sleep.



I can tell _____ how I feel.
(person)



I will try to say "I am tired."



I might put my head down or take a break.



Then I won't be tired and I can work.