Building the Capacity for Conversation in Young Children with ASD

Naturalistic Developmental-Behavioral Intervention Strategies to Prepare your Kids for Having Conversations with Family and Friends

Dr. Patrick J. Rydell, Director

Rocky Mountain Autism Center

Autism On Call, LLC

I have no financial or
non-financial disclosures

Questions that Parents and Professionals Often Ask:

1. Can our kids with ASD learn to have natural conversation?

2. How do we best prepare our kids to glue themselves together with others through conversation?

3. What is our game plan for getting them ready for conversation groups (to take full advantage)?

4. How do we work together?

My Response

1. Let's develop a game plan now (EI)

2. Let's not wait until the kids are adolescents to push the conversational button

3. Let's determine what we don't want, then what we do want…..

What We Don't Want

Mechanical?

Scripted?

Robotic?

Routinized?

Limited?

Controlled?

Data-Basing?

"I'm not sure how to put it….it just seems…

I don't know…..it doesn't flow….you know?

What We Do Want

Conversational Foundations

1. Topic (thematic) Initiations
2. Topic Maintenance
3. Flexibility and Variation
4. Turn-Taking
5. Reciprocal Exchanges
6. Social Exchanges
7. Engagement in Others' Topics
8. Contingent Comments
9. Contingent Responses
10. Topical Shifts

Our Focus Today

As we begin to prepare our kids to be successful in conversation, we ask:

- How do our kids learn?

- What does and does not make sense to our kids?

- Given this info, we critic ourselves and ask:

- Do our intervention programs reflect the core challenges and learning styles of children with ASD?

- Do our goals and priorities reflect these core challenges and learning style differences?

- Do our teaching strategies incorporate our understanding of these core challenges and learning style differences?

When developing our programs, we firmly believe:
"You have to be smart enough
to listen to the kids"

1. Our kids will tell you what does/doesn't make sense

2. With this info, we develop a learning style <u>profile</u> (pattern, description) that reflects how our kids learn

3. We must consider learning style differences and challenges, because

4. Each child learns differently

5. We need to match our programs and strategies to account for our kids' learning style differences and challenges if we are to prepare our kids for conversational success

6. To eliminate as many stumbling blocks as possible

Sound Familiar?

Here are 10 assessment questions that we can ask ourselves regarding learning style challenges and *Getting Our Kids Ready for Conversation*

1) Does your child pay more attention to objects than people?

2) Does your child have difficulty learning the social-communication and behavioral skills modeled by others?

3) Does your child receive social-learning cues from only one person at a time?

4) Does your child interact with objects and/or people in a rigid/repetitive/inflexible manner?

5) Does your child form his/her own agenda and insist that others follow it?

6) Does your child respond to other people in restricted ways during social interactions and only for certain purposes?

7) Does your child primarily use scripted or memorized verbal phrases for communication?

8) Does your child have difficulty focusing his/her attention to complete a task or activity?

9) Does your child respond to others only when they are at a close distance?

10) Does your child resist transitions in activities, events, locations, and/or routines?

How was the LSP Developed?

Dr. Rydell is the author and developer of the *Learning Style Profile for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder* (Rydell, 2012).

LSP incorporates -

1. Core Challenges of ASD (DSM-V)
2. Well-established EBP assessment and intervention guidelines from existing ASD models e.g., SCERTS Model (Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent & Rydell, 2006) and others (PRT, LEAP, Hanen,TEAACH)
3. Learning Style Profile Protocol (Rydell, 2012)
4. Common Sense
5. LSP serves as the foundation for RMAC's assessment and intervention programs

How Were the 10 LSP Components Selected?

Dr. Rydell –

1. Tried to make sense of the enormous amount of empirical research and make it a) digestible, and b) a focused game-plan for parents and professionals

2. Merged well-established evidence-based ASD intervention guidelines and strategies into key ASD learning style components that promote skill acquisition across developmental areas and domains (e.g., social, communication, emotional regulation, behavior)

3. Used social validity measures (subjective measures of importance of ASD program challenges/needs gathered from working professionals **on the front lines** in the schools)

4. Determined the 10 greatest challenges and needs from over 36 years of ASD research, program development, ASD task-forces, running an ASD center and consulting across the U.S and abroad

5. Determined that "We need to be effective, efficient and practical as we prepare our kids for conversation in the coming years and eliminate the stumbling blocks for success"

How do you define "Learning"?

