

# Book I: Assessment & Intervention



## Advancing Social-Communication and Play

An Intervention Program for Preschoolers with Autism

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**BOOK I:**  
**ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION**  
Introduction  
Assessments  
Picture Dictionary  
Intervention  
Tips & Troubleshooting  
Research

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# 1

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# INTRODUCTION

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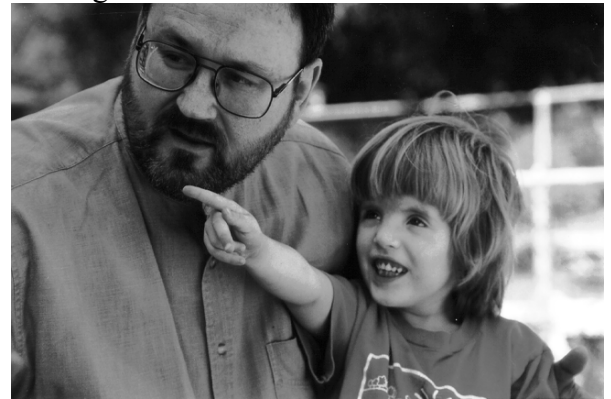
## What is ASAP?

ASAP stands for “**Advancing Social-Communication And Play: An Intervention Program for Preschoolers with Autism.**” This is an intervention program to help teachers, therapists, and others foster the development of important communication and play skills in young children with autism. Specifically, the end goal of the social-communication portion of this program is for preschoolers with autism to develop joint attention skills, and the end goal of the play portion of this program is for preschoolers with autism to develop symbolic play skills. ASAP is intended to supplement other more comprehensive intervention programs for young children with autism (that is, programs addressing a broad range of goals in the areas of language, cognition, social interaction, self-help skills, behavior regulation and so forth). Recent research supports the importance of specific efforts to improve joint attention and symbolic play skills in preschoolers with autism if we are to help these children achieve their full potential as they get older. (We have provided references for some of the key studies and a summary of their findings in Book I – Section 9: Research.) *Our goal in ASAP is to provide objectives, materials and strategies that can be blended successfully with a variety of different curricula used in public school preschool programs that serve children with autism.*

## What is Joint Attention?

*When one person purposefully coordinates his or her focus of attention with that of another person, we refer to the behavior as “joint attention.”* Joint attention involves two people paying attention to the same thing. But it is more than just paying attention, because in joint attention two people pay attention to the same thing intentionally and for social reasons. Thus, if an adult gives a child an attractive toy, and the child looks at or plays with the toy, we can say the child is paying attention to the toy. But we cannot be sure whether the child is simply paying attention to the interesting properties of the toy, or whether he is aware that the adult is sharing his attention to the toy. However, if the child looks at the toy and up to the adult who gave it to him and then back to the toy, then we can say the child is engaging in joint attention. That is, by looking from the toy to the adult and back to the toy, the child has shown that he is aware of the toy and is aware that

the adult is also looking at the toy. Both the child and adult are purposefully sharing the same focus of attention.



*There are two general types of joint attention behaviors. The first type involves behaviors for initiating bids for joint attention.* We initiate bids for joint attention by drawing the attention of others to something we want them to notice. Here are some examples of common ways young children initiate bids for joint attention:

- *Pointing:* a young boy sees an airplane in the sky, and points up to it so that his father will look up at the plane as well.
- *Showing:* a toddler finds an insect in the grass, picks it up, and shows it to her mother.
- *Giving:* a child picks up a colorful fall leaf and gives it to his brother (often young children will want the interesting object back immediately!).
- *Alternating gaze:* a young girl sees an unfamiliar cat in the yard, inhales sharply while looking at her mother, and then looks back at the cat.
- *Combining strategies:* a child points to pictures in a book he is sharing with his father, and says, “da?” each time he points, thus combining a gesture with a vocalization; or he sees a bubble floating down, says, “bubu” and looks at his sister and back at the bubble, combining alternating gaze with a word.

In each of these examples, the child is initiating a bid for joint attention. Even if the child is not yet talking, his or her nonverbal behaviors communicate ideas such as, “Look at that!” or “Do you see that?” or “Wow,



isn't that interesting?" The child is not just paying attention to an object or event, but also wants to be sure someone else is paying attention to the same object or event and therefore sharing in the experience.

*The second type of joint attention behavior is responding to bids for joint attention.* In this situation, the other interaction partner has initiated a bid for joint attention, as described above, and the responder shows that s/he is shifting his or her attention to the object or event that the partner is pointing to, showing, etc.

Below are some examples of how young children may respond to bids for joint attention:

- *Following a point:* a father points to an elephant at the zoo, and the child shifts the direction of his gaze in order to look in the direction that her father is pointing.
- *Responding to showing:* a mother shows her toddler a fluffy stuffed toy, and the child looks at his mother, smiles, and looks back at the toy.
- *Responding to a gaze shift:* an older sister is playing in the sandbox with her young brother. She notices a squirrel that is near the sandbox, looks at her brother and then at the squirrel. The younger brother looks at his sister and then looks in the same direction his sister is looking.

Thus, when a child responds to a bid for joint attention, s/he looks *in order to see* what someone else is paying attention to, so they can share that interest.

By the time typically developing children are 12 months old they are initiating and responding to joint attention bids. These behaviors do not just happen in infancy, however. All people engage in joint attention as they communicate with other people throughout their lives. Joint attention behaviors are especially important for young children's language learning. Young children who are better able to follow the attention of other people by responding to joint attention bids have more chances to connect words to objects. For example, if a parent says, "Look at that bird" while pointing toward the birdfeeder, and the child looks in the direction the parent is looking or pointing, then the child has an opportunity to associate the word "bird" with the animal on the birdfeeder. But if the child continues to look at the toy truck he is holding in his hand, then he misses a chance to learn that the word "bird" stands for a feathered creature that eats seeds.

Initiating joint attention bids also provides children with more opportunities for social interaction and language learning. When young children initiate joint attention, they are very likely to get a positive response in return. So a child who initiates more joint attention will lead other people to engage in social interactions with him or her around objects that are of interest to the child. Joint attention bids from the child also usually lead the communication partner to talk in ways that promote the child's language learning. If a child extends an object toward an adult and looks at the adult, then it is very likely the adult will talk to the child, saying things such as, "What did you find? Oh, that's a bug!" So the more a child initiates, the more s/he is likely to hear people talk about the things that have grabbed the child's interest at a particular point in time. This is an ideal situation for children to learn language.

### **What is Symbolic Play?**



*Symbolic play is play that involves pretending.* When children pretend that one object, such as a banana, is another object, such as a telephone, they clearly show that they have reached a level of symbolic play. Symbolic play is also seen when children pretend they are using an object that is not really present, such as pretending to put food on a plate. Yet another type of symbolic play is seen when children engage in role play, such as pretending to be a parent or a teacher or a firefighter.

Play with objects develops in a predictable sequence in most children, as outlined below:

- When infants first begin to handle objects, they explore all objects in similar ways, such as by mouthing, poking, and banging them, no matter what type of object it is.

- Next, infants begin to do different actions with different types of objects, such as squeezing soft objects, banging hard ones, and rolling round ones.
- As they continue experimenting and learning about objects, children begin to use two or more objects in combination with each other, such as by taking objects apart or putting objects into containers.
- Children then use objects in the expected ways, but with the beginnings of “pretending.” For example, a child may pick up an empty cup and pretend to drink from it, use a spoon to stir in an empty bowl, or push a toy truck while making motor sounds.
- A later step is to use objects with other people or dolls. At this point, the child might “feed” a doll or stuffed animal, or insert a driver into a toy truck.
- Still later, the child will use one object to stand for another one, such as by putting a bowl on his head and pretending that he is wearing a hat.
- As the child’s ability to pretend grows, s/he takes on the roles of other people who are familiar to him or her, such as pretending to play house or work in the yard.
- Still later, the child will take on fantasy roles, such as pretending to be a superhero, and will participate in assigning roles to other children who are participating in the play.

Learning to engage in symbolic play with objects and with other people is an important part of a child’s social and language development. Play skills are learned in a social context, when children observe other people and do what other people do, or pretend to do what other people do. Children who engage in a wide variety of pretend play activities give other people who interact with them more things to talk about that are meaningful to the child. Thus, engaging in more pretend play can lead to children hearing more language about things that interest them. This in turn leads to the children developing better language skills. Symbolic play and language both involve learning to use symbols. In the case of play, the symbols are objects or actions that “stand for” something else. In the case of language, the symbols are words that “stand for” something else. Typically, symbolic play and language abilities develop together, and children who are better at symbolic play tend to be better at language and vice versa. Also, preschoolers who engage in more pretend play are more successful in interacting with their peers. Thus, symbolic play skills provide children with more opportunities to play with other children, learn from those interactions, and develop friendships.

### **Why is the ASAP Intervention Important for Preschoolers with Autism?**

Children with autism are diagnosed because of the problems they have with social and communication interactions, as well as a tendency to engage in repetitive, nonfunctional behaviors and to have a limited range of interests. Almost all preschool children with autism have difficulty with joint attention and symbolic play.

When researchers have looked at what preschool skills are most predictive of how a person with autism will function when s/he is older, language skills always are among the most important abilities. Children who have acquired the ability to use spoken language in order to communicate with other people by the end of preschool generally have brighter futures than children who are still nonverbal. Further, research tells us that if we teach joint attention and symbolic play skills to children with autism, they will develop better language and communication abilities. Alternatively, if we do not specifically teach joint attention and symbolic play skills to preschoolers with autism, they will be unlikely to learn the skills, and their language development will not progress as well. *Thus, joint attention and symbolic play are key skills that should be addressed for ALL preschool children with autism.*

Of course, preschool children with autism generally have many needs, and a comprehensive intervention program that helps them develop in many areas is essential. The ASAP intervention is intended for use in preschool programs that are providing comprehensive educational services for children with autism.

One concern that many teachers and related service providers in public schools expressed as they assisted in the development of this manual is that having goals to improve play skills is often not a supported practice

in their school/school system, even at the preschool level. Play skills sometimes are not viewed as being important to academics. In addition to the rationale presented in this manual for directly targeting play skills with preschoolers with autism, school personnel who wish to argue for the inclusion of play goals in an Individualized Education Plan for a preschool child may find additional support in the early learning standards or guidelines for preschoolers in their state. For example, the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework includes a section on “Representation and Symbolic Thinking” with specific outcomes such as “Takes on pretend roles and situations,” and “Makes believe with objects,” which are the ultimate goals of the symbolic play component of the ASAP program. Most of the individual states have early learning standards for preschoolers stating similar outcomes (see *ASAP and the Standard Course of Study* at the end of this section for more detailed discussion).

## **Who Are the Key Players in Implementing the ASAP Program?**

The success of the ASAP program depends on a team effort. This manual is directed at preschool teachers, teaching assistants, and therapists who serve preschoolers with autism. We recommend that all these team members become familiar with the manual so that they understand the purpose and background for the program, the specific skills they will be helping the children learn, and strategies for teaching those skills. In the next sections, we discuss in more detail the roles of these team members in the ASAP program.

The children’s parents and the school administrator(s) are key players in the ASAP intervention as well. We have provided handouts for the parent and for the administrator on pages 11 to 13 to introduce them to the ASAP program. We encourage the intervention team to share these handouts with parents and administrators when the team starts to use the ASAP program. Also, the manual provides additional materials to send home to parents to describe each of the different skills that are addressed in the intervention program, and to provide some suggestions to parents on ways they can encourage these skills at home (see Book III – Section 1: Parent Handbook).

## **Additional Information for the Teacher**

As a teacher in a classroom that serves one or more young children with autism, you play several essential roles in the ASAP program. These include the roles of *curriculum specialist*, *advocate*, *team coordinator*, *assessor*, and *teacher*. In each role, the teacher has the responsibility of integrating knowledge of working with children with autism with knowledge of other school practices. As well, federal guidelines under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) indicate that children with disabilities should be exposed to the standard course of study and should have opportunities for interaction with typically developing students. Most federally mandated outcome measures require data collection to document how children are responding socially. Since social-communication and play are quite integral to early development and social interactions, the ASAP guidelines can be helpful in meeting both the requirements of the federal and state mandates and the needs of the child.

As mentioned earlier, in developing the ASAP intervention, one comment that we heard numerous times from public school teachers and therapists was that play is not emphasized as a goal for preschoolers, particularly for four-year-olds who soon will transition into kindergarten settings. Instead, play tends to be used as a means to achieve other more academically oriented goals. This perspective may be especially disadvantageous to young children with autism, many of whom need some direct instruction in order to develop the ability and interest in participating in pretend play. Pretend play can open the doors to peer interaction for children with autism, providing them with opportunities to then learn from their peers. Thus, the inclusion of play is a vital part of any IEP development for children with autism.

As a *curriculum specialist*, the preschool teacher is thoroughly familiar with the standard preschool curriculum endorsed by the public schools in his or her state. In most cases, the standard preschool curriculum will include pretend play skills. We will use some examples from the North Carolina Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers. These standards are divided into 5 domains: Approaches to

Learning, Emotional and Social Development, Health and Physical Development, Language and Communication, and Cognitive Development. Pretend play is specifically addressed under each domain except for Health and Physical Development. Even the domain of Health and Physical Development includes the use of objects to develop eye-hand coordination and fine-motor skills; certainly this could include the *imaginative* use of objects that would facilitate the child's physical development as well.

Because public school preschool classrooms are often located in elementary schools, the school-based assessment teams, administrators, and related service personnel serving preschoolers with special needs may be much more familiar with the curriculum standards for elementary age children than those for preschool age children. Many also have intervention procedures that are designed for older children, and thus there is a need to design developmentally appropriate strategies for preschoolers. For that reason, the preschool teacher often assumes the role of an *advocate*, educating others in the school regarding preschool curriculum standards and the importance of including specific goals related to social-communication and play on the Individualized Education Plans for preschoolers with autism, in order to help them access the standard preschool curriculum.

The preschool classroom teacher serves as a *team coordinator*, and is a natural choice for this role because the teacher is the person who is most likely to have regular contact with all the other educational personnel serving his or her students as well as with the children's parents. The teacher can provide leadership for the team, assuring that roles and responsibilities are clear with regard to meeting student needs. This leadership includes tapping the expertise and capabilities of all team members, and using the therapists as consultants to enhance the quality of each child's educational experience. The teacher also is in the best position to lead the team in assessing what additional resources would promote the ability of the team to address the needs of preschoolers with autism included in the classroom. With respect to ASAP, the teacher can confirm that all members of the educational team are "on the same page" regarding the current educational objectives for the child, and that each child with autism has daily instruction on objectives related to social-communication and play. Regular, repeated opportunities to learn ASAP skills are essential to the success of the ASAP program. In addition, the teacher can assure that the appropriate ASAP parent pages are sent home to the child's family. This will keep the family up-to-date on the child's objectives and provide ideas on things they can do at home to support the child's progress.

As an *assessor*, the preschool teacher can collaborate with the therapists or related service personnel who work with the child to identify the child's current skills related to social-communication and play. Sometimes a child may demonstrate the ability to engage in a higher level skill when s/he is working on focused practice with an adult, yet rarely use the skill at that level in a generalized setting without a lot of prompting or individual support. The teacher can provide this type of authentic assessment of the skills the child uses (or fails to use) readily in the classroom setting. The ASAP manual provides assessment checklists and some suggested strategies for teachers to observe and record what skills a child uses in the classroom setting. These checklists are easy to use and can provide a thumbnail sketch of the child in relation to ASAP goals.

Finally, in the most primary role of *teacher*, the preschool teacher has a responsibility for including daily work on ASAP objectives in the instructional program in the classroom for children with autism. The daily instruction may involve some focused instruction of the child by classroom staff, depending on the service model used in the classroom. But the essential aspect of ASAP classroom instruction is to provide the child with opportunities and prompting as needed to use targeted ASAP skills during the usual activities of the classroom day, including small and larger generalized activities, snacks or meal times, outside on the playground, and so forth. The Activities section of the ASAP manual (Book II – Section 1: Activities) provides examples of ways teachers can include work on ASAP during a variety of activities that occur across different types of preschool classrooms serving young children with autism.

## **Additional Information for the Teaching Assistant**

The teaching assistant plays critical roles in creating a high quality classroom environment, one in which a child with autism can thrive. The teaching assistant(s) in a classroom provides all children, including any children with autism, more opportunities for focused practice and small group interactions. Because of the central roles of the teaching assistant, s/he should become familiar with all aspects of the ASAP program, in the same way as the teachers and therapists.

Meeting the needs of children with autism is challenging, whether the child is in a small classroom that serves only children with autism, in a classroom serving children with a variety of special needs, or in a larger classroom that primarily serves children who do not have special needs. A variety of different types of programs can be effective in promoting development in preschool children with autism, despite using different approaches. However, effective programs seem to have some common characteristics. One important common characteristic is multiple opportunities for interactions with adults in focused and small group settings. Peer interactions are also important for preschool children with autism, but to be successful, these peer interactions often require support from the teaching staff. Children with autism may also require other types of support, such as picture schedules or augmentative communication systems. Providing these types of supports requires planning, creativity, and time.

Program characteristics such as those described above are important for helping children with autism develop the social-communication and play skills that are the focus of the ASAP program. Under the direction of the classroom teacher, the teaching assistant can provide direct instruction on social-communication and play skills, and can support the child with autism in learning to use new skills in small or larger group classroom settings that include other children. The teaching assistant also can help all the children in the classroom interact successfully with one another. For instance, s/he could provide a cue to a child at an appropriate moment, such as saying, “Show your beautiful picture to Tommy” or “Give Rodrigo a block so he can play, too.”

In addition, the teaching assistant can work with the teacher to identify any materials that need to be collected or created in order to provide the child with more or better opportunities to learn social-communication and play skills and use them in the classroom.

*As we developed this program, school personnel stressed again and again the importance of having teaching assistants involved as members of any ASAP intervention team.* In different classrooms, the exact roles played by the teaching assistants will vary, but teaching assistants undoubtedly will make valuable contributions to the success of the ASAP program.

## **Additional Information for the Therapist**

The speech-language pathologist and/or occupational therapist both have expertise that is invaluable in successfully implementing the ASAP program. Possible roles for the therapist in implementing ASAP are as *autism consultant, communication and/or play consultant, assessor, and direct interventionist.*

Public school programs for children with autism use a variety of different service models, including self-contained classrooms for children with autism, self-contained classrooms for preschool children with varied disabilities including autism, inclusive classrooms in public school settings (often ones primarily serving children identified due to low household incomes), and itinerant teams who provide special education services to children with autism who attend community-based preschools. The roles of the therapists who are part of the instructional team will vary depending on the policies and practices of the state and local education agency, the particular educational setting in which a child is served, the Individualized Education Plan of each child, and the knowledge and skills of each therapist.

