Early Communication for Children with Developmental Delays

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• Engagement
• Participation
• Independence
ENGAGEMENT

• Engagement is ACTIVE

• Dr. Michael Schmoker completed a study including 1,500 classrooms. <50 % of the students were engaged in most classrooms, 85% of total classrooms.

• students have to see purpose in what they are being asked to do (Jablon & Wilkonson, 2001)

• *ACTIVE observation
PARTICIPATION

Social Cognitive development:

• Communication with others
• Answering and asking questions
• Providing input on activity
  *contingent responses

Augmentative/Alternative Communication (AAC) provides opportunities for participation
INDEPENDENCE

• Assessing knowledge of skill set requires child to perform a task as independent as possible

*Imitation/modeling
• HOH/manding
• backward chaining
• tactile/verbal prompting
ENGAGEMENT

• Mental processes required for child to be engaged:
  • Impulse control-sitting
  • Motivation-desire
  • Ability to control activity level
  • Interest
  • Knowledge-cause/effect
  • Competence-access

*if we have visual interest, we can begin to require communication
How to tell if child is engaged:

*peers playing in boat together
ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

*Child on Swing
ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

*Peers engaging in making applesauce
PARTICIPATION

• Communication with others
• Answering and asking questions
• Providing input on activity
  *contingent responses

Augmentative/Alternative Communication (AAC) provides opportunities for participation
Participation through Communication

• Refer to the “First Things First” presentation terms for establishing a baseline of child’s readiness skills
• Teach foundational cognitive skills
• Attend to what’s meaningful to the child as to where to begin
Teach Communication through play

- Look for opportunities to teach foundational cognitive skills

**Object permanence**
- Important precursor for labeling with communication
  - Hiding/finding toys, peek-a-boo

**Cause and effect**
- Contingent learning—when I do this, this happens
  - Communicative intent

**Means-end**
- Displacement of barriers, movement as the means, use of tools

*Leah eating*
Participation

• AAC is REQUIRED when child cannot communicate efficiently and effectively

Participate: Answering y/n?
*device use at home
Participate: Directing actions/verb usage

*ball and 2 switches (one noun, two verbs)
Participate: Making choices
Following sequences/routines

*Home choice board
How to Determine Appropriate AAC for each child/situation:

http://aackids.psu.edu/index.php/page/show/id/1

Janice Light and Kathy Drager (PENN state)

- Identify meaningful contexts
- Provide effective means for communication
- Select appropriate vocabulary
- Set up the environment
- Use interactive strategies to support communication
Context

Children are more likely to communicate if they are interested in an activity

*Jackie blocks

**Means to Communicate**

Effective and Efficient

*Brayson pictures

*should be easier to use than not use

**Vocabulary**

semantics, MLU, preferences/context

-sound effects, questions

-when are they not able to communicate?
Modify Environment

Positioning:
- mindful of hearing, vision, and motor abilities (CVI, unilateral loss, Spastic CP)
- position yourself for interaction

Interactive Strategies
Face the child and be near reinforcing item while minimizing distractors
(Light & Drager, 2012)
INDEPENDENCE

• Assessing knowledge of skill set requires child to perform a task as independent as possible

*Imitate
• HOH
• backward chaining
• tactile/verbal prompting
Getting to Independent Communication

• Allow several opportunities to practice communicating
• Model AAC use when communicating with child
• Allow time for child to respond (count to 10)
• Reinforce IMMEDIATELY (get shared attention if object isn't in proximity: water toy)

*Alex and shoebox tasks
What does this look like in a group?

• Determine what your baseline is for each child
• Program for appropriate AAC and environmental modifications to increase participation
• See to what extent they can perform a task independently (only if they are engaged...change task if not engaged)

*Group video