What is learning? A child will have learned a skill when he/she is able to apply the skill across persons, places and circumstances; knowing how and when to use the skill that has been learned

- Does the child know "how" and "when" to use skills? Or, are adults telling them what to do?
- We always ask: "Who is doing the thinking?"
- Our LSP program priority is for the child to independently learn how and when to use skills without adult direction and prompting
- Cues vs. Prompts

Something to Consider

"We are not going to have our kids long enough in speech therapy to teach them all that they need to know, but we can teach them how to learn"

"Social priority pulls us along"

LSP's Perspective on Establishing Intervention Priorities

1. Early on….we are more focused on the child's relative strengths and weakness in learning style (e.g., moving from object to people oriented, shared control, flexibility, etc.)

2. Focused on establishing a social-communication game-plan and conversational foundations for our kids

3. Less focused on percentages of correctness of skills

4. We embed social-pragmatic intentions (goals/objectives) into our programs once a social-communication game-plan (foundation) is established

5. Joshua video

As Conversational Skills Increased in Young Adults with ASD:

1. Social Connections Increased
2. Health, Mental Health and Health Care Needs Decreased
3. Postsecondary Education/Employment Opportunities Increased
4. Independent Living Arrangements Increased
5. Social and Community Participation Increased
6. Safety and Risk and Vulnerability Decreased

Roux, Anne M., Shattuck, Paul T., Rast, Jessica E., Rava, Julianna A., and Anderson, Kristy, A. *National Autism Indicators Report: Transition into Young Adulthood.* Philadelphia, PA: Life Course Outcomes Research Program, A.J. Drexel Autism Institute, Drexel University, 2015.

Intervention Priorities

Rocky Mountain Autism Center uses the SCERTS Model (Prizant, Wetheby, Rubin, Laurent & Rydell, 2006) curriculum to assist with establishing intervention priorities for the following programs:

1) Getting Your Child Ready for School
2) Getting Your Child Ready for Social Groups
3) Getting Your Child Ready for Conversation
4) Getting Your Child Ready for "Using Good Behavior"

Intervention priorities for each LSP component should be modified and adapted into goals and objectives that meet the individual child's needs, development, assessment results and program focus (1-4 above).

Developmental Progression

1. What we are doing conversationally, is the same thing we are doing behaviorally earlier on…only at a higher developmental level.

2. Verbal mapping vs. verbal modeling vs. verbal prompting

3. Shhh!!!   Don't tell the child what to say, e.g. "Johnny, say _____"

4. We are not looking for verbal imitation! The focus is for the child to develop a **social game plan** based on the acquired social-communication knowledge, models and cues.

5. The social game plan is the glue that will stick him together with others (family and friends)

6. Later, we will place language on top of this social game plan.

We Talk About What We Know

Quiz: How are the following conversational foundations embedded into the LSP components ?

Topic Initiations	Topic Maintenance
Flexibility and Variations	Turn-Taking
Reciprocal Exchanges	Social Exchanges
Engagement (others') Topics	Contingent Comments
Contingent Responses	Topical Shifts

Tough Sledding Early On

Be Smart Enough to Listen to the Child

Confidence

Patience

Trust

Allen is a good example….

LSP #1 Object vs People Oriented

Does your child pay more attention to objects than people?

Primary Focus on Objects

Primary Focus on People

$\longleftrightarrow$

Manipulation of objects
Sensory seeking
I see, I want, I get….

Looks up and around
Notices and is aware of others
What are we doing?

Object vs. People Oriented

- By virtue of ASD diagnosis….kid's comfort zone is more so with objects and less with people, so when kids walk into the room….."What are <u>we</u> doing?"

- Instead of "I see I want, I get"…we move toward, "Stop, wait, look up and around…what are you doing and how can I be part of what you are doing?