Therapists should collaborate with the classroom teaching staff to determine preferred roles and strategies for providing services to children with autism. For example, the majority of the public school preschool

teachers who met in focus groups during the initial phases of designing the ASAP program expressed a preference for the therapists working with a child to carry out interventions within the classroom if at all possible, even when the therapists are working one-to-one with the child. The teachers said that such in-class therapy provided them with an opportunity to observe the strategies the therapists were using and to be more aware of the current therapy goals so that they could support the child's progress throughout the classroom day. In some cases, a therapist or a child's teacher may have valid reasons for preferring that the therapist work with the child outside of the classroom. But these types of decisions about roles and strategies should be made based on a consensus by the team regarding what will work best for an individual child.

In some cases, the preschool classroom teachers may have considerable expertise in the area of autism and educational strategies that have been used effectively with children with autism. In other cases, preschool teachers may have limited knowledge or experience with young children with autism. In contrast, most SLPs and OTs have some background knowledge of autism and likely have had professional experiences with serving this population. For these reasons, the therapist may play a valuable role as an *autism consultant*. In assuming such a role, the therapist would want to attentively listen to the concerns the teacher has about meeting the needs of young students with autism in the context of the overall goals of the preschool curriculum, determine what kind of input the teacher would like to have from the therapist, and work with the teacher to problem-solve around the teacher's concerns. Other therapists may have limited knowledge of autism and therefore may not be able to contribute specific expertise on autism to the team. Regardless of the therapist's background knowledge of autism, s/he also can support the teacher in identifying and requesting any additional resources that are needed by the team to enhance the program's effectiveness in serving preschoolers with autism. For example, the instructional team may determine they need consultation from an expert on general classroom strategies appropriate for children with autism. The success of ASAP or any other specific interventions for children with autism relies on an educational setting in which all the team members are able to engage the children with autism in meaningful activities and use positive strategies to prevent and manage problem behaviors.

The SLP and/or OT also may play a valuable role in ASAP by serving as a *communication and/or play consultant*. The preschool teacher undoubtedly will have some educational background and practical experience in addressing these areas of development as part of the preschool curriculum. But directly teaching social-communication and play skills to young children with autism requires very specific and detailed knowledge of the various aspects of the skills, typical developmental sequences, and the developmental patterns commonly observed in children with autism. The SLP and/or OT may be able to contribute this specific level of knowledge as the team collaborates in implementing ASAP.

The SLP and/or OT have an essential role to play as *assessors*. The initial ASAP assessment for intervention planning involves combining observations of what the child can do in a focused situation with a supportive adult and what the child typically does in the classroom. Ideally, both teacher and therapist would contribute to the assessment process. However, depending on the level of knowledge that each team member may have of the child, the assessment may take varied forms. For example, if both the teacher and therapist know the child well, they both may participate in the initial assessment. If, however, the therapist knows little about the child (e.g., the child is new to her/his caseload), the teacher may take the lead in assessing the child and then collaborate with the therapist in using assessment probes with the child to identify the recommended starting point for intervention. The therapist will continue to engage in ongoing, informal assessment during focused interactions with the child or in the natural environment of the classroom. Ongoing assessment is essential for adjusting the intervention objectives, either because the child has mastered a skill and is ready to learn a new one, or because the child has been "stuck" for a while without showing progress and the team needs to decide on a different objective or approach that may help the child get "unstuck." This means that the therapist has an ongoing responsibility to communicate and collaborate with other team members. Strategies for ongoing communication will vary from team to team, but may include brief, unscheduled interactions when the therapist is in the classroom, email exchanges, and/or phone calls.

Finally, the SLP and/or OT have an essential role in ASAP as the focused *direct interventionist*. The ASAP program includes a focused practice component and a classroom component. The focused practice component is important to ensure that the child gets sufficient opportunities to learn new social-communication and play skills through direct instruction in a highly supportive situation. The classroom component is important to ensure that the child is able to generalize the social-communication and play skills to everyday activities taking place in the preschool setting. Again, some educational teams may assign the focused instructional role to a different team member, relying on the therapist to provide consultation rather than direct instruction. *In such cases, the therapist should stress the importance of regular, direct focused instruction, and advocate for including focused instruction in the child's Individualized Education Plan. Previous research has shown that children with autism can improve in these important skill areas if they have regular focused instruction, but no research to date demonstrates these skills can be successfully taught to children with autism without focused instruction.*

## **ASAP and the Standard Course of Study**

Instructional teams are accountable for the progress of all students in the standard course of study for their grade level, and their responsibility for preschool students with autism is no different. The categories and levels of Social-Communication and Play that we have provided are detailed and arranged hierarchically in order to help with day-to-day decision making on specific objectives for preschoolers with autism. Most young children, including children with disabilities other than autism, develop social-communication and play skills without direct instruction. For that reason, it may be easy to overlook the importance of social-communication and play in making it possible for children with autism to progress in the standard course of study. We argue that these skills are, in fact, essential to engaging in the standard course of study at the preschool level (and later in school), and therefore, they must be addressed in the Individualized Education Plan of any preschooler who lacks these abilities.

Table I.1 shows a sample of early learning expectations from the Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers, a document that serves as the standard course of study for preschool children served in public school programs in the state. Of course, there will be some variation from one state to another, but many states have adopted very similar standards at the preschool level. The ASAP program can be connected to each of the early learning expectations shown in Table I.1. For example, under the domain of Emotional Development, one expectation is that each child will enjoy playing alone or near other children. Gaining skills in object play as part of the ASAP program will increase the ability of children with autism to engage in enjoyable play. Under that same domain, another expectation is that children will “seek out others when...needing social interaction.” The social-communication skills that children develop in the ASAP program related to social interaction and joint attention will provide them with the requisite skills to meet this learning expectation.

The connection between the ASAP program and the learning expectation examples under the domain of Health and Physical Development may not be as obvious as some of the others. We would argue, however, that preschoolers usually develop these types of fine motor and eye-hand coordination skills in the context of play with objects. Repeated opportunities for practice are important in motor learning, and young children are more likely to engage in such practice if they are playing with objects they find interesting. Thus, working on the development of play skills involving objects at the same time one is working on the development of fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination is not only possible, but also desirable.

The National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC) provides links to websites with many of the states' early learning standards. It may be helpful to use your state's early learning standards to justify play goals on Individualized Education Plans.

Table I.1: Sample North Carolina Early Learning Expectations Addressed by ASAP

<b>Domains of NC Early Learning Standards for NC Preschoolers</b>					
Sample NC Early Learning Expectations Addressed by ASAP	<b>Approaches to Learning</b>	<b>Emotional &amp; Social Dev.</b>	<b>Health &amp; Physical Dev.</b>	<b>Language &amp; Communication</b>	<b>Cognitive Dev.</b>
	Act out a memory	Enjoy playing alone or near other children	Experiment with handheld tools that develop strength, control & dexterity of small muscles	Understand & use a growing vocabulary	Expand knowledge of environment through play
	Choose to participate in a wider variety of experiences	Use pretend play to express thoughts & feelings	Explore & engage in activities that enhance hand-eye coordination	Comprehend & use language for multiple social and cognitive purposes	Describe or demonstrate a sequence of events
	Demonstrate ability to remain engaged	Approach others with expectations of positive interactions		Understand that people communicate in many ways (verbal, gestures, devices, etc.)	Engage in representational thought (thinking about things that are not present)
	Take on pretend roles in play	Seek out others when needing ...social interaction		Use verbal & nonverbal language to communicate for multiple purposes	Use a variety of materials for sensory experiences, exploration, creative expression & representation
	Approach experiences with increasing imagination	Play & interact cooperatively with other children		Use language as a part of pretend play	



## For the Parent

Your child's teachers and therapists are going to use a program called ASAP as part of your child's educational services. ASAP stands for "Advancing Social-Communication And Play: An Intervention Program for Preschoolers with Autism." The end goal of the social-communication portion of this program is for preschoolers with autism to develop joint attention skills. The end goal of the play portion of this program is for preschoolers with autism to develop symbolic play skills.

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### What is joint attention?

Joint attention is a term used to describe what happens when two people pay attention to the same thing on purpose. They are joining each other in their attention. Imagine, for example, that a teacher points to her desk and says to a child, "Look at that big apple." The child looks at the place the teacher has pointed and sees the apple. In this situation, the teacher and the child have engaged in joint

attention—that is, they shared attention to the apple on purpose. As another example, imagine that a child is out with his mother and sees a large dog. The child might look up at his mother to check whether she also sees the dog and then look back at the dog again. This would also be an example of joint attention.

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### Why is joint attention important for children with autism?



Children who are learning social and communication skills in a typical way will often show examples of joint attention from the time they are 12 months old. Joint attention is

important in helping people communicate with each other all through life. Children with autism have a hard time with this kind of communication. For these children, delays in developing joint attention skills lead to delays in developing language. And we all know how important language is to everyday life. Children with autism who are able to use spoken language by the age of five generally have better success in school, in social relationships, and in their adult lives than children who do not get to that level of communication skills as preschoolers.

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### What is symbolic play?

The other part of the ASAP program focuses on symbolic play. Symbolic play is play that involves pretending or using imagination. At a simple level, when a toddler pretends to stir in a bowl that is actually empty, she is *pretending* that there is something in the bowl. Or when a preschooler picks up a cardboard tube and swings it in front of him like a sword, he is *pretending* that the cardboard tube is something different from what it actually is. A kindergartner who swoops around pretending to be a superhero defeating the "bad guys" is also showing symbolic play skills.

## Why is symbolic play important for children with autism?



Children may begin to show simple kinds of pretending around 12 months of age. Symbolic play skills become more and more complex as children grow from toddlers to preschoolers to kindergartners. Young children with autism

almost always learn symbolic play skills more slowly than children who do not have autism. Like joint attention skills, learning symbolic play skills during the preschool years helps children with autism in other areas of development. Children with autism who have better symbolic play skills as preschoolers often have better language later in life. In addition, symbolic play skills are important in playing with other children. Much of what young children do with each other is play with toys and other objects, and use those objects to pretend. A preschool child who does not know how to pretend will have trouble joining in pretend play with other children and will miss out on chances to learn language and social skills from other children.

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## Intervention can help!

Exciting research has shown that preschool children with autism can learn joint attention and symbolic play skills and these skills will help them later in life. For example, learning joint attention and symbolic play skills in the preschool years has been shown to lead to much better language skills for children with autism. Better language skills, in turn, mean better social skills with adults and other children, higher academic performance, and better success in work and independent living as an adult.

ASAP is designed to help teachers, therapists, and parents teach these skills to preschool children with autism. The ASAP program is meant to be used as a part of the total educational program, not as a substitute for other programs. We hope you will enjoy learning more about ways you can help your child learn joint attention and symbolic play skills from the parent pages that your child's teachers and therapists will be sending home to you.

## For the Administrator

### Introduction

The teachers and therapists in your school who work with preschoolers with autism have the opportunity to use the ASAP program to improve communication and play skills of these children. ASAP stands for “Advancing Social-Communication And Play: An Intervention Program for Preschoolers with Autism.” The ASAP program was developed specifically to address some critical skills for preschool children with autism. Young children with autism have specific difficulties with developing a set of social-communication skills called “joint attention,” as well as symbolic or pretend play skills. However, exciting new research has demonstrated that when direct instruction on

social-communication and play is provided, most children with autism will improve in these areas. Even more exciting, this type of intervention also enhances the children’s language and social skills as they get older. Research has shown that preschoolers with autism who have better social-communication skills are much more likely to have later success in academic performance, interacting with other people including their peers, and living more independently as adults. Your understanding of the goals of the ASAP program, and your administrative support for the efforts of your instruction staff, can greatly enhance the success of the program.

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### What is joint attention?

The end goal of the social-communication portion of the ASAP program is for preschoolers with autism to develop joint attention skills. Joint attention is a term used to describe what happens when two people pay attention to the same thing on purpose. Imagine, for example, that a teacher points to her desk and says to a child, “Look at that big apple.” The child looks at the place the teacher has pointed and sees the apple. In this situation, the

teacher and the child have engaged in joint attention—that is, they shared attention to the apple on purpose. As another example, imagine that a child is out with his mother and sees a large dog. The child might look up at his mother to check whether she also sees the dog and then look back at the dog again. This too is an example of joint attention.

---

### What is symbolic play?

The end goal of the play portion of the ASAP program is for preschoolers with autism to develop symbolic play skills. Symbolic play is play that involves pretending or using imagination. At a simple level, when a toddler pretends to stir in a bowl that is actually empty, she is *pretending* that there is something in the bowl. Or when a preschooler picks up a cardboard tube and swings it in front of him like a sword, he is *pretending* that the cardboard tube is something different from what it actually is. A kindergartner who swoops around pretending to be a superhero defeating the “bad guys” is also showing symbolic play skills.

## **Why is ASAP important for preschoolers with autism?**

Given that young children with autism have difficulties developing both joint attention and symbolic play skills, the ASAP program specifically targets these two areas. As we noted, new research has shown that direct instruction on joint attention and symbolic play can facilitate the development of these areas. What is most important, however, is that the children who have participated in joint attention and symbolic play interventions have made large gains in their

language skills compared to children who were in a full-day classroom that did not offer direct instruction on these skills. The advantage in language skills for children who had direct instruction on symbolic play or joint attention skills was apparent even as long as four years after the original intervention. The direct instruction validated by research included daily, relatively brief focused teaching on joint attention and symbolic play skills.

# 2

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# ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTIONS

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## Assessment of Social-Communication to Identify Intervention Targets

### Social-Communication Skill Levels

#### Goals of Assessment

- Obtain an assessment of the child's baseline level of **social-communication** skills
- Guide goal-setting and intervention activities.

#### Key Components

There are **three key components** to keep in mind in the assessment of social-communication in the ASAP program: (1) functions of communication; (2) different roles as a communicator; and (3) developmental levels of social-communication skills. We explain each of these briefly below.

- 1) **Communication functions.** One key component of effective social-communication is being able to communicate for different purposes. The ultimate goal of the communication portion of this program is for the child to be able to respond to and initiate **joint attention**. Joint attention is a child's nonverbal and/or verbal communication behaviors used to share the experience of objects or events with others. Communicating for joint attention involves (1) being socially motivated to share an interest in an object or event with another person, and (2) being able to divide one's attention between a communication partner and some object or event of interest. Joint attention behaviors include such skills as alternating gaze between a communication partner and an object of interest, giving, showing, pointing to, and/or commenting on objects and events in the environment, and expressing pleasure during joint attention episodes.

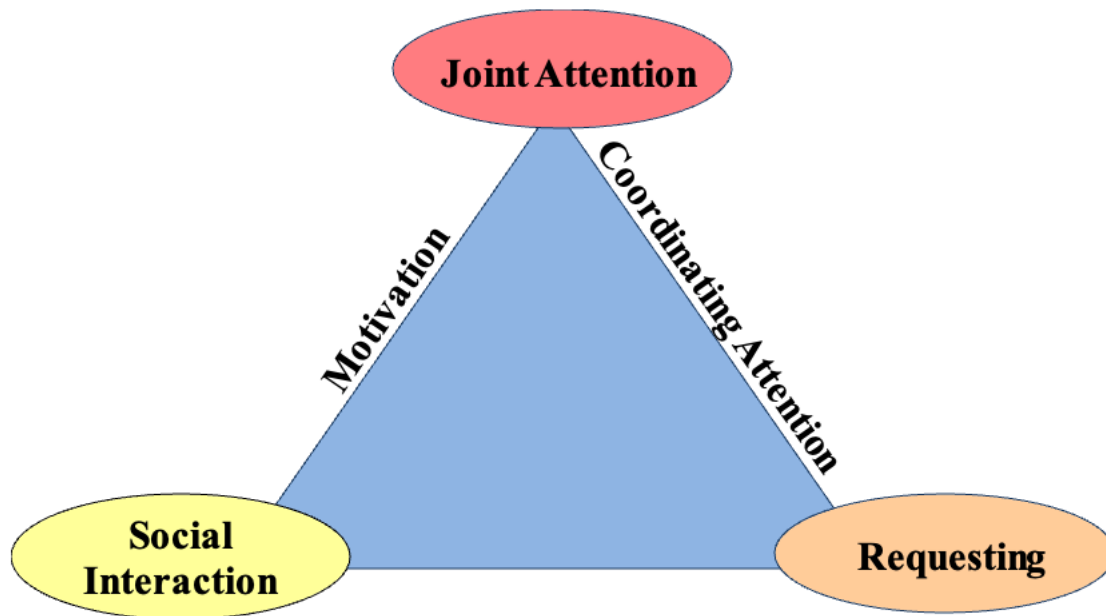


Other types of social-communication interactions are important stepping stones to developing generalized joint attention skills. Some of these preparatory skills are being able to engage in face-to-face **social interaction** routines where the focus is on what the two people are doing in the routine rather than on some outside object or event. Some examples are engaging in tickle games, up/down routines, or the movements to a song with another person. A child who learns to engage in and enjoy these social interaction routines is laying important groundwork for later learning to use joint attention behaviors by developing motivation to share experiences with other people.

Another type of social-communication interaction that can be an important stepping stone to joint attention is **requesting**. In requesting, the child is trying to get another person to give him/her an object or carry out some action. The focus in requesting is not on the sharing of an experience with another person (as in joint attention) but rather for the child to get what s/he wants or needs. Requesting can be a stepping stone to joint attention skills because requesting involves coordinating attention between the object or action the child wants and the communication partner to whom the request is directed. In addition, some of the same behaviors a child can use to request—such as alternating gaze between an object and a person, giving an object to an adult, or pointing to an object—can also be used for joint attention. Research has shown that children with autism often find it easier to use behaviors to request, sometimes long before they use them for joint attention. This is somewhat different from what we see with typically developing children, who tend to use strategies for requesting slightly before using them for joint attention, but much closer to the same time in their development.

Figure I.1 above shows the ASAP model for social-communication skills. Joint attention is at the top peak of the triangle, reflecting that acquisition of these types of communication skills are the ultimate goal. Social interaction and requesting are at the base of the triangle because each of these types of communicative functions involves important foundations for joint attention: social motivation (in communicating for social interaction) and coordinated attention (in communicating for requesting).

**Figure I.1: ASAP Model of Communication Development**



The Assessment of Social-Communication includes looking at these three broad categories of communication functions or purposes (see Table I.2): social interaction (in yellow), requesting (in orange), and joint attention (in red). This assessment is used to determine which skills the child currently has and to identify which skills should be targeted for intervention.

