Who Knew Play was so Complicated?
Development and Facilitation of PLAY
Play Hierarchy

- Sensorimotor-Exploratory {2-4 months}
  - grasping, mouthing, banging

- Relational-Nonfunctional {5-12 months}
  - stacking, nesting, pushing objects together

- Functional-Conventional {10-12 months}
  - Drinking from a cup, pushing a car, kissing a doll
Symbolic Play

- Decontextualization
- Decentration
- Symbolization

Casby 2003
Symbolic Play

Identifiable Components:

- Agent
- Instrument
- Scheme

Casby 2003
Symbolic Play

- Agent:
  - Self {12-18 months}
  - Passive-Other {18-24 months}
  - Active-Other {24-30 months}

Casby 2003
Symbolic Play

- Instrument
  - Realistic Object {10-12 months}
  - Substitute Object {18-24 months}
  - Imaginary Object {24-30 months}
Symbolic Play

- Scheme
  - Single {12-18 months}
  - Multiple {18-24 months}
  - Complex/Planned
  - {30 months}

Casby 2003
Symbolic Play

- Scheme
  - Single {12-18 months}
  - Multiple {18-24 months}
  - Complex/Planned
  - {30 months}

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Children with ASD & Play

- Lack of varied, spontaneous functional play
- Lack of varied, spontaneous symbolic play
- Repetitive play
- Inflexible/Rigid Play
- Delayed play behaviors
Targeting Play

- Start at the appropriate emerging level based on the developmental hierarchy
- Use motivating materials based on the individual child
- Pair developmentally appropriate language around the child’s actions
- Use a consistent routine in play
- Pair with visual supports as needed
- Model, Model, Model!
- Remember that play is difficult
Constructive Play

- Stacks a tower of rings, puts puzzle pieces together, puts train pieces together to make a train, strings beads
Constructive Play
Constructive Play
Functional/Conventional Play

- Makes shapes in play dough, pushes a car while making “beep beep” noises, puts miniature people on a bus, puts pieces in a puzzle

- Drinks from a cup/bottle, stirs with a spoon, puts a hat on, puts a phone to his/her ear
Symbolic Play

- 1-step autosymbolic
- Incorporate more actions/agents
Symbolic Play

- Pretend Good morning
- Pretend Grocery Store
Communicating w/ your Child

- Adjust complexity of language
- Avoid excess talking
- Get child’s attention
- Use relevant topics
- Repetition, Redundancy, Rephrasing
- Build ups & Break downs
- Echolalia
- Stress, Intonation, & Pause
- Be a good listener
- Respond consistently and simply
- Structure child’s world
Communicating w/ your child

- Language Facilitation
  - Talk at child’s level
  - Reduce rate
  - Pause
  - Rhythmic language
  - Expand
  - Recast
  - Build up & Break down
Play Goals

- Child will combine two steps in symbolic play routines 3x per session with minimum verbal/visual cueing.
- Child will direct a familiar peer in structured play activity 5x per session with minimum verbal/visual cueing in a less familiar context.
- Child will use familiar objects conventionally towards himself in symbolic play activities 2x per session with moderate verbal/visual cueing.
- Child will use familiar objects in constructive play with a familiar adult 4x per session with minimum verbal/visual cueing.
- Child will use miniature objects (e.g., small toy figures/vehicles) or substitute props in pretend play 3x per session with moderate verbal/visual cueing.
Routines

What is a routine???

- Predictable pattern
- Planned repetition
- Obvious unifying theme or purpose
- Structure for turn-taking
Why are routines so important???

- Predictability decreases:
  - cognitive load
  - social fear response
    - decreases risk of dysregulation/increases attention

- Core vocabulary decreases linguistic load
  - increases ability to detect linguistic regularities
  - acquire targeted vocabulary and attach to context/meaning
Implementing Routines

1. Introduce concept gradually. Start with simple routines based upon:
   a. Motivation and interest.
   b. Functionality.
   c. Naturalistic valid activities.
   d. Likelihood that activity already occurs or can be scheduled to occur as a regular activity.

2. Initially, model and prompt to establish routines:
   - use picture symbol schedule for the activity to facilitate understanding.
Implementing Routines

3. Provide structure and repetition until routine is mastered, add variation after mastery but keep “meaning” or purpose constant. {video: brown bear}

4. Establish a clear signal for initiation and termination of routine. Provide consistent simple language to mark dynamic aspects of routines (e.g., actions).
Varying Routines...

1. Interrupt or violate routine
2. Omit necessary materials
3. Introduce new materials
4. Initiate old routines in new contexts
5. Initiate routine and “play dumb”
Facilitative vs. Directive Teaching Approaches

- **Facilitative Style:**
  - Following the child’s attentional focus
  - Offering choices and alternatives within activities
  - Responding to & acknowledging children’s intent
  - Modeling a variety of communicative functions, including commenting on a child’s activities
  - Expanding and elaborating on the topic of a child's verbal/non-verbal communication

SCERTS, 2006
Facilitative vs. Directive Teaching Approaches

- Directive Style:
  - Frequent attempts to bring the child’s attention to events or activities chosen by the partner
  - A large proportion of questions designed to elicit specific answers or directions designed to have the child respond or perform in a particular manner
  - Frequent use of more intrusive prompting strategies to support the child to respond correctly
  - Evaluative comments indicating whether the child’s responses are appropriate or correct

SCERTS, 2006
Benefits of a Facilitative Style:

- Providing a child with a sense of social control and communicative power, which has been found to result in increased initiations and more elaborative communicative attempts (Mirenda & Donnellan, 1986; Peck, 1985).

- Following the child’s attentional focus and motivation, which reduces problems of noncompliance and may result in increased learning due to motivation and affective involvement.

-SCERTS, 2006
Benefits of a Facilitative Style:

- Providing elaborated information and feedback to the child’s level and attentional focus, which supports the child’s communicative and language development through modeling of vocabulary and more varied language forms and functions.
- Compared with a directive style, facilitative resulted in higher rates of student-initiated interactions, question asking, and conversational initiation in students with ASD (Miranda & Donnellan, 1986)
- Increase in communicative initiation and social-affective signaling of children with ASD with limited or no language abilities (Dawson & Adams, 1984; Peck, 1985; Tiegerman & Primavera, 1984)

-SCERTS, 2006
Strategies for Facilitating peer interaction:

- Use peer modeling: “show friend”
- Give a peer control of materials to give another child
- Introduce roles in an activity
- Reduce your language
- Comment on peer’s actions to direct attention
- Direct the child to gain information from a peer vs. an adult
- Use motivating activities
- Turn taking