Walking in their Shoes

Your Walking Guides:
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INTRODUCTION

• GOAL #1: To increase your awareness of sensory and language issues in students with autism
• Goal #2: To help you understand and develop a toolbox of strategies to use with students
INTRODUCTION

• Goal #3: To help you understand the role your related service providers play on your teams.

• Goal #4: To have fun!!
Introduction

• Introducing Margora – the two headed related service provider – double your pleasure, double your fun!
OUR PERSPECTIVE

- Autism as a Communication and Interaction Disorder
- Sensory Differences in persons with autism
- Both issues must be addressed to maximize learning opportunities
Sensory processing differences

- Hyper-responsive (over-responsive) nervous system may look like:
  - Auditory: covers ears, makes loud vocalizations or self-talk
  - Touch: withdraws or becomes upset with touch, strong preference for certain textures, loose fitting clothes, sweatpants, elastic waistbands, bothered by tags, seasonal clothing changes are hard, haircuts and grooming are challenging
  - Oral: strong gag response for tooth brushing or food textures, limits self to certain foods
  - Visual: may avoid eye contact or use peripheral vision, preference for dim or natural lighting, sensitive to flicker of fluorescent lighting
  - Movement: May look “shut-down”, slouches, collapses on to furniture, motion sickness, avoids or is fearful of movement
  - Smell: Frequent comments on smells that you may not notice, avoids lunchroom, public restrooms, certain people who wear strong perfumes or colognes, fabric softeners, laundry soap
Sensory Processing Differences

- Hypo-responsive (under-responsive) nervous system may look like:
  - Auditory- loud talker, craves loud music, may not notice or adjust voice volume in different environments (class, library, playground)
  - Touch- Does not notice when clothing is twisted on body, high threshold for pain, does not notice when hands or face are dirty
  - Oral- preference for strong flavors of food, oral overflow, may chew on clothing, pencils, non-food items, may over-stuff while eating
  - Visual- stares intensely at people or objects
  - Movement- Needs lots of input to register where body is in space- spin, run, walk, crashes into people or objects, “on the go”, trouble sitting for meals, settling in for bed
  - Smell- Does not notice strong odors, may lick things in attempt to get more input/information
SCERTS™
Wetherby and Prizant

• The SCERTS™ Model
• 1. Social Communication
• 2. Emotional Regulation
• 3. Transactional Supports

The SCERTS™ Model A Comprehensive Educational Approach for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders
Barry M. Prizant, Amy M. Wetherby, Emily Rubin, Amy C. Laurent, and Patrick J. Rydell
2006 Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
In social communication – emphasis is on functional language and communication in all natural settings.

Student’s emotional regulation and its effect on communication, social interaction, and learning are always considered, and arousal states are monitored constantly.
Together, it is our core purpose to effectively instruct and individually support the achievement of our students’.....

- Social skills
- Communication skills
- Self-awareness
- Self-sufficiency
- Self-regulation
- Self-advocacy and choice-making
- Problem-solving
- Life skills
- Literacy skills—listening, speaking, reading, writing
- General knowledge
- Active participation, contribution and personal responsibility
- Personal safety and healthy lifestyle choices
- Adaptation to change
- Work skills and employability
- Transition to adult life through parent education and support

Disciplined People.....Disciplined Thought.....Disciplined Action
What we believe is what we do!
2008-09
• Approaches to problem behavior are fully integrated with social communication programming and are determined by understanding the range of challenges to a student’s emotional regulation
7 Practices, cont.

- Environments are arranged and activities are designed to foster motivation and encourage initiation of communication.
- Transactional supports are used to promote active and independent participation in activities.
7 Practices, cont.

- Learning and interacting with peers is an essential component of education and social learning.
- Development of positive relationships among professionals and family members is the foundation for collaboration.
Related Service

• Speech and Occupational Therapy support the development of social communication and emotional regulation
• Teachers and support staff provide the transactional supports to foster student success
Focus

- Speech Pathologist focuses on development of joint attention skills and symbol usage (language)
- Occupational Therapist focuses on sensory regulation and awareness
- Well modulated students are ready to learn
Activity

- Receptive Language is often complicated by auditory processing delays and differences
Nonverbal Groups

- Nonverbal groups are conducted to help students to concentrate on learning receptive language and develop awareness of sensory needs.
- No talking by staff so they can “tune in” to students and students have no extra interference.
Examples

- Divide into groups by numbers 1-5
- Complete assigned experiences
- Role plays
Pyramid for Student Success