- Plenty of cues in the environment to help kids understand how to participate and communicate, but if their heads are down, they are not paying attention nor learning in relation to people

- We need to establish a social priority and comfort zone so kids are not anxious and nervous about communicating in social contexts or with family and friends

- Social-Pragmatic communication starts with LSP #1

- Object Oriented = Behavior Regulation; People Oriented = Social Use of Language

- We do not wait for conversational groups to begin working on conversation

Object vs People Oriented

1. Clear the room...we have to be the most important thing, initially. If the room is cluttered, the child will most likely select what he/she wants to do; immediate redirect

2. We don't give objects to kids at first. Joint attention and a "we" learning style orientation are established with the child at the introduction of each interaction in which the partner introduces objects by demonstrating, modeling and rehearsing an activity in a manner in which both the partner(s) objects are equally important.

3. We don't let the child go first. The child begins to learn ways of interacting with the object based on a "people-oriented" learning style. In essence, the child is learning about objects in relation to the partner, not just the object as a primary focus.

4. Consider introducing objects by asking the child to "stop, wait, look up and around, what are we doing?...how can you become part of what we are doing?" e.g., simple sensory activities

5. The objects/tasks are introduced based on a social ("we") agenda as opposed to an object ("I") agenda. This becomes the expectation as opposed to the exception.

Examples of Intervention Priorities
(Adapted from The SCERTS Model
(Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent & Rydell, 2006)

LSP #1 Object vs. People Oriented

- **Responds to bids for interaction**
- **Engages in brief reciprocal interactions**
- **Shifts gaze between people and objects**
- **Responds to changes in partner's expressions and intentions**
- **Monitors attentional focus of a social partner**
- **Imitates familiar actions or sounds when elicited after a model**
- **Anticipates another person's actions in familiar routines**
- **Takes turns**
- **Follows situational cues in familiar routines**
- **Uses a variety of familiar objects conventionally toward self and another**

How Do I Glue Myself Together with You?

Now we move from:

Social Priority ➡ Social Game Pan

LSP #2: Learns Through Social Modeling, Demonstration and Rehearsal

Does your child have difficulty learning the social-communication and behavioral skills modeled by others?

Little or no response to:

$\longleftrightarrow$

Responsive to:

Partner's demonstrations
Partner's modeling
Partner's rehearsals of
   social/communication

Partner's demonstrations
Partner's modeling
Partner's rehearsals of
   social communication

Learns through Social Modeling, Demonstration and Rehearsal
There are 3 issues here:

1. If the child remains in his/her comfort zone, they may not be aware of all the social-communication info available and not able to take advantage of these cues and social-communication models and not act on nor respond contingently. So, if we tell them what to do…etc. then, "Who is doing the thinking?" e.g. Waiting room

2. Professionals can't teach the kids all that they need to know and say…can't be responsible, not enough hours in the day

3. Another issue is, if paras and aides are telling them what to do and say…may be developing prompt-dependent learners. LSP is designed to teach kids to independently take advantage of social-communication models and demonstrations in the social context

Learns through Social Modeling, Demonstration & Rehearsal

1. Partner(s), do you know what we are doing? Child watches partner(s), who is watching the coach….etc. We often start with fun JARs ….it looks like we are playing….but,……

2. Introduce routines/tasks/activities and, using a partner(s) (adult, peer, etc.) in which the (coach) is allowed to provide necessary social-interactional information, the child is provided a consistent and systematic opportunity to "look up and around" to gain the necessary social knowledge base to engage and participate in interactions with others. Building social-communication game-plan.

3. The child is then given a turn or opportunity to participate having learned from the previous social model(s) and not primarily from following a series of adult-directed visual/verbal prompts. **No talking!!!!**   Later, we provide language models, but typically not at first.

4. To be glued to us…this is what we are doing. The child eventually relies less on the partner's visual/ verbal overuse of directives and becomes more accountable for making independent decisions, i.e., knowing **how and when** to participate based on the acquired social knowledge and cues.   My favorite goal is……

5. Verbal prompting by adults…big problem. By following the lead of the partner as opposed to being visually/verbally prompted by the partner, the child is less likely to become prompt-dependent and is more likely to use more independent problem-solving skills in knowing how and when to participate.

