


Social skills training for paediatricians


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Learning objectives

- ▶ To discuss the critical importance of social competence as a developmental task of middle childhood and adolescence
 - ▶ To understand the determinants of social competence
 - ▶ To address simple role playing strategies in the paediatric office for helping children make friends, handle teasing, and control anger
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What builds self esteem

- ▶ Secure early emotional attachment
 - ▶ Unconditional love and affection
 - ▶ Reliable, dependable, consistent parenting
 - ▶ Clear rules, limits and consequences
 - ▶ Opportunities to shine
 - ▶ Opportunities to feel useful
 - ▶ Opportunities to make choices
 - ▶ Opportunities to accept responsibility
 - ▶ Encouragement to take risks
 - ▶ Encouragement to feel OK about failure
 - ▶ **Feeling valued by one's peer group.**
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FOURTH ROW
THIRD ROW
SECOND ROW
FRONT ROW

Max Kirwan, Ben Jackson, Tyrone Lang, Daniel Krmptic.
Peter Lamont (Auskick Co-Ordinator), Dennis Hemphill (Boundary Umpire), Lauren Brazzale, Drew El Moussalli, Aaron Lombardo, Nick Vlastuin, James Hawking, Michael El Moussalli (Trainer), Max Kirwan (Sponsor).
Gordan Hawking (Goal Umpire), Matthew Sandalis, Nathan Chrimes, Daniel Patrick, Sam Mallard, Adrian Sargent, Jack Jarman, Nathan Stewart, Chris Vlastuin (Boundary Umpire).
Dave Jackson (Runner), Ben Smith, Mark Gaylard, Oliver Hemphill, Trevor Chrimes (Team Manager), Rick Jarman (Coach), Ian Sargent (Coach),

- ▶ Social acceptance, the quest for friendship and popularity, face saving, and looking good almost always takes precedence over academic stardom
 - ▶ Social mastery affects and is affected by self esteem, self confidence, and self image
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Social Ability – Classification

▶ CONTROVERSIAL

- Highly liked by some, highly disliked by others


▶ POPULAR

- Acceptable, sought after, respected


▶ NEGLECTED

- Inconspicuous, withdrawn


▶ REJECTED

- Actively excluded, alienated, ostracized
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Popular children

- ▶ Outgoing
 - ▶ Cooperative in play and social conversation
 - ▶ Good eye contact and listening skills
 - ▶ Show interest in other people
 - ▶ Good at affective matching
 - ▶ Initiate interactions but positively responsive to initiations of others
 - ▶ Resolve conflict without aggression
 - ▶ Ability to recover, learn from social errors
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Rejected children

- ▶ Bossy
 - ▶ Aggressive, insulting, exclusionary
 - ▶ Poor listening skills
 - ▶ Interrupts and intrudes
 - ▶ Poor eye contact
 - ▶ Disruptive in play
 - ▶ Do not or cannot read feedback
 - ▶ Can't compromise
- 


“You can’t pull up your
socks if you don’t know
what socks are”

From “The Coodabeen Champions”
The Football Wisdom of Guru Bob 1998

Social skills training

- ▶ How to make friends
 - ▶ How to handle teasing
 - ▶ How to control anger
- 


How to make friends

- ▶ Look at people when they talk to you
 - ▶ Listen when people talk, don't interrupt
 - ▶ Take an interest in others
 - ▶ Ask questions
 - ▶ Initiate social interactions
 - ▶ Acknowledge the positive initiations of others
 - ▶ Compliment others
 - ▶ Go along with what others want to do sometimes.
Tag along. Join in.
 - ▶ Call kids on the phone
 - ▶ Invite kids over
 - ▶ Send postcards /emails on holidays
- 


How to make friends

- ▶ Facebook
 - ▶ Kick
 - ▶ Instagram
 - ▶ Snapchat
 - ▶ Twitter
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- ▶ Risks and benefits
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How to handle teasing


- ▶ Stay calm
 - ▶ Pretend you're not upset
 - ▶ Say something to deflect the taunt
 - “Brush off” statements
 - “Self deprecatory” comebacks
 - ▶ Walk away
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How to control anger

- ▶ Learn to recognise the temporal associations of anger
 - ▶ Learn to recognise the somatic warning signs of anger
 - ▶ Signalling
 - ▶ Self talk
 - ▶ Relax hands
 - ▶ Slow deep breaths
 - ▶ Walk away and stay away until calm
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“Motivation and performance in school and in sports, the quality of peer relationships, the abuse of drugs and alcohol, teenage pregnancy, the willingness to persevere with various tasks, and the capacity to be resilient and bounce back from adversity and failure, are all influenced by how children think about themselves and how they view their competencies”

Robert H. Brooks
Harvard Medical School



What is the Secret Agent Society Program?

- Multi-media social skills program for 8 to 14 year-olds with Asperger's Disorder/High-Functioning Autism, Autism Spectrum Disorder DSM -5
- Espionage-themed activities to teach emotion recognition, emotion management and social skills
- Involves child group sessions, parent group sessions, teacher support, and a computer game!
- Previous research into effects of social skill training programs for ASD and Asperger's indicates that skills do not generalize to non- training domains



Research Trial

- This initial randomised controlled trial of 49 children (age 8-12) with ASD matched for IQ, severity of ASD, Social Competence
- Measures
 - Spence Social Skills Questionnaire Parent Version & Teacher forms (Spence 1995a)
 - Childhood Asperger Syndrome Test (CAST) Scott et al 2002,
 - Emotion regulation and Social Skills Questionnaire ERSSQ designed for this study
 - WISC – 1V short form,
 - Assessment of perception of emotion from facial Expression (Spence 1995b)
 - Assessment of perception of emotion from Posture Cues (Spence 1995c)
 - James and the Maths test (Attwood 2004a)
 - Dylan is Being Teased (Attwood 2004b)
- Beaumont, R., & Sofronoff, K. A multi-component social skills intervention for children with Asperger Syndrome: The Junior Detective Training Program. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 2008, 49, 743-753.



How Effective is the Program?

- Results from the study
 - ✓ Children's social skills significantly improved
 - ✓ From parent rating 76% children improved from having severe social difficulties to showing social skills within normal range and maintained at 5 months post.
 - ✓ Improvements made at home and at school
 - ✓ Program equally effective regardless of age, IQ or co-occurring disorders (e.g. ADHD)
 - ✓ Weekly home missions ➡ Better treatment outcome
- Beaumont, R., & Sofronoff, K. A multi-component social skills intervention for children with Asperger Syndrome: The Junior Detective Training Program. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 2008; 49, 743-753.





- Children



- Adolescent



- Adult

“All the world’s a stage,
and all the men and
women merely players”

William Shakespeare

Latrobe University study

An evaluation of the “Drama for Everyday Life” program for children and adolescents with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder.



Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre Latrobe

view report on www.voiceandmovement.com.au