

# Social Skills Training based on ART

For Preschool Children with  
Autism/Asperger

# Autisme/Asperger Syndrom

## Difficulties/limitations:

Joint attention

Observational skills

Understanding social contingencies – social rules

Understanding non verbal language/body language

Theory of mind

Understanding metaphor

Look at someones eyes

# Observational responses

Children with autism usually don't direct their attention to social stimuli despite parents' effort to show social attention from day

When parents reinforce the child, the child can seem to be deaf when it doesn't direct their attention to the parents, and it's not aware of the social attention.

Feedback from the environment such as verbal praise, smile and a nod is very important in learning new skills.

# Developmental significance of weak observational response

Will probably not be receptive to social stimuli (f.ex. Dinsmoor, 1982; Lovaas, 1966; Maltzman & Raskin, 1965).

Can lead to lack of joint attention, that would cause consequences in relation to further development in learning language and social skills. (Dunham & Moor, 1995).

Lack of joint attention will probably cause a challenge for the child to learn and understand social interaction and also correlate naming responses with objects – if they don't manage to follow other people's glance and gestures, or direct others' attention.

# Prerequisites for learning social skills in a group.

Practice in training joint attention to relevant aspects to others behavior-discrete trial training (DTT) would have an reinforced effect upon the observational response.(Wyckoff, 1952).

Language

Discriminate between different feelings

Not younger than 5 years

Understanding different pictures and symbols as visual help

Understanding role play as a concept

# Structural treatment

Treatment programs within social skills for children with autism have often been a deficient and a challenging area for both educationalists and parents.

The skill streaming program in ART for early childhood, have been very useful to give a systematic treatment of social skills for children with autism.

# Individual adjustments

Visual help

Further simplifications of the  
different social skills steps

# The use of symbols in the structure and rules for children who cant read



Section of Autism, Janne Mari A  
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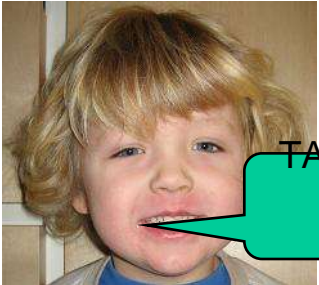
# Early childhood programs

# Individual adjustment

	What's nice to do?
	When?
	Say "Thank you"

	Look at the eyes
	Smile
	Say "Thank you"

# Individual adjustments with pictures of the child

	Look at the eyes
	Smile
	Say "Thank you"

Some children can react to their own pictures. We can then use pictures of other children or just symbols

We can refer to the picture and say "I can see that you manage .....in the picture"

# skill training

<p><i>velcroue</i></p>	<p>When I hit/push/tease others</p>
	<p>Children can be sad</p>
	<p>I shall try to walk over to the child</p>
	<p>When I get over to the child, I will stop and look at the child.</p>
	<p>I will try to say "I'm sorry"</p>
	<p>The child will be happy</p>

This kind of visual  
help can also include  
**WHEN** and **WHY**

Social stories has  
been effective for  
some children whit  
Autism/Asperger  
syndrome

# Example of social story with aspects of aggression replacement

	I am a happy boy
	Some times I get angry
	When I am angry I can tell 1, 2, 3
	That's good
	I become happy

# Pre training to manage participation in an organized group

Learning the meaning of different pictures/symbols

Teach them to answer different questions about the skills

Teach the children how to role play

# Pre Training to learn the meaning of pictures/symbols



What shall you do?  
Show me what you see.

## Procedure:

- 1) Teacher holds the symbol in front of the child and asks "What shall you do?". The child answers "smile"
- 2) Teacher holds the symbol in front of the child and asks "Show me what you see". The child smiles at the teacher.

*This training will precede with all of the symbols.*

# Pre Training to learn the meaning of pictures/symbols

What shall you do?  
Show me what you see.



Procedure:

- 1) Teacher holds the picture in front of the child and asks "What shall you do?". The child answer "counts 1,2,3"
- 2) Teacher holds the picture in front of the child and asks "Show me what you see". The child counts 1,2,3.