- 2) **Different roles as a communicator.** A second key component in developing these important communication abilities is to be able to take on different roles as a communicator. That is, the child must be able to initiate communication as well as respond to communication initiated by others. For example, to be fully competent as a communicator, the child should be able to look at an object that someone else shows, as well as show an object of interest to another person. In addition, it is important for the child to engage in joint attention frequently, in varied situations, and with varied communication partners.
- 3) **Developmental levels of social-communication.** A third key component of the ASAP approach is focused on the child's developmental level. To aid in assessment and intervention planning, the Assessment of Social-Communication is organized into sequenced skill levels, as shown in Table I.2. We have based the levels on the research literature, as well as our collective clinical experiences in working to improve the social-communication skills of children with autism. Thus, we might expect that a child with autism engaged in a social game with a supportive adult will learn to watch the adult closely at the first level of Social Interaction Skills (SI1). Then the child may be ready to learn to indicate to the adult through some signal, such as a body movement, that s/he wants the game to continue at the second level of Social Interaction Skills (SI2). Every child with autism will be unique in some ways, however, and even if our sequence describes the developmental pathways of the "average" child with autism, other children with autism will show other orders of acquiring these skills. In addition, children with autism sometimes demonstrate verbal communication skills (e.g., using words to label objects) that most people think of as "higher level" skills than nonverbal communication skills,

but these children may fail to use nonverbal communication skills such as reaching, pointing, or coordinated gaze that are foundations for effective communication. Children with typical development acquire these nonverbal behaviors early in development and continue to use them even after they have begun to talk. Throughout our lives, effective communication depends on both nonverbal and verbal communication skills. For verbal children with autism who are not using strategies such as pointing, showing, and alternating gaze, we recommend that you “go back” and teach nonverbal communication skills that haven’t been learned yet. In learning these nonverbal skills, the verbal child with autism will have a fuller range of behaviors that can be used to effectively respond to and initiate joint attention (e.g., words, reaching, showing).



As you continue to read about the ASAP social-communication skill domain, you will notice that we have integrated the component of **reciprocal roles** as a

communicator into the developmental levels for social-communication development. In assessing children, however, you may observe that an individual child masters developmental levels related to responding to communication much more quickly than corresponding skills in initiating communication, benefiting from the cues that naturally accompany another person’s communication. In contrast, another child may master levels related to initiating communication more quickly than the corresponding skills in responding to communication, perhaps because the child finds it easier to initiate communication about things related to the child’s own agenda than responding to communication about someone else’s agenda.

Of course, children (whether they have autism or not) rarely learn new skills category by category, mastering everything related to one category before they move to the next. Across the categories of social interaction, requesting, and joint attention, some skills are expected to develop at about the same time. For example, “showing” and “giving” behaviors appear quite close in development in typically developing children, and yet their timing may be quite different in children with autism. In Table I.2, skills that are expected to develop around the same time are shown on the same row. For example, when a child reaches the point that s/he is learning to initiate social interaction games independently (SI5), the child likely will also be developing early Requesting Skills such as giving objects to request help (RQ3). Therefore, the SI5 level and RQ3 level of skills should be appearing close to one another in development and could be targeted simultaneously in intervention if both are missing from the child’s repertoire.

In terms of developmental levels for the categories for social-communication, children with typical development usually begin performing social interaction behaviors between 8 and 15 months, requesting behaviors between 8 and 15 months, and joint attention behaviors between 10 and 18 months. As noted, however, children with autism often begin displaying these behaviors at much later ages and may not develop them in the same sequence as children with typical development (or at all without direct intervention). See Table I.2 for examples.

\*\*\*A **Picture Dictionary** of the social-communication skill levels included in the ASAP program is found in Book I – Section 5 of this manual.



**Table I.2: Skill Levels across Three Categories of Social-Communication**

SKILL LEVELS	CATEGORIES		
	<b>Social Interaction</b> <i>Age of Emergence: 8-15 months</i>	<b>Requesting</b> <i>Age of Emergence: 8-15 months</i>	<b>Joint Attention</b> <i>Age of Emergence: 10-18 months</i>
	<b>SI1.</b> During face to face games, physical activities, or routines, child watches the adult closely	<b>RQ1.</b> Child reaches for out of reach object to show wanting the object	
	<b>SI2.</b> During face to face games, physical activities, or routines, after a brief pause child shows wanting the game to continue (e.g., looks, moves body to make a motion of the game, touches the partner, vocalizes)	<b>RQ2.</b> Child pulls person's hand toward objects to show request for help	
	<b>SI3.</b> Child plays back-and-forth games with objects or actions (e.g., exchanges objects back-and-forth)	<b>RQ3.</b> Child gives objects to show request for help	
	<b>SI4.</b> Child initiates familiar games or routines (i.e., not right after an adult does the action )	<b>RQ4a.</b> Child looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request (i.e., objects within reaching distance) <b>RQ4b.</b> Child points to nearby objects to request them	<b>JA1a.</b> Child responds to another person giving objects just to share interest in the objects <b>JA1b.</b> Child gives objects just to share interest in objects with another person
	<b>SI5.</b> Child expands games or routines, e.g., includes a third person in the game/routine switches roles with other person (e.g., finder vs. hider)	<b>RQ5a.</b> Child looks at distant objects when another person points to the objects as a request (i.e., objects that are beyond reach) <b>RQ5b.</b> Child points to distant objects to request them	<b>JA2a.</b> Child responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects <b>JA2b.</b> Child shows objects just to share interest in the objects with another person
	<b>SI6.</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue	<b>RQ6.</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to request	<b>JA3a.</b> Child follows a point to nearby objects/events just to share interest in objects/events <b>JA3b.</b> Child points to nearby objects/events just to share interest in objects/events with another person
			<b>JA4a.</b> Child follows a point to more distant objects/events just to share interest in the objects/events <b>JA4b.</b> Child points to more distant objects/events just to share interest in objects/events with another person
			<b>JA5.</b> Child follows gaze of another person to objects/events just to share interest
			<b>JA6.</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event

# Assessment of Play to Identify Intervention Targets

## Play Skill Levels

### Goals of Assessment

- Obtain an assessment of the child's baseline level of **play** skills across the four categories of play
- Guide goal-setting and intervention activities.

There are **two key components** to keep in mind in the assessment of play in ASAP: (1) broad categories of play, and (2) developmental levels of play skills. We explain each of these briefly below.

The **broad categories** of play targeted in ASAP are Exploratory, Relational, Functional, and Symbolic.

**Exploratory Play** is play that focuses on discovering and experiencing the sensory properties of objects (e.g., how they feel, smell, taste, sound, look, and move), and manipulating objects in simple ways. This is the first type of play we see emerging as babies begin to interact with objects in their environment.

Examples are mouthing objects, banging them, and turning them over. Children who are older and have better fine motor skills continue to engage in exploratory play, for instance in turning the crank on a jack-in-the-box to get it to spring up, or pushing the switches on an electronic toy to get it to make different sounds.



**Relational Play** involves taking objects apart and putting them together. Relational play may involve two or more different objects, or different parts of the same object. Examples include dumping blocks out of a bucket or putting them in a bucket as a simple type of relational play, or stacking a series of nesting cups or putting together a multi-piece puzzle as more complex types of relational play.

**Functional Play** in the ASAP model refers to simple kinds of pretend play, using realistic objects in the way they are used conventionally by other people. The child may be directing these play actions toward an object (e.g., pushing a car purposefully along a path), toward himself or herself (e.g., using a brush to brush his or her own hair), toward a doll-like figure (e.g., feeding a stuffed dog with a spoon), or toward other people (e.g., putting a hat on the teacher's head).

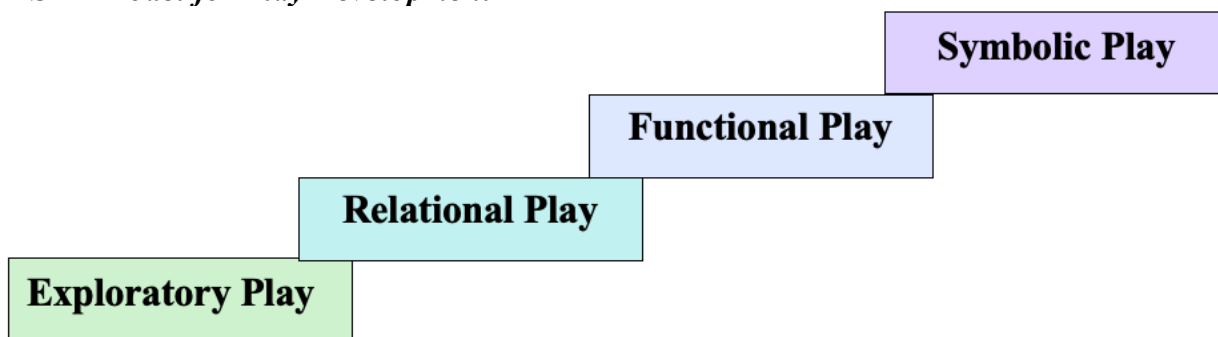


**Symbolic Play** is more complex pretend play that involves moving doll-like figures as though they are alive (e.g., having a stuffed dog lick someone with his tongue), using one object to represent something else (e.g., substituting a stick for a spoon), using imaginary objects (e.g., pretending to fix a broken toy with an imaginary hammer), acting as though objects have imaginary qualities (e.g., pretending that play food is hot), and taking on imaginary roles (e.g., pretending to be a firefighter).

\*\*\*Children with typical development usually begin performing exploratory play between 2-10 months, relational play between 10-18 months, functional play between 12-18 months, and symbolic play between 18-30 months. As noted, however, children with autism often begin displaying these behaviors at much later ages and may not develop them in the same sequence as children with typical development (or at all without direct intervention). See Table I.3 for examples.

Figure I.2 below shows the ASAP model for the development of play skills. This stair-step model suggests that **we conceive of play skills as developing in more of a hierarchy** than is true for social-communication skills. Although the hierarchy is depicted evenly, development is not that uniform. In development, relational play has a small amount of overlap with functional play, and functional play has a small amount of overlap with relational play, but symbolic play has considerable overlap with functional play. This model reflects some important assumptions we are making about the development of play skills, that is, if a child uses a number of relational play skills, then the child probably already mastered exploratory play earlier, even if the child is not showing a wide variety of exploratory play skills at the present time. Similarly, if the child uses a number of functional play skills, then the child has previously acquired the exploratory and relational play skills that served as the foundations for developing those functional play skills.

**Figure I.2: ASAP Model for Play Development**



A **second key component** of the ASAP approach to improving play skills in young children with autism are the different **developmental skill levels** within the four broad categories of play. As shown in Table I.3, the four broad categories of play are broken down into 20 skill levels. These skills levels are presented as a tool to help organize the assessment process and summarize a child’s play skills in an efficient manner in order to inform intervention decisions. As indicated in the model above, the different broad play categories overlap one another to some extent. That is, in typical development, some skills within and across the four broad categories of play develop concurrently, and this will be true for children with autism as well. Literature summarizing the early development of play is presented in Book I—Section 9: Research.

\*\*\*A **Picture Dictionary** of the social-communication skill levels included in the ASAP program is found in Book I – Section 5 of this manual.

**Table I.3: Skill Levels Across Four Categories of Play\***

**Categories**

<b>Exploratory</b> <i>Age of Emergence: 2-10 months</i>	<b>Relational</b> <i>Age of Emergence: 10-18 months</i>	<b>Functional</b> <i>Age of Emergence: 12-18 months</i>	<b>Symbolic</b> <i>Age of Emergence: 18-30 months</i>
<b>E1.</b> Child picks up and looks at a toy Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Picks up, looks at, puts down block</li> <li>Picks up, looks at, puts down ball</li> </ul>			
<b>E2.</b> Child plays with toys using both hands together (may include banging, shaking, rubbing, squeezing, mouthing, licking, smelling) Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pushes buttons on pop up</li> <li>Rolls ball</li> <li>Gathers blocks</li> <li>Turns pages in book</li> </ul>			
<b>E3.</b> Child plays with one toy in three or more different ways Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rolls, bounces, and pats ball</li> <li>Mouths, bangs, and stretches slinky</li> </ul>	<b>R1.</b> Child takes pieces of toys apart Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detaches large pop beads</li> <li>Removes lid from container</li> </ul>		
	<b>R2.</b> Child puts toys together in simple ways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drops blocks in cup</li> <li>Puts lid on container</li> </ul>		
	<b>R3.</b> Child puts several toys together in specific ways Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Puts pieces of puzzle together</li> <li>Strings beads</li> <li>Sorts shapes into a shape sorter</li> </ul>	<b>F1.</b> Child plays with toys in functional or simple pretend ways Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stirs spoon in cup</li> <li>Pushes truck in purposeful path</li> </ul>	
		<b>F2.</b> Child plays with toys in simple pretend ways directed to self Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feeds self with empty spoon</li> <li>Brushes own hair with plastic hairbrush.</li> </ul>	
		<b>F3.</b> Child includes a doll/action figure in simple pretend play with toys Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brushes doll's hair with brush</li> <li>Diapers doll</li> </ul>	
		<b>F4.</b> Child includes other people in simple pretend play with toys Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feeds adult with spoon</li> <li>Combs adult's hair with comb</li> </ul>	<b>S1.</b> Child makes doll/figure move or do things as if it were alive Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walks a doll</li> <li>Manipulates toy animal to "eat" from container</li> <li>Doll brushes own hair</li> </ul>
		<b>F5.</b> Child uses the same action in simple pretend play with two different people or dolls/figures Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Places cup to adult's lips, then places cup to doll's mouth</li> </ul>	<b>S2.</b> Child does 2 different pretend actions, one right after another, with the same toy Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stirs spoon in bowl and then pretends to feed doll</li> <li>Fills up car with gas and drives into garage</li> </ul>

## Categories

<b>Exploratory</b> <i>Age of Emergence: 2-10 months</i>	<b>Relational</b> <i>Age of Emergence: 10-18 months</i>	<b>Functional</b> <i>Age of Emergence: 12-18 months</i>	<b>Symbolic</b> <i>Age of Emergence: 18-30 months</i>
			<b>S3.</b> Child does 3 or more different pretend actions, one right after another, with the same toy Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feeds doll, wipes doll's mouth, puts doll to bed, kisses goodnight</li> </ul> Drives ambulance to hospital, takes patient out of ambulance, and places on hospital bed
			<b>S4.</b> Child uses one toy/object to represent or stand for another Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses block as a hairbrush or cup</li> <li>Puts sponge in bowl as food</li> <li>Uses paper as blanket or diaper for baby</li> </ul>
			<b>S5.</b> Child uses pretend qualities in play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blows on spoon as if soup is hot</li> <li>Makes "yucky" gesture when pretending to eat play dough</li> </ul>
			<b>S6.</b> Child uses pretend objects in play Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shakes imaginary salt shaker</li> <li>Holds hand to ear as if talking on phone</li> <li>Shapes hand as if holding a tool and creates tool's action</li> </ul>
			<b>S7.</b> Child takes on a pretend role in play that other people direct Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plays house when adult suggests it</li> <li>Plays construction worker when another child suggests it</li> </ul>
			<b>S8.</b> Child suggests pretend role in play to self or other people Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plays hospital, suggesting roles such as "I'll be the nurse, you be the patient."</li> </ul>
			<b>S9.</b> Child expands pretend play with other people into (a) new roles, (b) new theme, and/or (c) fantasy roles Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spiderman rescues victims</li> <li>Princess and Prince marry</li> </ul>

\*There is no evidence for an exact hierarchy of these play categories and skills. Typical age ranges for emergence are listed for each category; however, individual differences exist and age ranges overlap. Most children engage in different categories of play during any developmental stage. As children develop they commonly spend more time in higher level play as they "outgrow" early-emerging play. Generally, we assume that if a child displays relational play during assessment or intervention, different levels of exploratory play have likely been mastered earlier in development. Similarly, if a child displays functional play, s/he has likely mastered relational play skills included in the ASAP program. Development of functional and symbolic play overlaps more in our model; thus, if the child is exhibiting some symbolic play skills, we do not necessarily assume that the child has mastered all the skill levels in functional play.

## Assessment Method Options

There are **three primary methods** that teachers and therapists can use to complete the Assessment of Play and Assessment of Social-Communication. The unstructured and structured methods will be described in greater detail in their corresponding sections.

- 1) **UNSTRUCTURED ASSESSMENT:** The first method of assessment is based solely on the professionals' previous knowledge of the child and includes one or more professional(s) using that knowledge to determine the child's current level of functioning and to identify the immediate targets for intervention. This method relies heavily on the professionals' experiences in observing and interacting with the child during situations that allow for demonstration of play or social-communication skills. Ideally, both teacher and therapist would contribute to this determination by looking at *The Unstructured "Experience-Based" Assessment Summary Score Sheets* and comparing their ideas on the child's current skill levels and where to start in intervention. Depending on the level of knowledge that each professional has of the child, the assessment may take varied forms. For example, if both the teacher and therapist know the child well, they both may participate in completing the *Summary Score Sheet*. If the therapist knows little about the child (e.g., the child is new to his or her caseload), the teacher may take the lead in completing the *Summary Score Sheet* and then would collaborate with the therapist to share her/his knowledge of the child and to ensure mutual starting point(s) for intervention. Complete guidelines for this method of assessment are provided in Book I—Section 3: Unstructured Assessment.

- 2) **STRUCTURED ASSESSMENT:** The second method to assess the child's play or social-communication skills is to use a more "structured" format following the guidelines suggested in Book I—Section 4: Structured Assessments. For those who prefer more "formalized" assessments and/or for professionals who do not already know the child well, this type of assessment can be useful for eliciting observing a range of skills across play and social communication.



- 3) **COMBINED UNSTRUCTURED/STRUCTURED ASSESSMENT:** For the third method, the team combines the methods of assessment. For example, the team might be able to describe examples of certain categories of skills based on their past observations of the child, but may be uncertain about the other skills. In that case, they might use one or more of the scenarios from the Structured Play Assessment provided in Book I—Section 4: Structured Assessments to observe more fully the child's range of skills.

### Determining Goals and Objectives: “Where Do I Start?”

Now that you have assessed the child’s social-communication abilities, it is time to focus on making decisions about **where to start in intervention**. Although deciding on a starting point will be individualized for each child, there are certain principles that can be considered. Be aware, the principles for determining play goals vary slightly from the principles for determining social-communication goals.