Examples of Intervention Priorities
(Adapted from The SCERTS Model
(Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent & Rydell, 2006)

LSP #2 Learns through Social Modeling, Demonstration & Rehearsal

- **Takes turns by repeating own actions or sounds**
- **Spontaneously imitates familiar actions or sounds after a model**
- **Spontaneously imitates familiar actions or sounds at a later time**
- **Follows gestural cues by another**
- **Engages in extended reciprocal interactions**
- **Responds to behavioral, facial and intonation cues**
- **Follows instructions with visual/contextual cues**
- **Uses reenactment behaviors to represent previous activity**
- **Uses behaviors modeled by partners to guide social behavior**
- **Uses internalized rules modeled by partners to guide social behavior**

LSP #3: Attains Social Cues from Multiple Partners

Does your child receive social-learning cues from only one person at a time?

Attains social cues primarily from one partner in a setting

Attains social cues from multiple partners in a setting

$\longleftrightarrow$

Watches and learns from one partner at a time (e.g., adult directed)

Watches and learns from multiple partners at one time (e.g., contextual learning)

Attains Social Cues from Multiple Partners

- Many kids are situation-specific learners, e.g., pay attention to only one teacher aide or paraprofessional at a time (locked in?)

- Will often ignore all the other possible social models available in the classroom, in particular other children

- (remains a 1:1 learner?)

- So many social, communication, behavioral cues and models go unnoticed (connected at the hip?)

- We want kids to attain cues from multiple models, e.g., "lining up"….okay, I get it (without being told)

Attains Social Cues from Multiple Partners

1. Consider introducing JARs in small groups (e.g., 1-3 social partners) close to the outset of teaching new routines/tasks/activities. Simple routines/tasks/activities can be introduced at the outset with one or two other partners such that the child may immediately become aware and understand the "we" orientation (instead of 1:1) of the routine/task/activity, which is the primary objective.   e.g., requesting snack

2. A social orientation to intervention provides the child with an opportunity to engage, respond, reciprocate and learn from a variety of social partners and models, and lessens the focus on instructional strategies that focus primarily on the "correct" imitation of a behavior or expectation provided by adult instructor e.g., "Do this…". More interested in learning how and when…what "we" are doing, not just me

3. This strategy also lessens the probability for the child to become too dependent on any one primary instructor (e.g., teacher or paraprofessional) and strengthens the orientation style and joint attention toward multiple partners as an important part of the learning experience from the outset.

4. The start of Peer-Mediated Intervention (wing-man)

Examples of Intervention Priorities
(Adapted from The SCERTS Model
(Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent & Rydell, 2006)

LSP #3 Attains Cues from Multiple Partners

- **Engages in brief/extended reciprocal interactions with multiple partners**
- **Imitates familiar actions or sounds when elicited immediately after models from multiple partners**
- **Anticipates multiple partners' actions in familiar routines**
- **Takes turns with multiple partners**
- **Spontaneously imitates multiple partners' familiar actions or sounds immediately after a model**
- **Spontaneously imitates multiple partners' familiar actions or sounds at a later time**
- **Responds to multiple partners' facial, intonation and behavior cues**
- **Prefers to be engaged with multiple partners**
- **Uses behaviors modeled by multiple partners to guide social behavior**
- **Uses internalized rules modeled by multiple partners to guide behavior**

LSP #4: Level of Flexibility with Objects, Activities and People

**Does your child interact with objects and/or people
in a rigid/repetitive/inflexible manner?**

Rigid and Repetitive   **Flexible and Spontaneous**

⟷

Ritualistic   Able to:
Rote learning   Vary
Rule-based interactions   Modify
Need for sameness   Adapt to change

Level of Flexibility with Objects, Activities and People

- One of the biggest misperceptions in ASD pertains to predictability, consistency and expectancy

- One of our rules is…never do the same activity the same way two times in a row

- Otherwise, there is a good chance that we establish a rule or rote learning and the kids may become upset if it is broken…rule breaker

- We are actually creating the problem

Level of Flexibility with Objects, Activities and People

1. Consider providing tasks or activities that allow for a child to learn in flexible and varied manner. For instance, subsequent to the first time that an activity, task or schedule is provided to the child, consider using a controlled variation strategy that keeps the essential theme or expectation intact, but varies one or more small components,,e.g, train set

2. Vary the theme, such as the a) scheduled time, b) location, c) outcome, d) objects used, e) features of objects used, f) sequence, g) partners, h) turns, etc.