*This training will precede with all of the pictures*

# Training: WHEN the skill can be used

**S<sup>D</sup>:** "When can you say thank you?"

**R:**

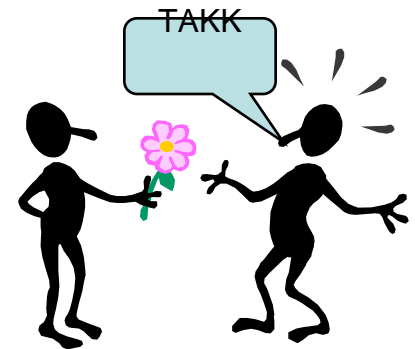
When I am done eating

When someone have been helping me

When I have got a gift...etc.

Procedure:

Teacher asks the child if he/she can tell when they can say thank you. Teacher shows pictures/symbols the first times. After a while the child should be able to answer without the visual help.



# Training: WHY the skill should be used

”Why shall we say thank you?”

We can say thank you...

To make other people happy

To be polite

To show that we are happy for something

Procedure:

The teacher asks the child questions. Can use other children as models, or use pictures to illustrate answers.

# Observation cards



We use every symbol/picture that illustrates the steps in social skills

The children will be informed what they shall observe in the role play. If it is a smile, gaze or if they say “thank you”.



We will give the child a picture/symbol as a help to remember what to observe.

...or the teacher keeps the picture/symbol if the child get distracted by it, and only shows the picture/symbol as a help.



*This pictures/symbols will be faded away.*

# The use of role play cards



We reduce the poster of the social skills steps to 50 %.

The teacher holds the cards, and uses them as a reminder for the child in the role play

The child can hold the card themselves as long as they don't get distracted by holding it.

# Training: How to role play

## Individual treatment

What do you see in the picture?

Show me what you see in the picture.

The teacher shows an action + asks the child "What do I do?"

## Pretending skills – with other children

To teach the child observing responses to important aspects of other peoples behavior – to guess what they are pretending, and to pretend action themselves.

# Preferences

We often have to use potential reinforcers – the reinforcer is presented contingent on a specific response.

A systematic preference assessment is necessary to find potential reinforcers.

Parents and teachers informs us about things the child likes – what they like to eat, play with... then we do the assessment.

Test	Category	Stimulus	Ranking
1	Eatable	Stimulus 1: _____ Stimulus 2: _____ Stimulus 3: _____ Stimulus 4: _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
2	Toys/objects	Stimulus 5: _____ Stimulus 6: _____ Stimulus 7: _____ Stimulus 8: _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
3	Eatable	Stimulus 9: _____ Stimulus 10: _____ Stimulus 11: _____ Stimulus 12: _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
4	Toys/objects	Stimulus 13: _____ Stimulus 14: _____ Stimulus 15: _____ Stimulus 16: _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
5	Mix  <i>The two highest ranking items form each test</i>	Stimulus ...: _____ Stimulus ...: _____ Stimulus ...: _____ Stimulus ...: _____ Stimulus ...: _____ Stimulus ...: _____ Stimulus ...: _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

# Explaining: Systematic preference assessment:

## ”Multiple stimulus assessment”

First try object/taste edible item

All stimuli lay in a line

After the child has made a choice, the item is removed.

Continue until the child doesn't make any more choices.

Ranking the choices

Before assessment: Teachers are ranking how they think the child will choose.

4 tests; 2 tests with potential edible reinforcers and 2 tests with potential reinforcing toys/objects. Just 4 stimuli at the same time at the table.