**Table I.4: Directions for Determining Goals and Objectives**

	<b>Social-Communication</b>	<b>Play</b>
<b>Determine Starting Goals</b>	Using the <i>Developmental Profile of Social-Communication</i> , note the highest level mastered in each of the three categories. For <u>each category</u> , the level that comes after the highest mastered level is a potential intervention goal.*	Using the <i>Developmental Profile of Play</i> , note the highest level mastered across the four categories. Identify the <u>highest category</u> in which the child has demonstrated a mastered skill then select the level above that mastered skill for the first intervention goal.*
<b>Consider Skill Gaps</b>	There will be times that a child has not mastered lower level skills within any one category. These skill gaps may be appropriate to address in situations in which the child is not making progress with the goals originally selected as a starting point.	There will be times when a child has not mastered lower level skills within any one category and the team feels it is important to target them.
<b>Work across Categories/Domains</b>	<p>Children often make simultaneous advances across different social-communication and play categories, so it is expected that you may be working across multiple categories at any one time.</p> <p>Another consideration in planning intervention is that multiple goals across play and social-communication domains can be addressed at a time. In deciding which goals to target simultaneously, it is helpful to consider how related the goals are.</p>	

\* Please note that these directions for determining goals and objectives for the social-communication intervention are different from the directions given for determining goals and objectives for the play intervention because social-communication skills do not necessarily develop in a linear or sequential manner as play skills often do. Therefore, it is important to sometimes work on lower level skills that are unmastered even if the child displays some higher-level skills.

#### Ongoing Assessment:



The assessment of play and social-communication skills is an ongoing process. An essential step in the initial team planning will be to agree on procedures and a format to record child progress. Then as team members follow through on monitoring and recording progress, this information can be used to adjust the objectives for a child’s intervention any time the child has (1) demonstrated mastery at a given skill level, or (2) gotten stuck at a given skill level.



## Case Studies: Determining Goals and Objectives

### **CASE STUDY: Determining Goals and Objectives for Social-Communication Intervention**

- 1) **Determine Starting Goals:** Let's take "Eric" who has mastered Social Interaction goal SI3 (plays back-and-forth games with objects or actions), Requesting goal RQ2 (pulls a person's hand toward an object to request help), but has not yet mastered any Joint Attention (JA) skills. For Eric, the starting point for intervention could be either of the following goals: SI4 (initiates familiar games or routines) or RQ3 (gives objects to request help). The team will choose one or two of these skills as the initial social-communication goals for Eric. We would look to see if he had shown any ability to initiate familiar games or routines (SI4), to give objects to request help (RQ3), or to perform any of these skills with prompting. If he was able to do any of them in an unprompted or prompted situation, it may lead to faster mastery of the targeted goal and might lead to choosing that skill as one of the first to target.
- 2) **Consider Skill Gaps:** Although Eric may have mastered SI3, he may not have mastered SI2 (shows wanting social game/routine to continue). Therefore, if the team is targeting SI4 (initiates games) as a goal for Eric and realizes that he is not making progress, it may be useful (or at times necessary) to return to a lower unmastered skill (SI2) to facilitate learning of the targeted goal (SI4). Therefore, our recommendation is to always target first *the level that comes after the mastered level in each category*, but to consider returning to previously lower unmastered skills if needed.
- 3) **Work across Multiple Categories (SI, RQ, JA):** For Eric who is participating in back and forth exchanges of objects (SI3) and pulling a person's hand to request help (RQ2), targeting initiating familiar games (SI4) and giving to request help (RQ3) in parallel may be helpful as he could be taught to use *giving* to initiate social games (e.g., playing ball) or to get someone to do something with the object (e.g., open a jar). In this way, multiple skill levels could be identified and targeted simultaneously or in hierarchical sequence.



### **CASE STUDY: Determining Goals and Objectives for Play Intervention**

- 1) **Determine Starting Goals:** Let's take "Eliza" who has mastered F5 (uses the same action in simple pretend play with two different people or dolls/figures) but does not display F4 (includes other people in simple play with toys) or any symbolic play skills. For Eliza, the goal for play intervention would be S1 (makes doll/figure move or do things as if it were alive) because it is the next highest level. It is not necessary to target the lower functional play skills (F4) that were not exhibited by Eliza during the assessment.
- 2) **Consider Skill Gaps:** Although Eliza has mastered using the same action in simple pretend play with two different people or dolls/figures (F5), she may not have mastered including other people in simple play with toys (F4). Therefore, if the educational team is moving through the symbolic play hierarchy and realizes that Eliza is not making progress, it may be useful (or at times necessary) to return to a lower unmastered skill (F4) that may help facilitate the learning of the immediate goal. Therefore, our recommendation is to always target as the first goal *the level that comes after the highest mastered level (regardless of category)*, but to consider returning to lower unmastered skills if needed.
- 3) **Work on Multiple Goals Simultaneously Across Domains:** For Eliza who is working on making dolls/figures move or do things as if they were alive (S1), she might also be ready for showing objects just to share interest (JA2b). The teacher/therapist could incorporate showing (JA2b) into the activities for making dolls/figures move (S1) with Eliza in parallel. In this way, multiple goals across play and social-communication could be targeted simultaneously.



# 3

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## UNSTRUCTURED ASSESSMENTS

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## Unstructured Assessment of Social-Communication

- 1) One or more assessors (e.g., teacher, therapist) will first become familiar with the categories and skill levels in the *Assessment of Social-Communication Summary Score Sheet*.
- 2) Using the *Unstructured “Experience-Based” Assessment of Social-Communication Summary Score Sheet*, the assessor(s) will look at each social-communication category (Social Interaction, Requesting, and Joint Attention) and determine, from prior experience with the child, the child’s current skill level. The child’s current level represents the level at which the child masters a skill with at least three different examples of the behavior displayed without adult prompting. The assessor can check off the number of different examples demonstrated (boxes provided on the form) and write in the examples of these behaviors for each skill. For a behavior to receive credit as a new example, however, the behavior must occur in a different context, with a different object, or in a different way. If the child plays peek-a-boo using his hands to cover his eyes, uses a blanket to cover his eyes, and uses a chair to shield his eyes, the child has provided three examples of the behavior. However, if the child only uses his hands to cover his eyes at three different times (on different days or during different sessions), the child only gets credit for using one example of that behavior. A child can also receive credit for completely different behaviors that fall under the same category. For example for SI3 (plays back-and-forth games), if the child has been observed to roll a ball back & forth, give & take sunglasses, and hide & find objects, the assessor would check three boxes, write in the three examples, and credit the child for mastering the skill SI3.
- 3) For each skill level, the assessor(s) will use the following scoring rubric and put a score in the Summary Score column on the form. The score is based on the examples of behaviors the assessor(s) have observed and the amount of prompting needed in previous interactions with the child:
  - ? = unsure of child’s skill
  - 0 = child has not displayed this skill (or displayed only with prompts)
  - 1 = child has displayed one example of this skill without prompts
  - 2 = child has displayed two different examples of this skill without prompts
  - 3 = child has displayed three different examples of this skill without prompts
- 4) The assessor(s) may have observed emerging social-communication skills that the child exhibits when prompted but not spontaneously. In these cases, the assessor(s) can note the examples on the Summary Score Sheet with an indication that the behavior occurs with prompts. These examples are not counted toward mastery, but may be useful in determining intervention strategies for helping the child.
- 5) Once you have completed the *Unstructured “Experience-Based” Assessment of Social-Communication Summary Score Sheet*, on the page labeled “*Developmental Profile of Social-Communication Skills*” write in the summary score for each skill. Remember, a “3” signifying “Mastery” is given only if the teacher/therapist/team has observed the child using 3 different examples of the skill at that level. It is also often helpful for intervention planning to circle the letters (e.g., SI3) of the highest level of social-communication skills mastered for each category (i.e., Social Interaction, Requesting, Joint Attention). Thus, for Social Interaction, circle the highest level the child achieved with a summary score of 3. If the child did not meet criteria for mastering any skill in the Social Interaction category, circle SI0 – no SI level mastered. Complete the profile for Requesting and for Joint Attention in a similar fashion.

# Unstructured “Experience-Based” Assessment of Social-Communication Summary Score Sheet

Child’s Name \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner’s Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner’s Role(s) (e.g., teacher, therapist): \_\_\_\_\_

**Assessment Method Used (check one):**

- ☐ Unstructured “experienced based”
- ☐ Structured Assessment of Social-Communication
- ☐ Combination

Other notes about the context(s) of the session:

**Directions:**

Fill out all sections completely and indicate if the child has displayed 0, 1, 2, or 3 different types of social-communication behaviors (unprompted) at each of the 24 skills levels. All examples of initiations must occur without any prompting by another person. Check off the “Example” boxes to indicate when a child has demonstrated a social-communication act at a given skill level, and write out the specific social-communication behaviors observed (e.g., “pointed to distant toy car”). An example can only be credited if the social-communication act occurs in a different context, with a different object, or in a different way, as the child does not receive credit for repeating the exact same social-communication act (even if on different days). You can make notes to indicate if any prompting was helpful to elicit a given skill (see a suggested shorthand for different levels of prompts in the box below); however, prompted behaviors do not get checked as examples and are not credited in the summary score. If you are unsure of the child’s ability to perform a particular skill, write a “?” in the Summary Score column. The number of checked boxes is the Summary Score, which should be noted in the last column. For example, if the child demonstrates reaching to request (RQ1) in two different situations, two boxes should be checked and the Summary Score is “2.” If no unprompted behavior is observed at a level, write “0” in the Summary Score column. The Summary Score for each skill should be transferred to the “Developmental Profile of Social-Communication Skills” and the highest skill level achieved for each category (i.e., Social Interaction, Requesting, Joint Attention) should be circled.

- ? = unsure of child’s skill
- 0 = child has not display this skill (or displayed only with prompts)
- 1 = child has displayed one example of this skill without prompts
- 2 = child has displayed two examples of this skill without prompts
- 3 = child has displayed three examples of this skill without prompts

\* **Prompt Levels-** UP=unprompted, FP=full physical, PP=partial physical, FM=full model, PM=partial model, VM= verbal model, G=gesture, P=positional, EV=environmental/pictorial

SOCIAL-COMMUNICATION CATEGORY AND SKILL LEVELS	Examples	Examples, Prompts, and Notes  Write in examples of behaviors observed. Note if a behavior was prompted. Prompted behaviors are scored 0. If no examples were observed, leave blank and score 0 to indicate that child did not display the skill.	Summary Score ? - unsure 0 – no examples 1 – 1 example 2 – 2 examples 3 – 3 examples
<b>SOCIAL INTERACTION</b>			
<b>SI1.</b> During face to face games, physical activities, or routines, child watches the adult closely	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>SI2.</b> During face to face games, physical activities, or routines, after a brief pause child shows wanting the game to continue (e.g., looks, moves body to make a motion of the game)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>SI3.</b> Child plays back-and-forth games with objects or actions (e.g., exchanges objects back-and-forth; back-and-forth game of imitating actions)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>SI4.</b> Child initiates familiar games or routines (i.e., not right after an adult does the action)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>SI5.</b> Child expands games or routines e.g., includes a third person in the game/routine, switches roles with other person (e.g., finder versus hider)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>SI6.</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>REQUESTING</b>			
<b>RQ1.</b> Child reaches for out of reach object to show wanting the object	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>RQ2.</b> Child pulls person's hand toward objects to show request for help	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>RQ3.</b> Child gives objects to show request for help	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>RQ4a.</b> Child looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request (i.e., objects within reaching distance)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>RQ4b.</b> Child points to nearby objects to request them (i.e., objects within reaching distance)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>RQ5a.</b> Child looks at distant objects when another person points to the objects as a request (i.e., objects that are beyond reach)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>RQ5b.</b> Child points to more distant objects to request them (i.e., objects that are beyond reach)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>RQ6.</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person to request	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	

SOCIAL-COMMUNICATION CATEGORY AND SKILL LEVELS	Examples	Examples, Prompts, and Notes  Write in examples of behaviors observed. Note if a behavior was prompted. Prompted behaviors are scored 0. If no examples were observed, leave blank and score 0 to indicate that child did not display the skill.	Summary Score ? - unsure 0 – no examples 1 – 1 example 2 – 2 examples 3 – 3 examples
<b>JOINT ATTENTION</b>			
<b>JA1a.</b> Child responds to another person giving objects just to share interest in the objects	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>JA1b.</b> Child gives objects just to share interest in the objects with another person	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>JA2a.</b> Child responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>JA2b.</b> Child shows objects just to share interest in the objects with another person	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>JA3a.</b> Child follows a point to nearby objects/events just to share interest in objects/events	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>JA3b.</b> Child points to nearby objects/events just to share interest in objects/events with another person	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>JA4a.</b> Child follows a point to more distant objects/events just to share interest in the objects/events	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>JA4b.</b> Child points to more distant objects/events just to share interest in objects/events with another person	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>JA5.</b> Child follows gaze of another person to objects/events just to share interest	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>JA6.</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b> Add final column of summary scores (possible range of 0-72 points).			

## DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILE OF SOCIAL-COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Directions: Write in the Summary Score (?, 0, 1, 2, 3) established for each skill in the “Summary Score” column.

<b>SOCIAL INTERACTION</b>	<b>Summary Score</b>	<b>REQUESTING</b>	<b>Summary Score</b>	<b>JOINT ATTENTION</b>	<b>Summary Score</b>
<b>SI0.</b> No SI level mastered		<b>RQ0.</b> No RQ level mastered			
<b>SI1.</b> During face to face games, physical activities, or routines, child watches the adult closely		<b>RQ1.</b> Child reaches for out of reach object to show wanting the object			
<b>SI2.</b> Child shows wanting the game to continue after a brief pause		<b>RQ2.</b> Child pulls person’s hand toward objects to show request for help			
<b>SI3.</b> Child plays back and forth games with objects or actions		<b>RQ3.</b> Child gives objects to show request for help		<b>JA0.</b> No JA level mastered	
<b>SI4.</b> Child initiates familiar games or routines		<b>RQ4a.</b> Child looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request		<b>JA1a.</b> Child responds to another person giving objects just to share interest in the objects	
		<b>RQ4b.</b> Child points to nearby objects to request them		<b>JA1b.</b> Child gives objects just to share interest in the objects with another person	
<b>SI5.</b> Child expands games or routines		<b>RQ5a.</b> Child looks at distant objects when another person points to the objects as a request		<b>JA2a.</b> Child responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects	
		<b>RQ5b.</b> Child points to more distant objects to request them		<b>JA2b.</b> Child shows objects just to share interest in the objects with another person	
<b>SI6.</b> Child combines gesture/vocalization with looking to show wanting game to continue		<b>RQ6.</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person to request		<b>JA3a.</b> Child follows a point to nearby objects/events, just to share interest in objects/events	
				<b>JA3b.</b> Child points to nearby object, just to share interest in objects/events with another person	
				<b>JA4a.</b> Child follows a point to more distant objects/events, just to share interest in the objects/events	
				<b>JA4b.</b> Child points to more distant objects/events just to share interest in objects/events with another person	
				<b>JA5.</b> Child follows gaze of another person to objects/events just to share interest	
				<b>JA6.</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event	

## Unstructured Assessment of Play

1. One or more assessors (e.g., teacher, therapist) will first become familiar with the categories and skill levels in the *Assessment of Play Summary Score Sheet*.
2. Using the *Assessment of Play Summary Score Sheet*, the assessor(s) will look at each of the play categories (Exploratory, Relational, Functional, and Symbolic) and determine, from prior experience with the child, the child's current skill level. The child's current level represents the level at which the child masters a skill with at least three different examples of the behavior displayed without prompting from an adult. The assessor can write in the examples of the behavior for each skill level. For a behavior to receive credit as a new example, the behavior must occur in a different context, with a different object, or in a different way. If the child sorts shapes into separate boxes, sorts shapes in a shape sorter, and sorts paper cut-out shapes for an art project, the child has provided three examples of the behavior. However, if the child only sorts shapes into a shape sorter at three different times (on different days or during different sessions), the child only gets credit for displaying one example of that behavior. A child can also receive credit for completely different behaviors that fall under the same category. For example for R3 "Child puts several toys together in specific ways," if the child puts objects/toys together in complex combinations or specific ways and can do this with three different types of toys (e.g., tries to put shapes in sorter, puts puzzle pieces in puzzle, puts pop beads together), the skill level R3 is mastered.
3. For each skill, the assessor(s) will use the following scoring rubric and put a score in the Summary Score column on the form. The score is based on the examples of behaviors the assessor(s) have observed and the amount of prompting needed in previous interactions with the child:
  - ? = unsure of child's skill
  - 0 = child did not display this skill (or displayed only with prompts)
  - 1 = child displayed one example of this skill without prompts
  - 2 = child displayed two examples of this skill without prompts
  - 3 = child displayed three examples of this skill without prompts
4. The assessor(s) may have observed emerging play skills that the child exhibits when prompted but not spontaneously. In these cases, the assessor(s) can note the examples on the Summary Score Sheet with an indication that the behavior occurs with prompts. These examples are not counted toward mastery, but may be useful in determining intervention strategies for helping the child.
5. Once you have completed the *Unstructured "Experience-Based" Assessment of Play Summary Score Sheet*, on the page labeled "*Developmental Profile of Play Skills*," enter the summary score for each skill level in the appropriate column. Remember, a "3" indicating "Mastery" is only given if the teacher/therapist/team has observed 3 different examples of the child displaying the skill at that level. You may also want to circle the highest level of play skills mastered for each category (i.e., Exploratory, Relational, Functional, and Symbolic). Thus, for Exploratory Play, circle the highest level the child achieved with a summary score of 3. If the child did not meet criteria for mastering any skill in the Exploratory Play category, circle E0. Complete the profile for Relational, Functional, and Symbolic Play in a similar fashion.

**Note:** In general, play skills develop in a linear or sequential manner. Although children maintain a variety of play skills in their repertoire, it is not uncommon for a child to stop exhibiting some very low level play skills (e.g., exploratory play) once higher level play skills (e.g., functional play) have been developed.

## Unstructured “Experience-Based” Assessment of Play Summary Score Sheet

Child’s Name \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner’s Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner’s Role(s) (e.g., teacher, therapist): \_\_\_\_\_

### Assessment Method Used (check one):

- ☐ Unstructured “experienced based”
- ☐ Structured Assessment of Play
- ☐ Combination

Other notes about the context(s) of the session:

### Directions:

Fill out all sections completely and indicate if the child has displayed 0, 1, 2, or 3 different types of play behaviors (unprompted) at each of the 20 skills levels (e.g., 3 for Exploratory, 3 for Relational, 5 for Functional, and 9 for Symbolic ). All examples of play must occur without any prompting by another person. Check off the “Example” boxes to indicate when a child has demonstrated a different play behavior in this skill level, and write out the specific play behavior observed (e.g., “brushes a doll’s hair”). An example can only be credited if the behavior occurs in a different context, with a different object, or in a different way, as the child does not receive credit for repeating the same exact play act (even if on different days). You can make notes to indicate if any prompting was helpful to elicit a given skill; however, prompted behaviors do not get checked as examples and are not credited in the summary score. If you are unsure of the child’s ability to perform a particular skill, write a “?” in the Summary Score column. The number of checked boxes is the Summary Score, which should be noted in the last column. For example, if the child demonstrated taking objects apart (R1) in two different situations, two boxes should be checked and the Summary Score is “2.” If no unprompted play behavior is observed at a level, write “0” in the Summary Score column. The Summary Score for each skill should be transferred to the “Developmental Profile of Play Skills” and the highest skill level achieved for each category (i.e., Exploratory, Relational, Functional, Symbolic) should be circled.