3. Reduces rigidity. His or her learning style eventually allows the child to go to "plan B" while becoming more flexible in his or her approach to learning and participation.

Flexibility and Generative Language

- Children with ASD (in many cases) have excellent verbal memory which leads to scripted language…"say ___ "

- Kids' language reflects learning style

- Flexible thinking leads to flexible language

- Flexible JARS lead toward generative language

Examples of Intervention Priorities
(Adapted from The SCERTS Model
(Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent & Rydell, 2006)

LSP #4 Level of Flexibility with Objects, Activities and People

- **Participates in new and changing situations**
- **Follows situational and gestural cues in unfamiliar activities**
- **Uses behavioral strategies to regulate arousal level in new and changing situations**
- **Uses language strategies to regulate arousal level in new and changing situations**
- **Uses behavioral strategies to regulate arousal level during transitions**
- **Responds to information or strategies offered by partners**
- **Uses behaviors modeled by partners to guide behavior**
- **Collaborates and negotiates with peers in problem-solving**
- **Accepts ideas from partners during negotiation to reach compromise**
- **Uses metacognitive strategies to regulate arousal level in new and changing situations**

LSP #5: Shared Control

Does your child form his/her own agenda and insist that others follow it?

Needs to be in control of the agenda

Shares control of the agenda

←→

A child will engage and participate in a social activity with a partner only when the child's agenda and expectation is being met

A child will engage and participate in a social activity when the agenda is equally established and shared by the child and partner(s)

Shared Control

- Children are mostly calm and organized when they are in their comfort zone

- Child left in charge of their familiar objects, routines, agenda, etc will often develop an agenda and expect others to follow it

- We are "good to go" if everyone is helping with the child's agenda

- But, what happens when a partner asks them to follow their lead?

- We become interference

- Shared control in JARS (coach) lead to shared topics and roles

Shared Control

1. **Don't let kids start the routine at first.** Consider systematically introducing learning opportunities that focus on "when-then" strategies vs. if-then in which a child is required to follow a partner's agenda prior to proceeding to his or her own agenda. As an example, "when we are finished with trains, we can have snack".

2. Frequent uses of a partner's simple, doable request facilitates the child to briefly follow a partner-initiated agenda prior to engaging in his or her turn or agenda. Use of multiple partners is recommended. Still working on "we"; this is not turn-taking…my agenda, then your agenda (still we)

3. The partner's agenda (when) can become systematically more comprehensive in time, as the child understands that his or her agenda (then) will be facilitated once the child follows another's agenda and shares the control. For instance, the adult agenda is being demonstrated and met first, e.g., "I am the coach, when I finish, you can be the coach" Use visual strategies to facilitate the organization of the JAR.

Examples of Intervention Priorities
(Adapted from The SCERTS Model
(Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent & Rydell, 2006)

LSP #5 Shared Control

- **Responds to bids for interactions**
- **Makes choices when offered by partners**
- **Engages in extended reciprocal interaction**
- **Uses behavioral strategies to regulate arousal level in shared agendas**
- **Uses language strategies to regulate arousal level in shared agendas**
- **Requests assistance to resolve problems in shared agendas**
- **Persists during tasks with reasonable demands**
- **Interacts in a common activity with other partners**
- **Takes on role and cooperates with other partners in a common activity**
- **Participates in a rule-based group activity**

LSP #6: Interaction Style

Does your child respond to other people in restricted ways during social interactions and only for certain purposes?

