

# TRI-STATE WEBINAR SERIES

## Autism in Early Childhood: Preparing for Purposeful Play

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## Tri-State Autism Spectrum Disorder Webinar Series



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## Presenter Information



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## Presentation Summary

This webinar is the second in a series of four for early childhood educators. Today we will focus on preparing ourselves for purposeful play. We will begin to explore the important role adults can take in helping children with developmental delays learn to interact, communicate and play. You will be introduced to strategies that facilitate interaction during those times when playing, communicating and socializing is the goal.

## Learner Objectives

Participants will:

- Identify levels of play for a student with autism
- Recognize characteristics in adult/child interaction that affect the development of children's play.
- Identify tips for facilitating purposeful play.



## Adults and Play



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## Types of Cognitive Play

- Exploratory play
- Cause and Effect
- Toy play
- Constructive Play
- Physical Play
- Pretend Play

Beyer and Gammeltoft 1999



## Poll 1

What would be an example of constructive play?

- A. spinning the wheels of a toy car
- B. stacking a tower of cans
- C. running up and down the playground
- D. flipping the eye lids of a baby doll open and closed

## Autism and Play



## Social Play (People Play)

- Solitary play
- Parallel play
- Associative play
- Cooperative play

Sheridan 1999



## The Difficulty with Social Play

There are three distinct behaviors that characterize children with autism:

- Difficulties with verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Difficulties with social interaction.
- Repetitive behaviors or narrow, obsessive interests.

-Griffin and Sandler 2010

**We join in play** because some children will not learn the life changing nuances of social interaction and infinite possibilities of play unless we join them.



The ability to share an understanding of the social world with others requires:

- Awareness of others
- Understanding of how to effectively engage others in play
- Understanding the feelings of others and how they are likely to respond

Engaging in social play provides modeling and practice for learning to share the social world.

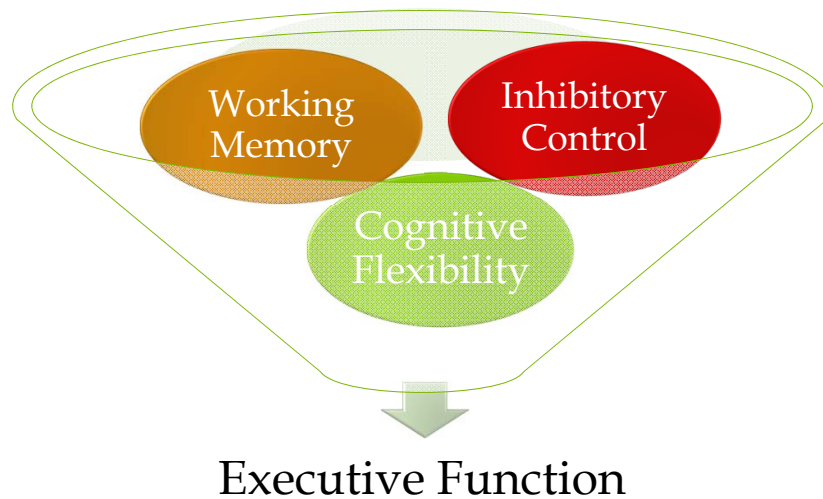
Adapted from Seach 2007

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Children build their (executive function) skills through engagement in meaningful social interactions and enjoyable activities that draw on self-regulatory skills at increasingly demanding levels.



Enhancing and Practicing Executive Function Skills with Children from Infancy to Adolescence, Center on Developing Child- Harvard Univ.





## Poll 2

For many children including those with autism, it is not enough to simply provide the opportunity, materials, peer models and environment for play. We also need to join in play to teach foundational skills for interaction.

True

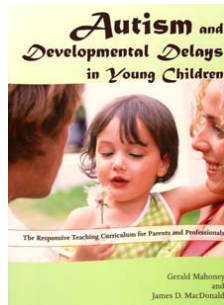
False

## Confidence



The impact parents have on children's development is related more to how they respond to their children than to what they do when they play.

Gerald Mahoney & James D. MacDonald



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Target social play if the child:

- Does not have frequent episodes of one-to-one play with parents and other caregivers
- Does not stay engaged long in play and other interactive episodes with parents and caregivers
- Engages in play routine with parents and others that are more task oriented than playful and fun.

Gerald Mahoney & James D. MacDonald

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## Insert Adult Here



- Purposeful – adult interaction should have a goal in mind without being task oriented.
- Flexible – the flow of the play should be flexible enough to follows the child’s direction of interest.
- Time for practice- be aware of times already built into the day when play can be practiced in a naturalistic setting.

## Preparing to Join In Social Play



When will I be joining in? (Examples: sand table, play-doh, recess)						
How does he/she usually play within this environment? (circle one)	Exploratory play	Cause and Effect Play	Toy Play (as the toy is intended)	Constructive Play	Physical Play	Pretend Play
How does he/she usually play with people during this time? (circle one)	Solitary Play (plays alone)	Parallel Play (plays alongside others with similar toys)	Associative Play (shares toys)	Cooperative Play (this play requires communication and cooperation)		

## Poll 3

- Based on the video, what is the student's cognitive play level and social play level?



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## Play Like a Child

Things to remember about myself:	Have Fun!	Play in the same activity	Play as the child does	Play as much or more than I talk	Be more interesting than the child's distractions
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- Have fun
- Play in the same activity
- Play as the child does
- Play as much or more than I talk
- Be more interesting than the child's distractions

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## Poll 4

Which of these characteristics of playing like a child did you see in Allie's play with this student?

- Have fun
- Play in the same activity
- Play as the child does
- Play as much or more than you talk
- Be more interesting than the child's distractions



## Poll 4

Which of these characteristics of playing like a child did you see in Allie's play with this student?

- Have fun
- Play in the same activity
- Play as the child does
- Play as much or more than you talk
- Be more interesting than the child's distractions




## Strategies That Promote Social Play


Strategies that Promote Social Play	Get into the child's world (get on their physical and communication level)	Use mirroring and parallel play to join (Follow the child's interest. Play alongside with similar toys)	Take one turn and wait (count to 10 in your head)	Imitate the child's actions and communications (Imitate any actions, sounds or words. Once they imitate you, change the action, sound or add a word)		
What I hope to see when we play:						

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## Get Into the Child's World

- Get on the same physical level as the child
- Communicate on the same level as the child
- Consider the world from the child's point of view



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## Use Mirroring and Parallel Play to Join an Activity

- Play side by side with similar toys
- Act the way he acts- Follow his lead



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## Take One Turn and Wait

- Take your turn with a word or action
- Wait....Wait....Wait.....Wait....Wait.....
- Use your eyes, face and body to show you are anticipating their turn



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## Imitate the Child's Actions and Communications

- Imitate any actions, sounds and words
- Imitate the child so that they learn to imitate you
- Imitation establishes an interactive relationship
- Imitation teaches the child that he can have some control



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## Poll 5

- What strategies do you see Sharon using in this video?



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**“Play is the work of the child”  
- Maria Montessori**

**“Play is the work of an early  
childhood provider who knows the  
joy that comes from remembering  
how to be a child”**

**-me when it wasn't too cold at recess that day**

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## Up Next!

- Part 3 • Teaching Object Based Play  
Presented by Teri McGill, M.S. Ed.
- Part 4 • Incorporating Play into the  
Natural Environment Presented by Lindy  
McDaniel, M.S. Ed.

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## Questions?



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# THANK YOU!

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