- Meet students where they are (what is their developmental level and sensory need)
- Take their hand (develop a relationship and gain trust and understanding)
- Walk by their side (guide by example and positive model – avoid doing “for” them, instead show them how)
Wrap Up

• Reflections on sensory and learning experiences
• Student Support Checklist
• Pyramid for Student Success
• References
Pyramid of Student Success

students grow with support

Clear beginnings and endings; Turn taking; Visual schedules

Repetition; Augmentative support; Clear steps to tasks; Visuals to organize and support

Visual support for groups; Adjust work for success; Modify sensory, physical, and social environment for students

design activities for students; Promotes motivation and fun; Changes between movement and sedentary activities

Resources

• The SCERTS™ Model A Comprehensive Educational Approach for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders
  Barry M. Prizant, Amy M. Wetherby, Emily Rubin, Amy C. Laurent, and Patrick J. Rydell
  2006 Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
  Strategies to promote adaptive competence for students on the autism spectrum, Janet Preis, Support for Learning, Vol. 22, Number 1, 2007
Resources

• *Is This Disorder for Real;* Claudia Wallace, *Time Magazine*, December 2007
Resources

Resources, cont.

- Tara Tuchel, MS, CCC-SLP, Hudson Wisconsin schools - suggested sensory activities
- John Werr, Knower of the Unknown and Video Wizard
Nonverbal Groups

- Rationale based on Aided Language Stimulation research (Harris & Reichle (2004), Draeger, Castellano, Gagliano (2006), Beck, Dennis, Stoner (unpublished 2007))
Nonverbal groups

- Group concept is modeling communication behavior when you cannot talk
- Use pictures, AAC devices, Smart Board, gestures, facial expressions, pointing
Nonverbal groups

- Also teaches receptive language skills by expanding vocabulary during activities
- Capitalizes on learning to follow picture directions with fewer prompts
- Remember a visual prompt is a less intrusive method than verbal
Consistent Classroom Procedures Used at 916 South Campus

- Check in on each student’s readiness to participate/learn (5-point scale)
- Clearly state lesson goals to students
- Link new instruction to past learning by reviewing key vocabulary, concepts, skills or behaviors
- Introduce new vocabulary, concepts, skills or behaviors
- Practice new learning
- Provide clear feedback to each student on progress toward stated lesson goals
- Check out by reviewing the schedule to prepare students for what’s coming next
Schedules

- Groups have a set schedule to reinforce student’s comfort level and reduce anxiety
- Activities vary from week to week
- *Sample schedule
Sensory Component

- Sensory activities are incorporated during the check-in procedure
- A special time is set aside for sensory choices before task demands of the activities
- Quiet, classical music is used to facilitate relaxation
Activities

- Activities are simple and can be performed with picture directions and demonstrations
- 1. Cooking
- 2. Crafts
- 3. Games (Bingo or Lotto are good choices)
- 4. Art projects
Closure

• Sequence for closing should be the same (e.g. cleaning up, turning the music off, saying goodbye)

• The structure reduces the behaviors that sometimes occur during transition times
Results

• Increased staff awareness of student needs and skills – staff can take the time to “listen” to what student’s are trying to communicate

• Increased student awareness. Many students who have attention problems gain ability to watch for cues.
Results, cont.

- Students show increased joint attention skills, especially with highly motivating activities.
- Staff may begin to hear words students have been mumbling under their breath.
Results, cont.

- Staff gain an appreciation and empathy for students who cannot use their voice to communicate!
- Students learn new symbols and new ways to be heard!
Results, cont.

• Select students who have a mix of levels for modeling
• Make your goals public
• Follow the lead of the students – if you must shift gears, shift gears
• Focus on process not product!!
• Have fun!!!
Resources

- Sensory Integration and the Child 25th Anniversary Addition A. Jean Ayres, Ph.D 2005 Western Psychological Services
- Sensational Kids: Hope and Help for Children with Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)
  - Lucy Jane Miller, Ph.D, OTR with Doris A. Fuller
  - 2006 G.P. Putnam’s Sons
- My Sensory Book: Working together to Explore Sensory Issues and the Big Feelings They Can Cause: A Workbook for Parents, Professionals, and Children
  - Lauren H. Kerstein, LCSW
Sources of Inspiration

• Mollie Wise – fearless leader and gentle, wise guide
• Erin Phelps-Stark – clever maven of student motivation
• Merilee Read – source of ideas and creativity in teaching