Initiating	Maintaining	Responding
⟷		⟷
Requesting	Social Commenting	Answering questions
Directing	Exclaiming	Responding
Greeting	Labeling	Contingent commenting
Showing	Turn-taking	Following directions
Giving	Reciprocal interactions	Receiving

Interaction Style

- Many families want their children to make friends and have conversations as a priority for intervention

- We need to create and equal balance of initiating, maintaining and responding behaviors…..concentrate on *maintaining*

- What we do behaviorally at young ages is the same that we do conversationally but at a higher developmental level; what glues us together behaviorally at younger ages is the same as conversation later on; initiating, maintaining responding (behaviorally vs conversationally…same thing !)

- We don't start working a friendships and conversation in middle school, start early

Interaction Style

1. As the child progresses through the developmental stages, the partners' communication intentions may first be demonstrated using non-verbal, behavioral expressions that represent purposeful means of interacting. These same communication intentions may eventually be demonstrated and represented by the child through the use of more developmentally advanced verbal/symbolic communication expressions.   The child progresses toward "talking about what he/she knows"

2. Use JARs to differentiate and facilitate an equal balance of partner roles and responsibilities. The partner(s) models and demonstrates how and when to take the lead, maintain the interaction and respond to others according to the shared agenda established by the "coach".   The "coach" role is rotated. Embed LSP #1-5 strategies.

3. At first, the intervention focus is on providing contextual cues of how and when to use a balance of communication intentions (see previous slide) that require very little verbal direction by any partner.   The "glue" and "road map" is provided by the JAR and not through the partner's verbal prompting.

4. The child's behavioral interaction style serves as the foundation for the more advanced verbal interaction style.

Examples of Intervention Priorities
(Adapted from The SCERTS Model
(Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent & Rydell, 2006)

LSP #6 Interaction Style

- **Demonstrates a balance of initiated and respondent turns**
- **Demonstrates behaviors to initiate and terminate activities**
- **Demonstrates language to initiate and terminate activities**
- **Demonstrates behaviors that represent a range of communicative functions**
- **Demonstrates language that represent a range of communicative functions**
- **Demonstrates behaviors to promote extended interactions**
- **Demonstrates language to promote extended interactions**
- **Initiates and maintains interactions that relate to mutual interests**
- **Initiates and maintains conversations that relate to mutual interests**
- **Contingently responds to partner's actions and communication acts**

LSP #7: Symbolic/Verbal Communication

Does your child primarily use scripted or memorized verbal phrases for communication?

Rigid and scripted

Flexible and Spontaneous

$\longleftrightarrow$

Ritualistic
Inflexible
Rotely learned
Prompted by partner

Generative
Flexible
Talk about what you know
Cued by social partner/context

Symbolic/Verbal Communication

- We strive to teach kids to speak in a generative, flexible way (gestalt vs. analytic processing).

- Scripted, memorized and rotely-learned phrases…Who is doing the thinking here?

- These scripts are not the child's language, but rather prompted, memorized chunks of language…. Stop telling kids what to say!

- Shhh !!!!!

- Kids talk about what they know

- Independent two-three word generative utterances are more advanced than a 5-7 word memorized phrase prompted by an adult

Symbolic/Verbal Communication

Okay!   It's Time for Verbal Mapping!
"Talk About What You Know"

1. Recreate JARs
2. Incorporate strategies from LSP #1-6
3. Coach verbally maps vocabulary that represent 5 semantic categories that are systematically embedded into JARs
4. Coach verbally maps the word combinations (syntax) that represent the systematic variation, options and choices of semantic categories that are embedded into the JARs
5. Verbal mapping represents the gradual increase of vocabulary and syntax complexity
6. Coach verbally maps the social-pragmatic uses of language (see LSP #6)

Embedding Semantic Categories and Syntax

1. True language symbolizes and represents what we know
2. Verbal vocabulary is an eventual outcome of this knowledge
3. Vocabulary can be categorized into semantic categories:
   a) Agents (e.g., people)
   b) Actions (e.g., verbs)
   c) Objects (e.g., things)
   d) Locations (e.g., where)
   e) Attributes (e.g., colors, shapes, sizes, number, etc.)
4. JARs should embed a balance of these 5 semantic categories
5. Generative use of verbal language is the outcome of early mixing and matching of these semantic categories
6. Options and choices should be embedded within the activities, e.g.,