Summary Score Guidelines:

- ? = unsure of child’s skill
- 0 = child has not display this skill (or displayed only with prompts)
- 1 = child has displayed one example of this skill without prompts
- 2 = child has displayed two examples of this skill without prompts
- 3 = child has displayed three examples of this skill without prompts

\* **Prompt Levels-** UP=unprompted, FP=full physical, PP=partial physical, FM=full model, PM=partial model, VM= verbal model, G=gesture, P=positional, EV=environmental/pictorial



PLAY CATEGORY AND SKILL LEVELS	Examples	Examples, Prompts, & Notes  Write in examples of behaviors observed. Note if a behavior was prompted. Prompted behaviors are scored 0. If no examples were observed, leave blank and score 0 to indicate that child did not display the skill.	Summary Score ? - unsure 0 – no examples 1 – 1 example 2 – 2 examples 3 – 3 examples
<b>EXPLORATORY PLAY</b>			
<b>E1.</b> Child picks up and looks at a toy Examples: Picks up, looks at, puts down block; Picks up, looks at, puts down ball	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>E2.</b> Child plays with toys using both hands together Examples: Pushes buttons on pop up; Rolls ball; Gathers blocks; Turns pages in book	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>E3.</b> Child plays with one toy in three or more different ways Examples: Rolls, bounces, and pats ball; Mouths, bangs, and stretches slinky	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>RELATIONAL PLAY</b>			
<b>R1.</b> Child takes pieces of toys apart Examples: Detaches large pop beads; Removes lid from container	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>R2.</b> Child puts toys together in simple ways. Examples: Drops blocks in cup; Puts lid on container	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>R3.</b> Child puts several toys together in specific ways Examples: Puts pieces of puzzle together; Strings beads; Sorts shapes into a shape sorter	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>FUNCTIONAL PLAY</b>			
<b>F1.</b> Child plays with toys in functional or simple pretend ways Examples: Stirs spoon in cup; Pushes truck in purposeful path	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>F2.</b> Child plays with toys in simple pretend ways directed to self Examples: Feeds self with empty spoon; Brushes own hair with plastic hairbrush.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>F3.</b> Child includes a doll/action figure in simple pretend play with toys Examples: Brushes doll's hair with brush; Diapers doll	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>F4.</b> Child includes other people in simple pretend play with toys Examples: Feeds adult with spoon; Combs adult's hair with comb	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>F5.</b> Child uses the same action in simple pretend play with two different people or dolls/figures Example: Places cup to adult's lips, then places cup to doll's mouth.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		

PLAY CATEGORY AND SKILL LEVELS	Examples	Examples, Prompts, & Notes  Write in examples of behaviors observed. Note if a behavior was prompted. Prompted behaviors are scored 0. If no examples were observed, leave blank and score 0 to indicate that child did not display the skill.	Summary Score ? - unsure 0 – no examples 1 – 1 example 2 – 2 examples 3 – 3 examples
<b>SYMBOLIC PLAY</b>			
<b>S1.</b> Child makes doll/figure move or do things as it were alive ■ Examples: Walks a doll; Manipulates toy animal to “eat” from container; Doll brushes own hair	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>S2.</b> Child does 2 different pretend actions, one right after another, with the same toy ■ Examples: Stirs spoon in bowl and then pretends to feed doll; Fills up car with gas and drives into garage	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>S3.</b> Child does 3 or more different pretend actions, one right after another, with the same toy ■ Example: Feeds doll, wipes doll’s mouth, puts doll to bed, kisses goodnight; Drives ambulance to hospital, takes patient out of ambulance, and places on hospital bed	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>S4.</b> Child uses one toy/object to represent or stand for another ■ Examples: Uses block as a hairbrush or cup; Puts sponge in bowl as food; Uses paper as blanket or diaper for baby	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>S5.</b> Child uses pretend qualities in play ■ Examples: Blows on spoon as if soup is hot; Makes “yucky” gesture when pretending to eat play dough	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>S6.</b> Child uses pretend objects in play ■ Examples: Shakes imaginary salt shaker; Holds hand to ear as if talking on telephone; Shapes hand as if holding a tool and creates tool’s action	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>S7.</b> Child takes on a pretend role in play that other people direct ■ Examples: Plays house when adult suggests it; Plays construction worker when another child suggests it	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>S8.</b> Child suggests pretend roles in play to self or other people ■ Example: Plays hospital suggesting roles to others such as “I’ll be the nurse, you be the patient.”	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>S9.</b> Child expands pretend play with other people into (a) new roles, (b) new theme, and/or (c) fantasy roles ■ Examples: Spiderman rescues victims; Princess and prince marry and go to live in haunted castle; Monsters fighting	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b> Add final column of summary scores. (Possible range 0-60 points)			

## DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILE OF PLAY SKILLS

Directions: Write in the Summary Score (?, 0, 1, 2, 3) established for each skill in the “Summary Score” column.

EXPLORATORY PLAY	Summary Score	RELATIONAL PLAY	Summary Score	FUNCTIONAL PLAY	Summary Score	SYMBOLIC PLAY	Summary Score
<b>E0.</b> No E level mastered							
<b>E1.</b> Child picks up and looks at a toy							
<b>E2.</b> Child plays with toys using both hands together		<b>R0.</b> No R level mastered					
<b>E3.</b> Child plays with one toy in three or more different ways		<b>R1.</b> Child takes pieces of toys apart					
		<b>R2.</b> Child puts toys together in simple ways		<b>F0.</b> No F level mastered			
		<b>R3.</b> Child puts several toys together in specific ways		<b>F1.</b> Child plays with toys in functional or simple pretend ways			
				<b>F2.</b> Child plays with toys in simple pretend ways directed to self			
				<b>F3.</b> Child includes a doll/action figure in simple pretend play with toys		<b>S0.</b> No S level mastered	
				<b>F4.</b> Child includes other people in simple pretend play with toys		<b>S1.</b> Child makes doll/figure move or do things as if it were alive	
				<b>F5.</b> Child uses same action in simple pretend play with two different people or dolls/figures		<b>S2.</b> Child does 2 different pretend actions, one right after another, with the same toy	
						<b>S3.</b> Child does 3 or more different pretend actions, one right after another, with the same toy	
						<b>S4.</b> Child uses one toy/object to represent or stand for another	
						<b>S5.</b> Child uses pretend qualities in play	
						<b>S6.</b> Child uses pretend objects in play	
						<b>S7.</b> Child takes on a pretend role in play that other people direct	
						<b>S8.</b> Child suggests pretend roles in play to self or other people	
						<b>S9.</b> Child expands pretend play with other people into (a) new roles, (b) new themes, and/or (c) fantasy roles	

# 4

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## STRUCTURED ASSESSMENTS

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## Structured Assessment of Social-Communication

There are two parts to the Structured Assessment of Social-Communication:

- (1) Focused practice session with an Adult
- (2) Classroom Social-Communication Observation (small group observation)

### Part I: Focused Practice Session with an Adult

#### *Context & Time*

Approximately 20-25 minutes are needed to complete this portion of the assessment. The assessment can be completed in one longer session, or in shorter mini-sessions as fits into the classroom schedule and/or the child's attention abilities. This part of the Assessment of Social-Communication is conducted by an adult (e.g., therapist or teacher) and the individual child in a separate portion of the classroom allowing for focused interaction (or in a separate room). The suggested furniture is a child-sized table and two chairs. Alternatively, the child and adult can be seated on the floor facing one another if in the adult's judgment the child will be more comfortable and cooperative in that location.

There are five scenarios to present to the child for this assessment (puzzles, action toys, physical games, surprise bag, and book). In addition, the adult will pre-place colorful pictures or objects that may interest the child in the assessment area. The scenarios can be presented in any order.

#### *Materials*

- ☐ Two 4- to 7-piece form board puzzles with different themes (e.g., animals and vehicles)
- ☐ 2-3 different "action" toys, such as wind-up toys or switch-operated, battery-powered toys that can be turned on to create an interesting spectacle and then turned back off. These toys should be relatively novel to the child rather than toys that are commonly available in the classroom.
- ☐ Props for selected physical games, if any are needed (e.g., a hand puppet to use for tickling the child).
- ☐ An opaque bag with four "surprise" toys inside; these can be individualized to the child's interests, but might include such things as a pair of sunglasses, a musical instrument such as a bell with a handle or a tambourine, a toy car, and a ball. There should be at least one toy that can be rolled back and forth between the examiner and child, such as a car or ball. The adult should have duplicates of at least two of these toys to allow both the child and the adult to have one.
- ☐ A picture book with two "defaced" pages embedded in the book—one page that is torn, and one page that has been scribbled on with a marker.
- ☐ A colorful picture on the wall (such as a picture of a favorite cartoon character), or a colorful object, placed in front of the child out of reach but in his or her line of sight. This picture or object should be novel (i.e., not usually in the room where the child can see it), and put in place before beginning the assessment.
- ☐ A colorful picture (or colorful object) that is placed slightly behind the child to his/her left or right side, out of the child's reach. This picture or object also should be something novel, and should be put in place before beginning the assessment.
- ☐ Two boxes or bags to store materials—one for materials that have not been presented yet, and one for materials that have been used ("finished").
- ☐ *Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Worksheet, Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Summary Score Sheet, and Manual*

## General Procedures for the Examiner

- 1) Seat the child so s/he is comfortable, settled in a chair or on the floor, and facing the examiner.
- 2) Present each scenario and related toys sequentially, and put away the toys or other materials at the end of each scenario.
- 3) There is no set time for each scenario. We have suggested some approximate times. **A total time of 20-25 minutes is appropriate** to complete the entire measure.
- 4) **Talk as little as possible.** Give the child plenty of silent time to initiate or respond.
- 5) Show interest in the materials and in whatever the child is doing with them.
- 6) The goal is to get some basic information about what the child can do with minimal support and prompting. Try to use as few prompts and supports as possible so that you are more likely to see the child's spontaneous skills. Resist what often is a natural inclination to "teach," and instead use this session to see what the child can do without the prompting and encouragement used in teaching. If you do prompt the child, make a note of your prompt on the Social-Communication Worksheet, and take the prompts into consideration when scoring the child's performance during the assessment.

## Assessment Scenarios

(Use the *Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Worksheet* to document the child's behaviors)

### Puzzles (3-4 minutes)

The puzzles scenario primarily provides opportunities for Requesting; Joint Attention behaviors may be seen as well.

- ☐ Opportunities for the child to ***initiate Requesting***:
  - Hold up the two puzzles beyond the child's easy reach, to offer the child a choice.
  - Hold back one or two of the puzzle pieces out of the child's reach when you give a puzzle to the child.
  - Watch child work on puzzle without assisting him/her. If child finds puzzle challenging, observe whether s/he requests your assistance.
- ☐ Opportunities for the child to ***initiate Joint Attention***:
  - Stay quiet as the child works on the puzzle. Observe whether the child shows you an interesting puzzle piece or comments on something in the puzzle.
- ☐ Opportunities for the child to ***respond to Requesting***:
  - When the child has completed the puzzle (or lost interest in doing so), point to the puzzle board or a puzzle piece and ask the child to give it to you. Two attempts to get a response from the child are enough. Then put the puzzle away.

### **Action Toys (2-3 minutes)**

The action toys scenario provides opportunities for Requesting and Joint Attention.

- Opportunities for the child to ***initiate Requesting***:
  - Keep the toy out of the child's reach and activate it briefly. Let it wind down or turn off the switch. Wait for the child's response without saying anything. Observe whether s/he requests the toy. Try a second toy if the child's doesn't seem interested in the first one.
  - Give the toy to the child (even if s/he doesn't request it), and let the child play with it briefly. Stay quiet while the child has the toy unless the child initiates communication with you. If the child cannot operate the toy, this may provide another opportunity for the child to request.
- Opportunities for the child to ***initiate Joint Attention***:
  - As described above, don't say anything when you first activate the toy. Observe what the child does (e.g., looks at you and back at the activated toy, or points at the toy to show you what's happening).
  - Also, if the child later starts the toy independently, observe whether the child tries to communicate with you about the activated toy (e.g., looks from the toy to you, or points to the activated toy).
- Opportunity for the child to ***respond to Requesting***
  - After the child has had 1-2 minutes to play with the toy, point to the toy and ask the child to give it to you or to put it in the "finished" bag or box. Observe how the child responds.

### **Physical Game (3-4 minutes)**

The physical game scenario is primarily aimed at assessing Social Interaction.

- Possible games include:
  - A tickle game, where you use your fingers to "creep" toward the child as you get ready to tickle.
  - A "horsey" game where you bounce the child on your knees a few times and then open your legs so that the child slips part of the way in between them.
  - A "ring-around-the-rosie" game where you hold hands with the child, circle around, and fall down.
  - Any other social game you think the child would enjoy. See the Activities section (Book II—Section 1) for other ideas.
- Opportunities for the child to ***participate in social interaction***
  - Whatever physical game you choose, do a first round of the game to let the child learn the routine. Then repeat the game for two more rounds. After the first round, observe whether the child looks at you in anticipation of the next round. You might alter the timing of the game (e.g., creeping fingers more slowly) to see if the child will look in anticipation.
  - Once you have played three rounds of the game, pause before starting another round to see if the child will indicate s/he wants to play the game again.
  - Play a second physical game with the child, using the same procedures.
  - When you pause after playing three rounds of the second game, observe whether the child will indicate s/he wants to play either the first or second game again.
- If the first game you try does not engage the child, try 1 to 2 others.

### **Surprise Bag (8-10 minutes)**

The surprise bag scenario is primarily aimed at assessing Joint Attention. It also can provide opportunities for Social Interaction and responding to Requesting.

- Opportunities for the child to ***respond to Joint Attention:***
  - At the beginning of the scenario, pull one toy from the bag, and show it to the child, making a delighted facial expression. Comment as you show it (e.g., “Oh, look at this truck!”). Observe how the child responds.
  - After you have shown the toy to the child and observed the child’s response, offer the toy to the child, making another comment (e.g., “This is a neat truck”). Observe whether the child takes the offered toy and looks at it.
  - Wait until later in the scenario (after the initiating Joint Attention opportunities) when all the toys are out of the bag. Point to one of the toys that the child isn’t looking at or playing with and comment on the toy with enthusiasm (e.g., “I like those sunglasses!”). Observe how the child responds. Repeat with another toy.
- Opportunities for the child to ***initiate Joint Attention:***
  - After pulling one toy from the bag and commenting on it, give the surprise bag with the remaining toys to the child. Observe whether the child attempts to show a toy to you or otherwise engage your attention to look at a toy that interests him/her. Do not talk to the child about the toys unless s/he initiates communication with you. (If the child doesn’t begin to explore the toys, you can try to engage the child’s interest by shaking the bag or partially uncovering a toy that is still in the bag.)
  - “Accidentally drop” or roll an object off of the table, letting it fall a distance away from you and the child. Wait without saying anything to see if the child communicates about the dropped object.
- Opportunities for the child to ***respond to Requesting:***
  - After the toys are out of the bag, point to an object and ask the child to give it to you. Observe how the child responds.
  - Use the “accidentally” dropped object described above. Point to the object and ask the child to get it. Observe how the child responds.
- Opportunities for the child to ***participate in Social Interaction:***
  - Wait until the child is playing with one of the duplicate toys. Use the other duplicate toy to imitate what the child does with the object, and observe what the child does when you imitate his or her action. Pause to see if the child looks toward you as though waiting for you to imitate him/her again. Repeat the imitated action to see if you can establish a back-and-forth imitation game with the child.
  - With the rolling toy or ball, try to initiate a game of rolling the toy back and forth to one another. If the child engages in taking several turns with you, then pause before taking your next turn. Wait to see if the child does anything to indicate s/he wants the game to continue.



### **Book (3-4 minutes)**

The book scenario is aimed primarily at assessing levels of Joint Attention.

- Opportunities for the child to ***respond to Joint Attention:***
  - Give the defaced book to the child making a simple, interested comment (e.g., “I like this book!”). Observe the child’s response.
  - Sometime toward the end of the book, point to an object on a page in the book and say “Look at the \_\_\_\_\_ (name of object).”
- Opportunity for the child to ***initiate Joint Attention:***
  - If the child starts to look at the book, let the child look through at least half of the book on his or her own, without talking unless the child initiates communication with you.
  - If the child does not begin to look at the book, make no more than 2 attempts to get the child started.

### **Colorful Pre-placed Pictures or Objects (1-2 minutes)**

The pre-placed pictures or objects in the assessment area are aimed primarily at assessing Joint Attention.

- Opportunities for the child to ***initiate Joint Attention:***
  - The presence of the pictures and/or objects offer opportunities for the child to initiate Joint Attention. For the first half of the session, do not direct the child’s attention to them. Observe whether the child initiates any communication about the pictures or objects.
- Opportunities for the child to ***initiate Requesting:***
  - The child may decide that s/he wants to have the pictures or objects in his or her hands. Observe whether the child communicates to request that s/he wants you to give him/her the pictures or objects.
- Opportunities for the child to ***respond to Joint Attention***
  - During the second part of the session, choose a time when the child is generally looking in your direction. First, cock your head to look around the child, and look with interest at a picture or object located behind him/her. **Do not point, or talk yet —just use your gaze along with an interested facial expression.** Observe how the child responds.
  - If the child does not respond to you directing your gaze to the picture, then point to the picture and say, “Look at that!” Observe how the child responds.

## **Part II: Classroom Social-Communication Observation (Small Group)**

### ***Context and Time***

Approximately 20-30 minutes are required for the adult (e.g., teacher or therapist) to complete this portion of the social-communication assessment. It may be conducted across several days (e.g., in blocks of 5-10 minutes at a time) in at least three different small group classroom settings. The contexts observed should be those where the child is alongside his/her peers, and is not engaged in a highly structured activity that places the child largely in a responder role. One context should be fairly open-ended play in any classroom center offering a variety of toys (e.g., housekeeping, blocks). Other suggested activities include snack time or table play (e.g. with sand, water, play dough), or a story time with a small group of two to four children.

### ***Materials***

The materials for this assessment will be those that are ordinarily present in the contexts in which the child is being observed. Use the *Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Summary Score Sheet* and Manual.