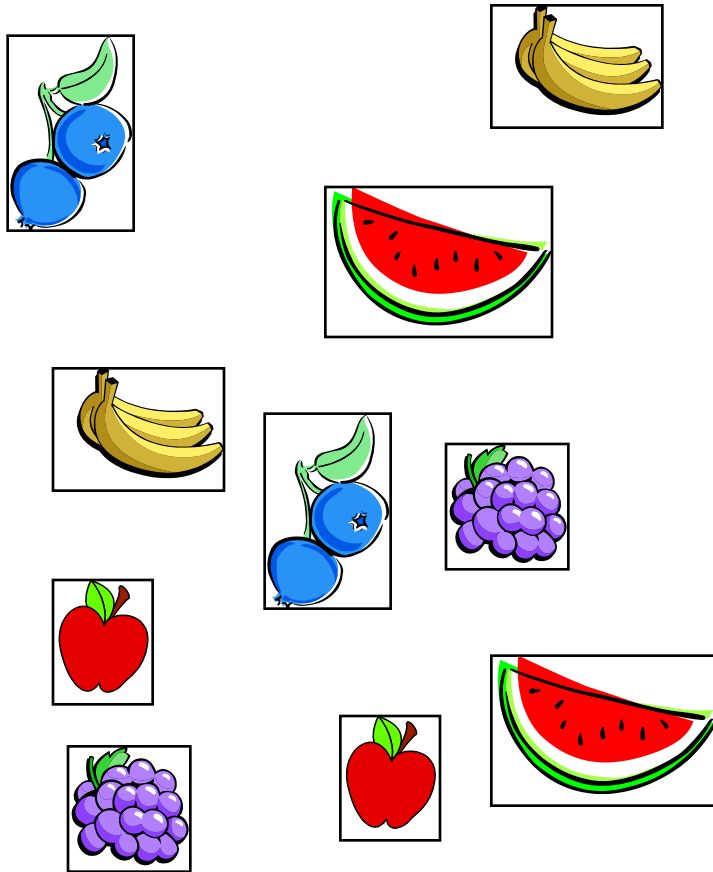
# Token economy



The rules - Token economy for the whole group

When every token are earned, the children can choose from different games or different items.

# Example: A game called “fruit salad”



Minimum 2 pictures of each fruit.










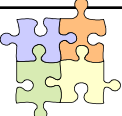



The children are given one picture each.

The teacher names one of the fruits, example “apple”. The children with a picture of an apple switch places.

The teacher can also hold up an picture of the fruit he/she is naming as a help.

When the teacher says “fruit salad” all the children switch places.

# Token economy for each participants

NAME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	REWARD
PER									
KARI									
BRIT									
									

# Group

# Group of children

Small group with 2-3 kids

Only one child with Autism/Asperger Syndrom in each group

Focus on fast and intense sessions – max 15 -20 minutes

Visual aid (is a must)

Reinforcers

Train the same skill 2-3 times

# Modeling

The main element in ART- the training is modeling

Constellation of the group and the group process is very important.

Only one child with Autism/Asperger Syndrom in each group, because children with autism tend not to learn so much useful from each other.

# Order in role play

Main trainer and assistant trainer

Two "normal" functional child

One "normal" functional child + child with Autism/Asperger syndrom

# Start and stop of roleplay

Its practical to use some visual or non-verbal cues to illustrate the start and stop of role play.

Count to three – clap your hands

Use a cap

Use a sticker or a badge on your shirt

# Variation in roleplay

The role plays must be different from each other.

Same skill should be repeated several times in the same roleplay – you should focus on variations during the same skill, if the skill is used in different settings.
















# Generalisations

Co-operation with parents is crucial- they have to know at all times what kind of a skill is trained, and also what kind of skills that we focuses on in regard to generalise to natural environment

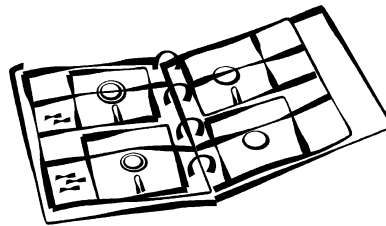
We can use token economy system when we practice generalisation training to increase amount of responses in natural settings.

# Example: token economy for generalization of skills

- Target area: *Classroom/school yard*

SKILLS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	REWARD
Ask to join a game that has started									CHOICE
Say hi									
Ask for help									

# The child's own book



The different posters of the skills are reduced and laminated before they are put into the book.

The children administrates the book by their selves

It can be an advantage to make a social story in the first page about how they are going to use the book.