Mom kick	Dad kick	Johnny kick
Kick ball	Throw ball	Catch ball
Kick ball net	Kick ball down	Kick ball (to) Mom
Kick big ball	Kick red ball	Kick two ball(s)

Examples of Intervention Priorities
(Adapted from The SCERTS Model
(Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent & Rydell, 2006)

LSP #7 Symbolic/Verbal Communication

- **Demonstrates behaviors though imitation, observation and collaboration with partners**
- **Understands and uses symbols/words as references to things**
- **Understands and uses symbols/words as references to agent, action, object, location and attributes**
- **Understands and uses nonverbal cues and meanings in reciprocal interactions.**
- **Understands and uses generative word combinations**
- **Understands and uses a variety of generative sentence constructions**
- **Understands and uses generative sentence constructions for behavior regulation, social use and joint attention**
- **Understands and uses generative sentence constructions to initiate, maintain and respond to verbal interactions**
- **Understands and follows rules initiating, maintaining and responding to conversations**
- **Understands and follows rules for shifting topics of conversations**

LSP #8: Executive Function

Does your child have difficulty focusing his/her attention to complete a task or activity?

Difficulty establishing and maintaining focus in order to complete a plan of action

Able to make and execute a logical plan of action in logical, sequenced steps to its completion

$\longleftrightarrow$

Impulsive actions or comments
Rapid loss or change of focus
Unrelated comments
Tangential behavior

Actions are based on plan of action
Plan of action is maintained
Actions/comments are relevant
Actions are logical and sequenced

Executive Function

1. Social breakdowns often occur when a mutually agreed upon game plan is not established

2. Misunderstandings, confusion and anxiety exist in lieu of a social game plan

3. Children need the confidence to enter into a social interaction

4. Children also need confidence to execute and maintain a social interaction

5. Children often need assistance to execute a social game plan; At least for some children, we can use visual organization to assist with social-learning expectations and direction (game plan) while reserving much of our verbal models, demonstrations and rehearsals for vocabulary, syntax and social-pragmatic development.

Executive Function, cont.

6. This assistance comes in the form of visual organization that is mutually agreed upon with the partner(s)

7. In some cases, assistance should not come in the form of adult direct instruction; this can become overwhelming

8. Five questions of structure assists children and partners with visual organization for establishing and executing a successful social interaction
   (Adapted from the TEACCH Model)
   1. Where am I supposed to go?
   2. What am I supposed to do?
   3. How much am I supposed to do?
   4. How do I know when I am finished?
   5. What comes next?

Zach's Thoughts
(12 years old; 6th grade)

"Joshua seems confused and doesn't know...

1) where he is supposed to be,

2) what to do, and

3) if he wants to continue"

"It doesn't make sense to him and he seems stressed"

Examples of Intervention Priorities
(Adapted from The SCERTS Model
(Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent & Rydell, 2006)

LSP #8 Executive Function

- **Uses support to define steps within a task**
- **Uses support to define steps and time for completion of activities**
- **Uses visual support to enhance smooth transitions between activities**
- **Uses support to organize segments of time across the day**
- **Uses support to enhance attention in group activities**
- **Uses visual support to foster active involvement in group activities**
- **Uses visual support to engage in a predictable sequence to complete an activity**
- **Uses logical sequences of actions in play within a familiar activity**
- **Uses logical sequences of actions in play within an unfamiliar activity**
- **Uses visual support to enhance the *5 questions of structure* (LSP©)**

LSP #9: Distance Learning

**Does your child respond to others only
when they are at a close distance?**

**Are we the most important thing
in the child's environment only
at close range?**

**Are we still the most important
thing in the child's environment
even at a distance?**

$$\longleftrightarrow$$

Acts on and responds to a
partner or situational cues
only at close distances

Acts on and responds to a
partner or situational cues at
gradually increasing distances

Distance Learning

- We work on distance learning because teachers are going to be standing 10-15-20 feet away

- Plenty of competition and distractions at greater distances

- Social partners still need to be the most important thing, even at a distance

- Increased distances often lead toward decreasing social priority to pay attention

Distance Learning

1. Provide learning opportunities for children to establish and maintain joint attention related to adult partner directives, demonstrations and models from progressively increased distances.