### ***General Procedures***

- ☐ Classroom instructional staff should be accessible to the child, but not highly active in initiating interactions with the child or prompting behavior during these observations. The overall goal is to see what the child will communicate and respond to on his/her own, without prompting.
- ☐ There should be three “engineered” situations to create motivation for the child to request during the 20-30 minutes of observation in different contexts. These might include having a favorite snack in sight but not offering it immediately to the child; leaving a favorite toy on a high shelf; removing the batteries from a favorite battery-operated toy; or handing one of the child’s favorite toys to one of his or her peers playing nearby.
- ☐ If the child’s peers are not initiating communication to the child (i.e., engaging his/her attention for social interactions, requests, or joint attention), then the observer should attempt to direct the child’s attention to nearby objects and to distant objects for the purpose of assessing the child’s responses to requests and attempts to share attention. The adult should not make any more than three attempts to direct attention of any one type (e.g., only point three times to request a nearby object at level RQ4a, or use three attempts to get the child to follow gaze to a distant object at level JA6).

### ***Acknowledgement***

This social-communication assessment was adapted from the work of Kasari et al. (2006), Mundy et al., (2003), and Wetherby & Prizant, (2001), as well as other literature on the development of joint attention and other social-communication abilities in children developing typically and those with autism (e.g., Crais, Douglas, & Cox, 2004; Watson, Crais & Baranek, in preparation).

## Scoring the Structured Assessment of Social-Communication

- 1) Use the *Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Worksheet* to document the child's communication behaviors during the assessment. We have organized the worksheet to allow you to check off the child's communication behaviors during each of the scenarios in the *Structured Assessment*. **You only will be scoring unprompted behaviors from the child;** however, we've given you spaces to check off any prompted behaviors that you observed as well, as this information may be helpful in your intervention planning.
- 2) After you have assessed the child's social-communication abilities, it is time to transfer that information from the worksheet to the *Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Summary Score Sheet*. On this sheet, you record the number of times the child exhibited unique unprompted communication behaviors at each level (up to three different behaviors across a variety of contexts) and any behaviors that were prompted. To guide you in this process, for each communication category and skill level, we have listed the Structured Assessment scenario (e.g., Puzzles, Book) where you are most likely to find examples of the targeted skills.
- 3) For each skill level, check the appropriate boxes to indicate each communicative act that "counts" as a unique and unprompted example of a given communication skill, up to a total of 3 unique examples of a single skill. Remember, if the child repeats the same behavior in the same scenario (e.g., requests a puzzle piece twice), s/he only gets credit for it one time.
- 4) We have indicated the categories of communication behaviors that a child is most likely to use during each scenario. However, children may communicate in other ways during a scenario. For instance, during the book activity which is generally focused on Joint Attention, a child may take your finger and move it along the words to request that you read. In such a case, you would be able to score the behavior as an example of requesting at level RQ2.
- 5) After completing the Structured Assessment of Social-Communication, the assessor(s) will use the following scoring rubric and put a score in the Summary Score column on the right side of the Summary Score Sheet. The score is based on the examples of unprompted communication behaviors the assessor(s) have observed:
  - 0 = child did not display this skill (or displayed only with prompts)
  - 1 = child displayed one example of this skill without prompts
  - 2 = child displayed two examples of this skill without prompts
  - 3 = child displayed three or more examples of this skill without prompts
- 6) Calculate the Total Score across items by adding together the 24 summary scores. The range of Total Scores is between 0 and 72. There is a space to mark the Total Score on the bottom right corner of the fourth page.
- 7) At the end of the *Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Summary Score Sheet*, on the page labeled "Developmental Profile of Communication Skills," enter the final score for the child for each of the different skill levels in the column marked "Focused Practice" for Part I of the assessment and "Observation" for Part II of the assessment.
- 8) Also, you may want to circle the highest level of communication skills mastered for each category (i.e., highest skills level in each of the three communication categories with a summary score of 3). Thus, for Social Interaction, circle the highest level the child achieved with a summary score of 3. If the child did not meet criteria for mastering any skill in the Social Interaction category, circle SI0. Complete the profile for Requesting and for Joint Attention in a similar fashion.

**Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Worksheet:  
Puzzles (Time: 3-4 minutes)**

**Materials:** Two 4-7 piece form board puzzles with different themes

What Adult Does	Child's Communication (Check all that apply)	
	Unprompted	Prompted
Offer child a choice of puzzles, holding them out of child's reach	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ1: Reaches for nearby object to show wanting the object <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b: Points at nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6: Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ1: Reaches for nearby object to show wanting the object <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b: Points at nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6: Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Hold back one or two puzzle pieces out of the child's reach when you give a puzzle to the child	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ1: Reaches for nearby object to show wanting the object <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b: Points at nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6: Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ1: Reaches for nearby object to show wanting the object <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b: Points at nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6: Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Watch child work on puzzle without assisting him/her  Stay quiet unless the child initiates communication	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ2: Pulls person's hand toward objects to show request for help <input type="checkbox"/> RQ3: Gives objects to show request for help <input type="checkbox"/> JA1b: Gives object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA2b: Shows object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA3b: Points to nearby object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6: Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ2: Pulls person's hand toward objects to show request for help <input type="checkbox"/> RQ3: Gives objects to show request for help <input type="checkbox"/> JA1b: Gives object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA2b: Shows object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA3b: Points to nearby object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6: Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
When child has completed puzzle (or lost interest in doing so), point to the puzzle board or a puzzle piece and say to the child "Give it to me." Two attempts to get a response are enough. Then put the puzzle away	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ4a: Looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ4a: Looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

## Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Worksheet: Action Toys (Time: 2-3 minutes)

**Materials:** 2-3 different “action” toys, such as wind-up toys or switch-operated, battery-powered toys that can be turned on to create an interesting spectacle and then turned back off. These toys should be relatively novel to the child rather than toys that are commonly available in the classroom.

What Adult Does	Child’s Communication (Check all that apply)	
	Unprompted	Prompted
<p>Keep the toy out of the child’s reach and activate it briefly. Let it wind down or turn off the switch. Wait without saying anything for the child’s response.</p> <p>Try a second toy if the child doesn’t seem interested in the first one.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ1. Reaches for nearby object to show wanting the object <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b. Points at nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> JA3b. Points to nearby object/event just to share interest in object/event with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ1. Reaches for nearby object to show wanting the object <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b. Points at nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> JA3b. Points to nearby object/event just to share interest in object/event with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>Give the toy to the child (even if s/he doesn’t request it), and let the child play with it briefly.</p> <p>Stay quiet while the child has the toy unless the child initiates communication with you.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ2: Pulls person’s hand toward objects to show request for help <input type="checkbox"/> RQ3. Gives objects to show request for help <input type="checkbox"/> JA1a. Responds to another person giving object just to show interest <input type="checkbox"/> JA2b. Shows object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA3b. Points to nearby object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ2: Pulls person’s hand toward objects to show request for help <input type="checkbox"/> RQ3. Gives objects to show request for help <input type="checkbox"/> JA1a. Responds to another person giving object just to show interest <input type="checkbox"/> JA2b. Shows object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA3b. Points to nearby object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>After the child has had 1-2 minutes to play with the toy, point to the toy and ask the child to give it to you or to put it in the “finished” bag or box.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ4a. Looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ4a. Looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

## Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Worksheet: Physical Game (Time: 3-4 minutes)

**Materials:** Most physical games do not require any materials, but you might choose one that requires a prop, such as a hand puppet to tickle the child with, or a blanket to use in a “peek-a-boo” type game.

What Adult Does	Child's Communication (Check all that apply)	
	Unprompted	Prompted
Physical Game #1: Do a first round of the game to let the child know what the routine is.  Repeat the game for two more rounds. You might alter the timing of the game (e.g., creeping fingers more slowly) to see if the child will look closely at you.	<input type="checkbox"/> SI1. Watches the adult closely <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> SI1. Watches the adult closely <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Physical Game #1, cont. Once you have played three rounds of the game, pause before starting another round to see if the child will indicate s/he wants to play the game again.	<input type="checkbox"/> SI2. After a brief pause, child shows wanting the game to continue (e.g., looks, moves body to make a motion of the game, touches the partner, vocalizes) <input type="checkbox"/> SI5. Child expands games or routines, e.g., switches roles with other person (e.g., finder versus hider) <input type="checkbox"/> SI6. Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> SI2. After a brief pause, child shows wanting the game to continue (e.g., looks, moves body to make a motion of the game, touches the partner, vocalizes) <input type="checkbox"/> SI5. Child expands games or routines, e.g., switches roles with other person (e.g., finder versus hider) <input type="checkbox"/> SI6. Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Physical Game #2: Do a first round of the game to let the child know what the routine is.  Repeat the game for two more rounds. You might alter the timing.	<input type="checkbox"/> SI1. Watches the adult closely <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> SI1. Watches the adult closely <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Physical Game #2, cont. Once you have played three rounds of the game, pause before starting another round to see if the child will indicate s/he wants to play the game again, OR if the child indicates s/he wants to play Physical Game #1 again.	<input type="checkbox"/> SI2. After a brief pause child shows wanting the game to continue (e.g., looks, moves body to make a motion of the game, touches the partner, vocalizes) <input type="checkbox"/> SI4. Child initiates familiar games or routines (i.e., not right after an adult does the action ); that is, the child indicates s/he wants to play Physical Game #1 again. <input type="checkbox"/> SI5. Child expands games or routines, e.g., switches roles with other person (e.g., finder versus hider) <input type="checkbox"/> SI6. Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> SI2. After a brief pause child shows wanting the game to continue (e.g., looks, moves body to make a motion of the game, touches the partner, vocalizes) <input type="checkbox"/> SI4. Child initiates familiar games or routines (i.e., not right after an adult does the action ); that is, the child indicates s/he wants to play Physical Game #1 again. <input type="checkbox"/> SI5. Child expands games or routines, e.g., switches roles with other person (e.g., finder versus hider) <input type="checkbox"/> SI6. Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

## Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Worksheet: Surprise Bag (Time: 8-10 minutes)

**Materials:** An opaque bag with four “surprise” toys inside; these can be individualized to the child’s interests, but might include such things as a pair of sunglasses, a musical instrument such as a bell with a handle or a tambourine, a toy car, and a ball. There should be at least one toy that can be rolled back and forth between the examiner and child, such as a car or ball. The adult should have duplicates of at least two of these toys to allow both the child and the adult to have one.

What Adult Does	Child’s Communication (Check all that apply)	
	Unprompted	Prompted
<p>Pull one toy from the bag, and show it to the child, making a delighted facial expression. Comment as you show it (e.g., “Oh, look at this truck!”). Wait to observe child’s response.</p> <p>Offer the toy to child, making another comment (e.g., “This is a neat truck.”).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ1. Reaches for out of reach object to show wanting it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b. Points to nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> JA1a. Responds to another person giving objects just to share interest in the objects <input type="checkbox"/> JA2a. Responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ1. Reaches for out of reach object to show wanting it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b. Points to nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> JA1a. Responds to another person giving objects just to share interest in the objects <input type="checkbox"/> JA2a. Responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>Give the surprise bag with the remaining toys to the child.</p> <p>Do not talk to the child about the toys unless s/he initiates communication with you.</p> <p>(If the child doesn’t begin to explore toys, try to engage the child’s interest by shaking bag or partially uncovering a toy in the bag.)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> JA1b: Gives objects just to share interest in objects with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA2b: Shows object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA3b: Points to nearby object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6: Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person just to share interest <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> JA1b: Gives objects just to share interest in objects with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA2b: Shows object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA3b: Points to nearby object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6: Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person just to share <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>After the toys are out of the bag, point to an object and say to the child “Give it to me.”</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ4a. Looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ4a. Looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>“Accidentally” drop or roll a toy off the table so that it is a little distance away from you &amp; the child.</p> <p>Wait without saying anything to see if the child communicates about the dropped object.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> JA4b. Points to more distant object/event just to share interest in the object/event with another person <input type="checkbox"/> RQ1. Reaches for out of reach object to show wanting it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b. Points to nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> JA4b. Points to more distant object/event just to share interest in the object/event with another person <input type="checkbox"/> RQ1. Reaches for out of reach object to show wanting it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b. Points to nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>Point to the dropped object from a distance (beyond arm’s length) and say to the child “Give it to get me.”</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ5a. Looks at distant object when another person points at the object as a request. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ5a. Looks at distant object when another person points at the object as a request. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

<p>Wait until the child is playing with one of the duplicate toys.</p> <p>Use the other duplicate toy to imitate what the child does with the object</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> SI3. Plays back-and-forth game with actions or object (e.g., exchanges object back-and-forth; back-and-forth game of imitating actions)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> SI3. Plays back-and-forth game with actions or object (e.g., exchanges object back-and-forth; back-and-forth game of imitating actions)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>
<p>With the rolling toy or ball, try to initiate a game of rolling the toy back and forth to one another.</p> <p>If the child engages in taking several turns with you, then pause before taking your next turn.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> SI2. After a brief pause, shows wanting the game to continue (e.g., looks, moves body to make a motion of the game, touches the partner, vocalizes)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SI3. Plays back-and-forth games with objects or actions (e.g., exchanges objects back-and-forth; back-and-forth game of imitating actions)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SI6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> SI2. After a brief pause, shows wanting the game to continue (e.g., looks, moves body to make a motion of the game, touches the partner, vocalizes)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SI3. Plays back-and-forth games with objects or actions (e.g., exchanges objects back-and-forth; back-and-forth game of imitating actions)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SI6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>



**Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Worksheet:**  
**Book (Time: 3-4 minutes)**

**Materials:** A picture book with two “defaced” pages embedded in the book—one page that is torn, and one page that has been scribbled on with a marker.

What Adult Does	Child’s Communication (Check all that apply)	
	Unprompted	Prompted
<p>Give the defaced book to the child, making a simple, interested comment (e.g., “I like this book!”).</p> <p>If the child begins to look at the book, say nothing more unless the child initiates communication with you.</p> <p>(If the child does not begin to look at the book, make no more than 2 attempts to get the child started.)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> JA1a. Responds to another person giving objects just to share interest</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JA1b. Gives object just to share interest in object with another person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JA2b. Shows object just to share interest in object with another person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JA3b. Points to nearby object just to share interest in object with another person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JA6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> JA1a. Responds to another person giving objects just to share interest</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JA1b. Gives object just to share interest in object with another person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JA2b. Shows object just to share interest in object with another person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JA3b. Points to nearby object just to share interest in object with another person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JA6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>
<p>Sometime toward the end of the book, point to an object on a page in the book and say “Look at the _____ (name of object).”</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> JA2a. Responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> JA2a. Responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>

## Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Worksheet: Colorful Pre-Placed Pictures or Objects (Time: 1-2 minutes)

**Materials:** A colorful picture on the wall (such as a picture of a favorite cartoon character), or a colorful object, placed in front of the child out of reach but in his or her line of sight. This picture or object should be novel (i.e., not usually in the room where the child can see it), and put in place before beginning the assessment. A colorful picture (or colorful object) that is placed slightly behind the child to his/her left or right side, out of the child's reach. This picture or object also should be something novel, and should be put in place before beginning the assessment.

What Adult Does	Child's Communication (Check all that apply)	
	Unprompted	Prompted
<p>The presence of the pictures and/or objects offers opportunities for the child to initiate Joint Attention.</p> <p>For the first half of the session, do not direct the child's attention to them.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> JA4b. Points to more distant objects/events just to share interest in objects/events with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> JA4b. Points to more distant objects/events just to share interest in objects/events with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>The presence of the pictures and/or objects also offers opportunities for the child to initiate Requesting. The adult should simply observe whether this occurs.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ5b. Points to more distant objects to request them. <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ5b. Points to more distant objects to request them. <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>During the second part of the session, choose a time when the child is generally looking in your direction. First, cock your head to look around the child, and look with interest at a picture or object located behind him/her. Do not point or talk yet —just use your gaze along with an interested facial expression.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> JA5. Follows gaze of another person to objects/events just to share interest <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> JA5. Follows gaze of another person to objects/events just to share interest <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>If the child does not respond to you directing your gaze to the picture, then point to the picture and say, "Look at that!"</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> JA4a: Follows a point to more distant objects/events just to share interest in the objects/events <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> JA4a: Follows a point to more distant objects/events just to share interest in the objects/events <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

**Structured Assessment of Social-Communication  
Summary Score Sheet**

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examiner's Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date(s) of Evaluation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examiner's Role(s) (e.g., teacher, therapist):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluation Session (check one):**

- ☐ Part I: Focused Practice with an Adult
- ☐ Part II: Classroom Social-Communication Observation (Small Group). Number of peers present: \_\_\_\_\_

Other notes about the context(s) of the session: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:**

Now that you have assessed the child's social-communication and related abilities, it is time to transfer that information from the Worksheet to this *Social-Communication Summary Score Sheet*. Under each Social-Communication Category and Skill Level is listed the skill targeted and the task that elicited the skill within the Structured Assessment (see next page). For example under SI1 "During face to face games, physical activities or routines, child looks in anticipation when activity stops," the **Physical Games Task** from the Structured Assessment is listed. Within this task there are several opportunities to elicit and observe a child participating in physical games and routines. The professional can then move back and forth between the **Social-Communication Worksheet** and record the observed behaviors for each skill level on the **Social-Communication Summary Score Sheet**. Check off the "Example" boxes to indicate when a child has demonstrated an unprompted behavior and write out the specific behavior observed (e.g., "pointed to distant toy car"). Remember, an example can only be credited if the behavior occurred in a different context, with a different object, or in a different way, as the child does not receive credit for repeating the exact same behavior (even if on different days). All examples of scored behaviors must occur without any prompting by another person. You can note if prompting was helpful to elicit a given skill; however, prompted behaviors do not get checked as examples and are not credited in the summary score. The number of checked boxes is the Summary Score, which should be noted in the last column. For example, if the child demonstrates reaching to request (RQ1) in two different situations, two boxes should be checked and the Summary Score is "2." If no unprompted behavior is observed at a level, write "0" in the Summary Score column. The Summary Score for each skill for both the one to one and classroom observations should be transferred to the "Focused Practice" and "Observation" columns on the *Developmental Profile of Communication Skills* and the highest skill level achieved for each category (i.e., Social Interaction, Requesting, Joint Attention) should be circled in both columns.

