

# What is Autism?

Katherine Lamb, Ph.D., CCC/SLP

# Financial and non-financial disclosure statement

- Relevant Financial Relationship(s):
- Relevant Nonfinancial Relationship(s):
  - I have no relevant non-financial relationship(s) to disclose.

# Autism spectrum disorders (ASD)

- Complex neurodevelopmental disorders
- Social impairments
- Communication difficulties
- Restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped

# Characteristics

- 1. Communication/Language
- 2. Social Interaction
- 3. Behaviors
- 4. Sensory and movement disorders
- 5. Resistance to change (predictability)
- 6. Intellectual functioning

# 1. Communication Skills

- Broad range of abilities,
- Two common impairments
  - A. Delayed language
  - B. Echolalia

## 2. Social Interaction

- Hallmark
- 1. Impaired use of nonverbal behavior
- 2. Lack of peer relationships
- 3. Failure to spontaneously share
- 4. Lack of reciprocity
- ToM?

# 3. Behaviors

- Repetitive
- Impeding
- Positive behavior supports
  - Self-injurious
  - Aggression

# 4. Sensory and movement disorders

- Common
- Over- or under-sensitive
- Abnormal posture and movements
  - eye movements
- Repeated gestures and mannerisms
- Can be detected very early



# 5. Predictability

- Change in routine
- Particular arrangements, foods
- Symmetry
- Preparing for change

## 6. Intellectual functioning

- All levels of intelligence
- ID- 75% below 70
- Verbal and reasoning skills are difficult
- Savant syndrome

Developmental, individual;-  
difference, relationship-based  
model DIR

# PIVOTAL RESPONSE TREATMENT (PRT)

# Key pivotal behaviors

- Motivation
- Responsivity to multiple cues
- Self-initiations
- Self-management

# Antecedent -based PRT strategies

- Get child's attention and create learning opportunity
- Incorporate multiple cues
- Intersperse maintenance tasks
- Sharing control

# Consequence-based PRT strategies

- Reinforce contingently and immediately
- Reinforce attempts
- Use natural direct reinforcers

# PECS

## Picture Exchange Communication System



# Protocol

- Phase 1 = exchange picture for item/activities, requires two adults
- Phase 2 = exchange more pictures for more items/activities, requires 2 adults
- Phase 3 discrimination
- Phase 4 = use sentences
- Phase 5 = answer questions
- Phase 6 = comment

# Specific Strategies

- IN box to OUT box
- File folder activities
- Shoe box activities

# IN box to OUT box

- Work to be done is placed in the IN box to the left.
- The workspace is defined by a blotter or poster board or even a tape boarder.
- Completed work is moved to the right to the OUT box.
- Once the IN box is empty, work session is over!

# File Folder Activities

- Created in a file folder that holds ALL necessary items for completion
- Should be laminated for repeated use

# Shoe Box Activities

- Similar to file folders but for those that require larger items
- ALL materials are located in the box
- A variation is the FIRST, THEN box which shows on the top...First you do \_\_\_\_\_, then you

# Types

- Visual Schedules
- Checklists
- Cue Cards
- Color-coded materials

# Social Stories

Gray, C. (1990)

# Social skills & relationships

- Central feature
- Predictor of diagnostics
- Distinguishing feature
- Vulnerable



# Integrate Social goals

- Support friendships & relationships
- Classroom routines
- Recess
- Lunch
- Playground
- Therapy Community activities
- Home

# Individualization

**No single intervention to strengthen social skills**

- Well for one, not another
- Combination of strategies
- Explore
- Selective
- Right fit
- Use advantage of strengths and interests
-

# Generalization

Generalization: used or applied outside of controlled teaching conditions

Generalization deficit has the skills but does not perform it across contexts

# Cannot or Will not

- May not be a lack of motivation or refusal
- Skill acquisition deficit
- Generalization
- Confounding factors in environment

# Setting up the environment

- Assessment
  - Pointing
  - Gaze
  - Imitation
  - Dynamics with family
- Room
- You

# Hypersensitive

- Overstimulated
  - What the child does
  - What can you do

# Hyposensitive

- Understimulated
  - What the child does
  - What can you do
- Senses

# Reinforcement Hierarchy

- Almost anything will work
  - Be observant
  - Be creative



# General Clinical

- Auditory
- Animated
- Be specific
- Eye contact
- Behaviors