2. Provide learning opportunities for children to establish and maintain joint attention related to social, communication, situational cues, etc. from progressively increased distances.

3. Classrooms provide a great deal of competition and distractions, especially when the child and source of information is at greater distances

4. Social priorities often decrease, especially when the child and social partner (e.g., teacher) are at greater distances

5. Systematically provide verbal/visual information and/or cues at graduating distances e.g., 5-10-25-50 ft. away.

Examples of Intervention Priorities
(Adapted from The SCERTS Model
(Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent & Rydell, 2006)

LSP #9 Distance Learning

- **Engages when alerted by partners at a distance**
- **Responds to partners' bids for interaction at a distance**
- **Responds to partners' use of behavioral strategies at a distance**
- **Responds to partners' use of language strategies at a distance**
- **Responds to partners' use of guidance and feedback at a distance**
- **Responds to partners' use of nonverbal cues at a distance**
- **Responds to partners' use of visual support at a distance**
- **Responds to rule-based group activities at a distance**
- **Responds to partners' use of information or strategies at a distance**
- **Responds to partners' attempt to promote initiation and maintenance of activities at a distance**

LSP #10: Transitions

Does your child resist transitions in activities, events, locations, and/or routines?

Difficult   **Fluid**

$\longleftrightarrow$

Child blocks/ignores partner's   Shifts to a new activity, event or location
attempts to change activity,   in a cooperative, fluid manner
event, or location

Difficulty shifting attention from   Anticipates and shifts attention to both
current to upcoming activity, event or location   preferred and less preferred activities

Transitions

- Transitions are a dilemma; probably the most asked about challenge in schools, for instance:

- Are we surprising the kids?

- Too much information too quickly?

- Are the transitions visually organized?

- Are we violating the Premack Principle?
    - Going from less preferred to more preferred or vice versa?

- Does the child have flexibility and control issues?

Transitions

1. Children most likely have an easier time transitioning from less-to-more preferred activities, but less so in other circumstances.

2. Try not to surprise the child with transition information (too much, too quickly)

3. Use the "Texas Two-Step" procedure

4. Provide a pre-determined visual game plan for transitions (e.g., soccer practice – soccer game)

5. Provide a social component (wing man) for transitions (look up, look around…what are "we doing"?)

6. Build in "shared control" and "cognitive flexibility" with new activities rather than breaking down old routines.

Examples of Intervention Priorities
(Adapted from The SCERTS Model
(Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent & Rydell, 2006)

LSP #10 Transitions

- **Responds to clear beginning and ending to an activity**
- **Responds to support to define steps within a task**
- **Responds to supports that define steps and time for completion of activities**
- **Responds to visual supports to enhance smooth transitions between activities**
- **Responds to supports to organize segments of time across the day**
- **Uses behavioral strategies to regulate arousal during transitions**
- **Uses language strategies to regulate arousal during transitions**
- **Uses metacognitive strategies to regulate arousal during transitions**
- **Responds to predictable sequence to an activity**
- **Responds to the contextual cues that indicate cessation of activities**

Appendix A

Joint Action Routine Components

1. An obvious unifying theme or purpose to support shared attention
2. A requirement for joint focus and interaction to support reciprocity
3. A limited number of clearly delineated roles
4. Exchangeable or reversible roles
5. A logical, nonarbitrary sequence
6. A structure for turn-taking in predictable sequence
7. Planned repetition
8. A plan for controlled variation to enhance flexibility

Thank you!

Dr. Patrick J. Rydell, Director

Rocky Mountain Autism Center, Inc

Autism On Call, LLC

Autism On Call Vimeo Educational Series

Lone Tree, Colorado 80124

303-985-1133

rydell@rockymountainautismcenter.com

www.rockymountainautismcenter.com

www.autismoncall.com

@AutismOnCall

Dr. Rydell is a MedBridge Approved Instructor