**Summary Score Guidelines:**

- ? = unsure of child's skill
- 0 = child has not display this skill (or displayed only with prompts)
- 1 = child has displayed one example of this skill without prompts
- 2 = child has displayed two examples of this skill without prompts
- 3 = child has displayed three examples of this skill without prompts

**\* Prompt Levels-** UP=unprompted, FP=full physical, PP=partial physical,  
FM=full model, PM=partial model, VM= verbal model, G=gesture,  
P=positional, EV=environmental/pictorial

SOCIAL-COMMUNICATION CATEGORY AND SKILL LEVELS	Examples	<b>Examples, Prompts, and Notes</b>  Write in examples of behaviors observed. Note if a behavior was prompted. Prompted behaviors are scored 0. If no examples were observed, leave blank and score 0 to indicate that child did not display the skill.	<b>Summary Score</b> ? - unsure 0 – no examples 1 – 1 example 2 – 2 examples 3 – 3 examples
<b>SOCIAL INTERACTION</b>			
<b>SI1.</b> During face to face games, physical activities, or routines, child watches the adult closely <b>Structured Assessment: Physical Games</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>SI2.</b> During face to face games, physical activities, or routines, after a brief pause child shows wanting the game to continue (e.g., looks, moves body to make a motion of the game, touches the partner, vocalizes) <b>Structured Assessment: Physical Games, Surprise Bag</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>SI3.</b> Child plays back-and-forth games with objects or actions (e.g., exchanges objects back-and-forth; back-and-forth game of imitating actions) <b>Structured Assessment: Surprise Bag</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>SI4.</b> Child initiates familiar games or routines (i.e., not right after an adult does the action) <b>Structured Assessment: Physical Games, Surprise Bag</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>SI5.</b> Child expands games or routines, e.g., ▪ Includes a third person in the game/routine ▪ Reverses roles with other person <b>Structured Assessment: Physical Games, Surprise Bag</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>SI6:</b> Child combines gesture and/or verbalization/vocalization with looking at person to signal wanting game to continue <b>Structured Assessment: Physical Games, Surprise Bag</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	

SOCIAL-COMMUNICATION CATEGORY AND SKILL LEVELS	Examples	<b>Examples, Prompts, and Notes</b>  Write in examples of behaviors observed. Note if a behavior was prompted. Prompted behaviors are scored 0. If no examples were observed, leave blank and score 0 to indicate that child did not display the skill.	<b>Summary Score</b> ? - unsure 0 – no examples 1 – 1 example 2 – 2 examples 3 – 3 examples
<b>REQUESTING</b>			
<b>RQ1.</b> Child reaches for out of reach object to show wanting the object <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys, Surprise Bag, Colorful Pictures/Objects</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>RQ2.</b> Child pulls person's hand toward objects to show request for help <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>RQ3.</b> Child gives objects to show request for help <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>RQ4a.</b> Child looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request (i.e., objects within reaching distance) <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys, Surprise Bag</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>RQ4b.</b> Child points to nearby objects to request them <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys, Surprise Bag</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>RQ5a.</b> Child looks at distant objects when another person points to the objects as a request (i.e., objects that are beyond reach) <b>Structured Assessment: Surprise Bag (object rolling away)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>RQ5b.</b> Child points to more distant objects to request them (i.e., objects that are beyond reach) <b>Structured Assessment: Colorful Pictures/Objects</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>RQ6.</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to request <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys, Surprise Bag, Colorful Pictures/Objects</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	

SOCIAL-COMMUNICATION CATEGORY AND SKILL LEVELS	Examples	Examples, Prompts, and Notes  Write in examples of behaviors observed. Note if a behavior was prompted. Prompted behaviors are scored 0. If no examples were observed, leave blank and score 0 to indicate that child did not display the skill.	Summary Score ? - unsure 0 – no examples 1 – 1 example 2 – 2 examples 3 – 3 examples
<b>JOINT ATTENTION</b>			
<b>JA1a.</b> Child responds to another person giving objects just to share interest in the objects <b>Structured Assessment: Action Toys, Surprise Bag, Book</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>JA1b.</b> Child gives objects just to share interest in objects with another person <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Surprise Bag, Book</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>JA2a.</b> Child responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys, Surprise Bag, Book</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>JA2b.</b> Child shows objects just to share interest in the objects with another person <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys, Surprise Bag, Book</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>JA3a.</b> Child follows a point to nearby objects/events just to share interest in objects/events <b>Structured Assessment: Surprise Bag, Book</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>JA3b.</b> Child points to nearby objects/events just to share interest in objects/events with another person <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys, Surprise Bag, Books</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>JA4a.</b> Child follows a point to more distant objects/events just to share interest in the objects/events <b>Structured Assessment: Colorful Pictures/Objects</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>JA4b.</b> Child points to a more distant objects/events just to share interest in the objects/events with another person <b>Structured Assessment: Surprise Bag (object rolling away), Colorful Pictures/Objects</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>JA5.</b> Child follows gaze of another person to objects/events just to share interest <b>Structured Assessment: Colorful Pictures/Objects (Any time during assessment when elicited by adult)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>JA6.</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys, Surprise Bag, Book, Colorful Pictures/Objects</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b> Add final column of summary scores (possible range of 0-72 points).			

## DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILE OF SOCIAL-COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Directions: In the Focused Column, write in the Summary Score (0, 1, 2, 3) established for each skill during the Part I: Focused Practice with an Adult.

In the Observation Column, write in the Summary Score (0, 1, 2, 3) established for each skill during the Part II: Classroom Social-Communication Observation.

SOCIAL INTERACTION	Focused	Observation	REQUESTING	Focused	Observation	JOINT ATTENTION	Focused	Observation
<b>SI0.</b> No SI level mastered								
<b>SI1.</b> During face to face games, physical activities, or routines, child watches the adult closely								
<b>SI2.</b> Child shows wanting the game to continue after a brief pause			<b>RQ0.</b> No RQ level mastered					
<b>SI3.</b> Child plays back and forth games with objects or actions			<b>RQ1.</b> Child reaches for out of reach object to show wanting the object					
<b>SI4.</b> Child initiates familiar games or routines			<b>RQ2.</b> Child pulls person's hand toward objects to show request for help					
<b>SI5.</b> Child expands games or routines			<b>RQ3.</b> Child gives objects to show request for help			<b>JA0.</b> No JA level mastered		
<b>SI6:</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue			<b>RQ4a.</b> Child looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request			<b>JA1a.</b> Child responds to another person giving objects just to share interest in the objects		
			<b>RQ4b.</b> Child points to nearby objects to request them			<b>JA1b.</b> Child gives objects just to share interest in the objects with another person		
			<b>RQ5a.</b> Child looks at distant objects when another person points to the objects as a request			<b>JA2a.</b> Child responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects		
			<b>RQ5b.</b> Child points to more distant objects to request them			<b>JA2b.</b> Child shows objects just to share interest in the objects with another person		
			<b>RQ6.</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person to request			<b>JA3a.</b> Child follows a point to near-by objects/events, just to share interest in objects/events		
						<b>JA3b.</b> Child points to near-by objects/events, just to share interest		
						<b>JA4a.</b> Child follows a point to more distant objects/events, just to share interest		
						<b>JA4b.</b> Child points to more distant objects/events just to share interest		
						<b>JA5.</b> Child follows gaze of another person to objects/events just to share interest		
						<b>JA6.</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event		

## Structured Assessment of Play

There are two parts to the Structured Assessment of Play:

- (1) Focused practice session with an Adult
- (2) Classroom Play Observation (small group observation)

### Part I: Focused Practice with an Adult

#### *Context & Time*

Approximately 15-20 minutes are needed to complete this portion of the assessment. Multiple sessions may be needed depending on the child's skill level and attention abilities. It is conducted by an adult examiner (e.g., therapist or teacher) and the individual child in a small room (or portion of the classroom) with a child-sized table and two chairs.

#### *Materials*

- ☐ Three conventional toy sets that lend themselves to simple pretend play and symbolic play in the context of familiar social or occupational routines.
  - Mealtime set: Large doll/stuffed animal/action figure, 2 cups, 2 spoons, 2 plates, pot/pan, serving utensils such as spatula, large spoon, etc., and some "generic" items including a sponge, a few shapes/blocks, a piece of writing paper.
  - Night-time set: Large doll/stuffed animal/action figure, doll-sized blanket or small towel, baby bottle, diaper, plastic comb/brush set, toothbrush, and some "generic" items including a stick, a few shapes/blocks, and an empty shoebox.
  - Farm set: Three miniature "people" figures (e.g., PlaySkool Weebles®, Fisher-Price® people), four miniature plastic farm or domestic animals (e.g., cow, pig, cat, dog, horse, sheep), a toy tractor and/or truck with room to "haul," and some "generic" items including a small open box, a few shapes/blocks, a stick.
- ☐ Child-sized table and two chairs.
- ☐ *Structured Assessment of Play Worksheet, Summary Score Sheet, and Manual.*

#### *General Procedures*

- 1) The child is seated at a small child's table with the examiner seated opposite or next to the child.
- 2) Present each set of toys sequentially to the child without any initial prompts for play. The objective is to (a) first observe any spontaneous play, and (b) elicit the highest level of play from the child.
- 3) After allowing for spontaneous play, the examiner can first use a verbal prompt (e.g., "Teddy wants something to eat.").
- 4) If this type of prompt is not successful, the examiner could add more information such as handing the child a spoon and saying "Give Teddy something to eat."
- 5) If a verbal and physical prompt does not elicit symbolic play, the examiner may model a play act for the child (e.g. feeding Teddy).
- 6) The examiner can comment on the child's play, but less talk and action on the part of the examiner is preferred. Be as natural as possible.
- 7) The goal is to get a base level picture of what the child can do with minimal support and prompting. Try to use as few prompts and supports as possible so that you are more likely to see the child's spontaneous skills. You may find that you prompt or encourage the child during the assessment (e.g., saying "baby is hungry" to encourage the child to feed the baby). Make notes of the prompts given and take that into consideration when scoring the child's responses.
- 8) There is no set time for each toy set. Move along as fast as the child's play allows. An approximate time of 15-20 minutes is appropriate to complete the entire measure.



## **Part II: Classroom Play Observation (Small Group)**

### ***Context & Time***

Approximately 20-30 minutes is required for the adult (e.g., teacher or therapist) to complete this portion of the play assessment. It may be conducted across several consecutive days within a small group classroom setting where the child is interacting with toys alongside other peers.

### ***Materials***

- ☐ A variety of toys that can be manipulated and sorted (e.g., 10-12 blocks of varying sizes; shape sorter/puzzle, nesting cups, ball, pop-ups, musical phone)
- ☐ A variety of small toys that can be used for simple pretending and symbolic play. These should include some plastic action figures (e.g., miniature dolls for a “mommy” or “baby”, Spiderman, farmer, animals, dinosaurs, sharks, etc.), and some conventional accessories, miniature furniture, or other props (e.g., cars and trucks; table, chairs, sofa, bed; TV and kitchen appliances; plates, cups, spoons, forks; pan with lid, salt and pepper shakers, blankets)
- ☐ A few “generic” items such as an open box, sponge, stick, paper, etc.
- ☐ *Structured Assessment of Play Summary Score Sheet* and Manual

### ***General Procedures***

- 1) Set up the play area with the above toys during an appropriate play time and observe across several consecutive days (e.g., approximately 3 days within the same week).
- 2) The child will be allowed to interact spontaneously with the toys and other peers.
- 3) If the child does not engage automatically, play with the child for approximately 5 minutes to encourage play with the toys.
- 4) Use as little prompting as is necessary to facilitate spontaneous play by the child and to accurately assess developmental play level.
- 5) After allowing for spontaneous play, the examiner can first use a verbal prompt (e.g., “The doll wants something to drink.”).
- 6) If this type of prompt is not successful, the examiner could add more information such as handing the child a cup and saying “Give the doll a drink”.
- 7) If a verbal and physical prompt does not elicit functional play, the examiner may model a play act for the child (e.g. feeding Teddy with a cup).
- 8) Determine the playacts that the child accomplishes spontaneously as well as those that are just emerging in his/her repertoire, using the scoring sheet to record observations.

### ***Acknowledgement***

This play assessment is adapted from the work of Kasari et al. (2006); as well as the literature on development of play: Baranek, Barnett, Adams, Wolcott, Watson & Crais (2005); Casby (2003); Lifter et al. (1993).

## Scoring the Structured Assessment of Play

- 1) Use the *Structured Assessment Play Worksheet* to document the child's responses or lack of response during the play session. As you are assessing the child, document specific examples of the child's behaviors (e.g., feeds bear with utensil) by checking the appropriate boxes on the worksheet. The worksheet will help you document the variety of play acts in each play category that occurred without a prompt.
- 2) After you have assessed the child's play skills, it is time to transfer that information from the Worksheet to the *Structured Assessment of Play Summary Score Sheet*. On this sheet, you will record the number of times the child exhibited unique unprompted play acts at each level (up to three different play acts across a variety of contexts) and any play acts that were prompted.
- 3) On the *Structured Assessment of Play Summary Score Sheet*, use the check boxes to indicate each time you observe a different type of play act for that given skill up to a total of 3 unique play acts (i.e., Example 1, 2 and 3). For a behavior to receive credit as a new example, the behavior must occur in a different context, with a different object, or in a different way. If the child puts the lid on the pot, puts a utensil in the pot, and puts a block in the pot, the child has provided three examples of the behavior (R2). However, if the child puts the block in the pot at three different times, the behavior is counted as only one example of that behavior. A child can also receive credit for completely different behaviors that fall under the same category. For example for R2, if the child has been observed putting clothes on the doll, putting blocks in the cup, and putting the lid on the pot, the assessor would check three boxes, write examples, and credit the child for mastering R2.
- 4) You may list additional notes or examples in the comments section. A focus of the assessment is to identify the level of prompting that a child needs to perform the behavior. Although unprompted and spontaneous displays of the behavior are the highest level desired, a number of children will require support. Although prompted occurrences of a play act do not "count" in the scoring, these should be described to note the conditions under which a skill may be present, and may help you determine the best intervention strategies.
- 5) After completing the Structured Assessment of Play, the assessor(s) will use the following scoring rubric and put a score in the Summary Score column on the form. The score is based on the examples of unprompted play acts the assessor(s) have observed during the assessment:  
0 = the child did not display this skill (or displayed only with prompts)  
1 = the child displayed one example of this skill without prompts  
2 = the child displayed two different examples of this skill without prompts  
3 = the child displayed three different examples of this skill without prompts
- 6) Calculate the Total Score across items by adding together the 20 summary scores. The range of Total Scores is 0 to 60. There is a space for Total Score on the bottom right of the third page.
- 7) At the end of the *Structured Assessment of Play Summary Score Sheet*, labeled "Developmental Profile of Play Skills," enter the final score for the child for each of the different skill levels in the column marked "Focused Practice" for Part I and "Observation for Part II of the assessment
- 8) Also, you may want to circle the highest level of play skills mastered for each category (i.e., highest skill level in each of the play categories with a summary score of 3). For example for Exploratory Play, circle E1, E2, or E3 to indicate the highest level the child achieved with a summary score of 3. If the child did not meet criteria for mastering any skill in the Exploratory play category, circle E0. Complete the profile for Relational Play, Functional Play, and Symbolic Play in a similar fashion.

## Structured Assessment of Play Worksheet

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner's Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner's Role(s) (e.g., teacher, therapist): \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment Method Used (check one):

☐ Focused Practice Session with Adult

☐ Classroom Play Observation (small group observation)

Number of peers present: \_\_\_\_\_

Other notes about the context(s) of the session:

**Directions:** This assessment of play skills was developed for those professionals who prefer a more structured approach to assessment. This method can be used in combination with the more unstructured approach (completed by the same or another professional) to provide an additional perspective on the child's skills. The attached worksheet can guide the professional in the administration of the tasks as well as to facilitate recording the child's responses. The worksheet is organized around three play scenarios (Mealttime, Nighttime, & Farm Set). For each scenario, common behaviors that might displayed by a child within that scenario are listed for each play category (Exploratory, Relational, Functional, and Symbolic). In addition, the behaviors within a category are listed in a hierarchical sequence. For example under the Exploratory category, behaviors representing E1-E3 levels are listed sequentially. As the child plays with the toys in each scenario, the adult then checks off the behaviors observed under the appropriate category. Once the assessment is completed, the results are then transferred from the Worksheet to the Summary Score Sheet.

# Structured Assessment of Play Worksheet

**General Directions:** Present the set of toys without any initial prompts for play. Observe the child's spontaneous play then elicit the highest level of play from the child using prompts from least directive to most directive (verbal → verbal with physical → model). You may comment on the child's play but the less talk and action on the part of the examiner is preferred. Make a note of prompts used to elicit behavior.

## Mealtime Set

Materials:    large doll/stuffed animal/action figure    2 plates    2 cups    large spoon    a few shapes/blocks  
                   serving utensils such as spatula        2 spoons    pot/pan    sponge    a piece of writing paper

Check the types of play observed:

### ***EXPLORATORY PLAY:***

- ☐ Picks up & visually inspects objects    ☐ Pat doll/bear/figure
- ☐ Gathers blocks    ☐ Manipulates doll/bear/figure    ☐ Folds paper
- ☐ Bangs plates, spoons, cups, pot/pan, utensils on table or other object
- ☐ Gives and takes doll/bear/figure    ☐ Gives and takes sponge
- ☐ Gives and takes shape/block    ☐ Gives and takes paper
- ☐ Gives and takes spatula/plate/spoon/cup/pot or pan
- ☐ Mouths, bangs, rolls cup
- ☐ Other 3+ actions on a single toy \_\_\_\_\_

### ***RELATIONAL PLAY:***

- ☐ Takes lid off pot    ☐ Takes clothes off doll/bear/figure
- ☐ Puts lid on pot    ☐ Puts utensil in cup/pot/pan    ☐ Puts blocks in cup
- ☐ Lines up any objects
- ☐ Bangs utensil on pot/pan    ☐ Puts utensil on plate
- ☐ Stacks blocks/shapes/cups/plates
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### ***FUNCTIONAL PLAY:***

- ☐ Stirs utensil in pot/pan    ☐ Stirs spoon in cup
- ☐ Feeds self with utensil    ☐ Drinks from cup
- ☐ Hugs, rocks, kisses doll/bear/figure
- ☐ Feeds doll/bear/figure with utensil    ☐ Feeds doll/bear/figure with cup
- ☐ Feeds examiner with utensil    ☐ Feeds examiner with cup

- ☐ Feeds examiner with utensil then feeds doll/bear/figure with same utensil    ☐ Feeds examiner with cup then feeds doll/bear/figure with cup
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### ***SYMBOLIC PLAY:***

- ☐ Walks/moves doll/bear/figure as if alive
- ☐ Makes doll/bear/figure eat as if alive
- ☐ Has doll/bear/figure use cooking item as if alive
- ☐ Other form of animating doll/bear/figure \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Stirs food in pot/pan then serves food on plate
- ☐ Pretends to fill cup with liquid then feeds to doll/bear/figure/other
- ☐ Other 2 step pretend action \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Feeds doll, wipes dolls mouth, puts doll to bed with paper as blanket
- ☐ Mixes pretend ingredients, cooks, serves food, feeds other
- ☐ Other 3+ step pretend action \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Used block/shape as food    ☐ Uses sponge as food
- ☐ Uses cup as a hat    ☐ Other substitution \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Makes "yuck" or "yum" gesture regarding pretend food
- ☐ Blows on food to pretend hot
- ☐ Other pretend characteristics \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Picks up imaginary food    ☐ Uses imaginary cooking or eating tool
- ☐ Other imaginary object \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Takes suggested role of chef    ☐ Takes suggested role of dad/mom
- ☐ Suggests role to examiner \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Expands play to new roles, new theme, and/or fantasy role

## **Nighttime Set**

Materials:      large doll/stuffed animal/action figure      toothbrush      diaper      an empty shoebox      a stick  
                 doll-sized blanket or small towel      plastic comb/brush set      baby bottle      a few shapes/blocks

Check the types of play observed:

### ***EXPLORATORY PLAY:***

- ☐ Picks up & visually inspects objects    ☐ Pats doll/bear/figure
- ☐ Gathers blocks    ☐ Manipulates doll/bear/figure
- ☐ Shakes, folds blanket
- ☐ Fingers bristles on toothbrush or brush
- ☐ Bangs toothbrush, comb, or hairbrush on table or other object
- ☐ Bangs bottle, shoebox, or blocks    ☐ Shakes bottle
- ☐ Gives and takes doll/bear/figure    ☐ Gives and takes shoebox
- ☐ Gives and takes shape/block    ☐ Gives and takes stick
- ☐ Gives and takes blanket    ☐ Gives and takes diaper or bottle
- ☐ Gives and takes toothbrush, comb, brush
- ☐ Mouths, bangs, fingers brush    ☐ Mouths, bangs, rubs block
- ☐ Other 3+ actions on a single toy \_\_\_\_\_

### ***RELATIONAL PLAY:***

- ☐ Takes blocks out of box    ☐ Puts blocks in box
- ☐ Takes stick out of box    ☐ Puts stick in box
- ☐ Puts brushes and comb in box    ☐ Stacks blocks/shapes
- ☐ Puts blanket, bottle, diaper in box
- ☐ Takes clothes off doll/bear/figure
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### ***FUNCTIONAL PLAY:***

- ☐ Covers self with blanket    ☐ Brushes own teeth
- ☐ Brushes/combs own hair    ☐ Feeds self with bottle
- ☐ Hugs, rocks, kisses doll/bear/figure
- ☐ Covers doll/bear/figure with blanket    ☐ Puts diaper on doll/bear/figure
- ☐ Brushes doll/bear/figure's teeth    ☐ Feeds doll/bear/figure with bottle
- ☐ Brushes/combs doll/bear/figure's hair

- ☐ Covers examiner with blanket    ☐ Brushes examiner's teeth
- ☐ Brushes/combs examiner's hair    ☐ Feeds examiner with bottle
- ☐ Brushes examiner's hair then brushes doll/bear/figure's hair
- ☐ Brushes examiner's teeth then brushes doll/bear/figure's teeth
- ☐ Feeds examiner with bottle then feeds doll/bear/figure with bottle

### ***SYMBOLIC PLAY:***

- ☐ Walks/moves doll/bear/figure as if alive
- ☐ Has doll/bear/figure brush own teeth
- ☐ Has doll/bear/figure brush own hair
- ☐ Has doll/bear/figure feed self with bottle
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Feeds doll/bear/figure pretend food, brushes doll/bear/figure's teeth
- ☐ Changes doll/bear/figure's clothes, puts doll/bear/figure to bed
- ☐ Other 2 step pretend action \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Feeds doll, wipes doll's mouth, puts doll to bed w/ paper as blanket
- ☐ Puts doll in pajamas, puts doll to bed, reads bedtime story
- ☐ Other 3+ step pretend action \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Uses stick as toothpaste    ☐ Uses block as cup
- ☐ Uses shoebox as sink
- ☐ Uses blanket as mirror    ☐ Other substitution \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Makes "stinky" gesture for diaper    ☐ Pretends hair is knotted
- ☐ Makes "yuck" gesture for toothpaste    ☐ Pretends bottle is empty
- ☐ Other pretend characteristic \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Reads imaginary bedtime story    ☐ Puts imaginary pajamas on doll
- ☐ Other imaginary object \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Takes suggested role of big brother
- ☐ Takes suggested role of dad/mom
- ☐ Suggests role to examiner \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Expands play to new roles, new theme, and/or fantasy role

## **Farm Set**

Materials:	three miniature “people” figure (e.g., Weebles, Fisher-Price people)	small open box
	four miniature plastic farm or domestic animals (e.g., cow, pig, cat, dog, horse, sheep)	a stick
	a toy tractor and/or truck with room to “haul”	a few shapes/blocks

Check the types of play observed:

### ***EXPLORATORY PLAY:***

- ☐ Picks up & visually inspects objects   ☐ Gathers blocks
- ☐ Gathers animals   ☐ Gathers people   ☐ Manipulates people
- ☐ Manipulates animals   ☐ Fingers tractor/truck
- ☐ Bangs blocks, stick, box   ☐ Gives and takes people
- ☐ Gives and takes animals   ☐ Gives and takes shape/block
- ☐ Gives and takes stick   ☐ Gives and takes box
- ☐ Rolls truck/tractor back and forth
- ☐ Mouths, bangs, rubs people or animals
- ☐ Mouths, bangs, rubs box/stick/or blocks
- ☐ Other 3+ actions on a single toy \_\_\_\_\_

### ***RELATIONAL PLAY:***

- ☐ Takes blocks out of tractor/truck   ☐ Takes blocks out of box
- ☐ Takes animals/people out of tractor/truck
- ☐ Takes animals/people out of box
- ☐ Puts people/animals in truck/tractor   ☐ Put blocks in truck/tractor
- ☐ Puts blocks in box   ☐ Puts people/animals in box
- ☐ Puts lid on box   ☐ Stacks blocks/shapes
- ☐ Puts people and animals in truck/tractor
- ☐ Bang stick on box
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### ***FUNCTIONAL PLAY:***

- ☐ Pushes truck/tractor on a purposeful path
- ☐ Puts blocks in truck/tractor, drives truck/tractor
- ☐ Drives tractor w/animal up to self
- ☐ Drives tractor w/animal up to play people
- ☐ Drives tractor w/animal up to examiner
- ☐ Gives different animals a “ride” in sequence
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### ***SYMBOLIC PLAY:***

- ☐ Walks/moves people as if alive   ☐ Moves animals as if alive
- ☐ Animals bite each other or people
- ☐ People feed self food (block)   ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Feeds animals pretend food, put animals in pretend barn
- ☐ Feeds people pretend food, puts people in pretend house
- ☐ Other 2 step pretend action \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Feeds people, has people drive the tractor, has people go home
- ☐ Waters animals, takes animals for a ride, puts animals in barn
- ☐ Other 3+ step pretend action \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Uses block as food to feed animals   ☐ Uses blocks or stick as fence
- ☐ Uses box as a water tray   ☐ Use blocks as barn
- ☐ Other substitution \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Pretends animals got loose
- ☐ Other pretend characteristic \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Feeds animals imaginary food   ☐ Puts animals in imaginary barn
- ☐ Other imaginary object \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Takes suggested role of farmer
- ☐ Takes suggested role of auctioneer
- ☐ Suggests role to examiner \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Expands play to new roles, new theme, and/or fantasy role

## Structured Assessment of Play Summary Score Sheet

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner's Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner's Role(s) (e.g., teacher, therapist): \_\_\_\_\_

### Evaluation Session (check one):

☐ Part I: Focused practice with an Adult

☐ Part II: Classroom Play Observation (Small Group).

Number of peers present: \_\_\_\_\_

Other notes about the context(s) of the session: \_\_\_\_\_

### Directions:

Now that you have completed the *Structured Assessment of Play Worksheet*, it is time to transfer that information to this *Structured Assessment of Play Summary Score Sheet*. For each of the 20 skill levels (e.g., 3 for Exploratory, 3 for Relational, 5 for Functional, and 9 for Symbolic), you will look across each of the play contexts (i.e., mealtime, nighttime, farm set) for examples of the targeted behaviors. For example, for Exploratory Play E1 "Child picks up and looks at a toy," you will look for unprompted examples of this behavior across the three play contexts. If the child displays one or more of the behaviors without prompting, check that number of "Example" boxes and write out the specific play behavior(s) observed. All examples of play must occur without any prompting by another adult or peer. Remember, additional examples can only be credited if the play act occurs in a different context, with a different object, or in a different way, as the child does not receive credit for repeating the same exact play act (even if on different days). There are three boxes in the Examples column for each level because a child must demonstrate three examples of each skill in order for the skill to be considered mastered. The number of checked boxes is the Summary Score, which should be noted in the last column. For example, if the child demonstrated taking objects apart (R1) in two different situations, two boxes should be checked and the Summary Score is "2." If no unprompted play act is observed at a level, write "0" in the Summary Score column. You also can make notes to indicate if any prompting (e.g., verbal, physical) was helpful to elicit a given skill; however, prompted acts do not get checked as "Examples" and are not credited in the Summary Score. The Summary Score for each skill for both the one to one and classroom observations should be transferred to the "Focused Practice" and "Observation" columns on the *Developmental Profile of Play Skills* and the highest skill level achieved for each category (i.e., Exploratory, Relational, Functional, Symbolic) should be circled in both columns.

### Summary Score Guidelines:

- ? = unsure of child's skill
- 0 = child has not display this skill (or displayed only with prompts)
- 1 = child has displayed one example of this skill without prompts
- 2 = child has displayed two examples of this skill without prompts
- 3 = child has displayed three examples of this skill without prompts

\* **Prompt Levels-** UP=unprompted, FP=full physical, PP=partial physical, FM=full model, PM=partial model, VM= verbal model, G=gesture, P=positional, EV=environmental/pictorial

PLAY CATEGORY AND SKILL LEVELS	Examples	Examples, Prompts, & Notes Write in examples of behaviors observed. Note if a behavior was prompted. Prompted behaviors are scored 0. If no unprompted examples were observed, leave blank and score 0 to indicate that child did not display the skill.	Summary Score ? - unsure 0 – no examples 1 – 1 example 2 – 2 examples 3 – 3 examples
<b>EXPLORATORY PLAY</b>			
<b>E1.</b> Child picks up and looks at a toy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples: Picks up, looks at, puts down block; Picks up, looks at, puts down ball</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>E2.</b> Child plays with toys using both hands together <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples: Pushes buttons on pop up; Rolls ball; Gathers blocks; Turns pages in book</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>E3.</b> Child plays with one toy in three or more different ways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples: Rolls, bounces, and pats ball; Mouths, bangs, and stretches slinky</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>RELATIONAL PLAY</b>			
<b>R1.</b> Child takes pieces of toys apart <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples: Detaches large pop beads; Removes lid from container</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>R2.</b> Child puts toys together in simple ways. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples: Drops blocks in cup; Puts lid on container</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>R3.</b> Child puts several toys together in specific ways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples: Strings beads; Sorts shapes into a shape sorter; puts pieces of puzzle together</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>FUNCTIONAL PLAY</b>			
<b>F1.</b> Child plays with toys in functional or simple pretend ways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples: Stirs spoon in cup; Pushes truck in purposeful path</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>F2.</b> Child plays with toys in simple pretend ways directed to self <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples: Feeds self with empty spoon; Brushes own hair with plastic hairbrush.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>F3.</b> Child includes a doll/action figure in simple pretend play with toys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples: Brushes doll's hair with brush; Diapers doll</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>F4.</b> Child includes other people in simple pretend play with toys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples: Feeds adult with spoon; Combs adult's hair with comb</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>F5.</b> Child uses the same action in simple pretend play with two different people or dolls/figures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Example: Places cup to adult's lips, then places cup to doll's mouth.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	



PLAY CATEGORY AND SKILL LEVELS	Examples	Examples, Prompts, & Notes	Summary Score ? - unsure 0 – no examples 1 – 1 example 2 – 2 examples 3 – 3 examples
<b>SYMBOLIC PLAY</b>		Write in examples of behaviors observed. Note if a behavior was prompted. Prompted behaviors are scored 0. If no examples of unprompted behaviors were observed, leave blank and score 0 to indicate that child did not display the skill.	
<b>S1.</b> Child makes doll/figure move or do things as it were alive ▪ Examples: Walks a doll; Manipulates toy animal to “eat” from container; Doll brushes own hair	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>S2.</b> Child does 2 different pretend actions, one right after another, with the same toy ▪ Examples: Stirs spoon in bowl and then pretends to feed doll; Fills up car with gas and drives into garage	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>S3.</b> Child does 3 or more different pretend actions, one right after another on the same toy ▪ Example: Feeds doll, wipes doll’s mouth, puts doll to bed, kisses goodnight; Drives ambulance to hospital, takes patient out of ambulance, and places on hospital bed	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>S4.</b> Child uses one toy/object to represent or stand for another ▪ Examples: Uses block as a hairbrush or cup; Puts sponge in bowl as food; Uses paper as blanket or diaper for baby	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>S5.</b> Child uses pretend qualities in play ▪ Examples: Blows on spoon as if soup is hot; Makes “yucky” gesture when pretending to eat play dough	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>S6.</b> Child uses pretend objects in play ▪ Examples: Shakes imaginary salt shaker; Holds hand to ear as if talking on telephone; Shapes hand as if holding a tool and creates tool’s action	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>S7.</b> Child takes on a pretend role in play that other people direct ▪ Examples: Plays house when adult suggests it; Plays construction worker when another child suggests it	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>S8.</b> Child suggests pretend roles in play to self or other people ▪ Example: Plays hospital suggesting roles to others such as “I’ll be the nurse, you be the patient.”	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>S9.</b> Child expands pretend play with other people into (a) new roles, (b) new themes, and/or (c) fantasy roles ▪ Examples: Spiderman rescues victims; Princess and prince marry and go to live in haunted castle; Monsters fighting	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3.		
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b> Add final column of summary scores. (Possible range 0-60 points)			

## DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILE OF PLAY SKILLS

Directions: In the Focused Column, write in the Summary Score (0, 1, 2, 3) established for each skill during the Part I: Adult-Child Structured Play Assessment. In the Observation Column, write in the Summary Score (0, 1, 2, 3) established for each skill during the Part II: Classroom Play Observation.

EXPLORATORY PLAY	Focused	Observation	RELATIONAL PLAY	Focused	Observation	FUNCTIONAL PLAY	Focused	Observation	SYMBOLIC PLAY	Focused	Observation
<b>E0.</b> No E level mastered											
<b>E1.</b> Child picks up and looks at a toy											
<b>E2.</b> Child plays with toys using both hands together			<b>R0.</b> No R level mastered								
<b>E3.</b> Child plays with one toy in three or more different ways			<b>R1.</b> Child takes pieces of toys apart								
			<b>R2.</b> Child puts toys together in simple ways			<b>F0.</b> No F level mastered					
			<b>R3.</b> Child puts several toys together in specific ways			<b>F1.</b> Plays with objects/toys in functional or simple pretend ways					
						<b>F2.</b> Child plays with toys in simple pretend ways directed to self					
						<b>F3.</b> Child includes a doll/action figure in simple pretend play with toys			<b>S0.</b> No S level mastered		
						<b>F4.</b> Child includes other people in simple pretend play with toys			<b>S1.</b> Child makes doll/figure move or do things as if it were alive		
						<b>F5.</b> Child uses the same action in simple pretend play with two different people or dolls/figures			<b>S2.</b> Child does 2 different pretend actions, one right after another, with the same toy		
									<b>S3.</b> Child does 3 or more different pretend actions, one right after another, with the same toy		
									<b>S4.</b> Child uses one toy/object to represent or stand for another		
									<b>S5.</b> Child uses pretend qualities in play		
									<b>S6.</b> Child uses pretend objects in play		
									<b>S7.</b> Child takes on a pretend role in play that other people direct		
									<b>S8.</b> Child suggests pretend roles in play to self or other people		
									<b>S9.</b> Child expands pretend play with other people into (a) new roles, (b) new themes, and/or (c) fantasy roles		

# 5

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## PICTURE DICTIONARY




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## Social-Communication Levels




### Social Interaction




<p><b>SI1.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 1 A.J. watches his dad while they are playing airplane</i></p>  <p><b>During face to face games, physical activities, or routines, child watches the adult closely</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child is engaged in a game or routine with another person, and looks at the person in expectation of an event or action. A look of anticipation during a game or routine shows that the child is beginning to recognize that their communication partner is contributing to the routine in some way and the child is expecting something to occur or continue to occur.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child watches as the adult counts to three before blowing bubbles</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adult bounces child on knee playing a horse game, and child looks as adult says “ready, set, go”</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child looks at teacher during circle time to see what song comes next</li> </ul>
<p><b>SI2.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 2 The teacher pauses while counting and Chris looks at her to see if she is ready for another high five.</i></p>  <p><b>During face to face games, physical activities, or routines, after a brief pause child shows wanting the game to continue</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child is engaged in a game or routine with another person, and that person stops the activity. Then, the child uses some form of communication, potentially gestures, vocalizations, verbalizations or gaze, to indicate that they want more of the game or routine. A signal for continuation after a brief pause shows that the child is beginning to understand that his/her actions can influence the actions of another person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child reaches toward bubbles or mimics blowing action when adult pauses while blowing bubbles</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child vocalizes or makes bouncing action during horse game when adult pauses after saying “ready, set...”</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child signs ‘more’ when adult stops in the middle of singing a favorite song</li> </ul>
<p><b>SI3.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 3 Michelle and Tracy are passing a ball back and forth.</i></p>  <p><b>Child plays back-and-forth games with objects or actions.</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child and another person are engaged in a game that involves some type of back-and-forth exchange with either actions or objects. Participation in a reciprocal game shows that the child is beginning to understand the back-and-forth nature of interactions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child plays peek-a-boo with another person, first with adult hiding his/her face, and then child hiding his/her face.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child participates in back and forth tickling game, first being tickled by the adult, and then tickling the adult</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child rolls ball back and forth with a play partner</li> </ul>

<p><b>SI4.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 4 Jacob bangs on the bucket to let his teacher know that he wants her to sing 5 Little Monkeys again.</i></p>  <p><b>Child initiates familiar games or routines</b></p>	<p>This occurs when a child uses some type of action to begin a preferred game or routine. The action could be a gesture, vocalization, verbalization, or an action that is utilized in that specific game or routine. Initiation of a familiar game or routine after <b>at least 5 minutes</b> shows that a child is beginning to develop preferred games and routines, recognizes the need for another person in those games or routines, and can recall the games or routines outside of the immediate context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child puts blanket over the head of an adult to initiate the peek-a-boo game</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child reaches up to adult to play “three, two, one blast-off” game</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child holds adults hands and hums to start “Ring-around-the-Rosie”</li> </ul>
<p><b>SI5.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 5 Ray pushes the truck with his teacher and later initiates the same game with a peer.</i></p>  <p><b>Child expands games or routines</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child expands familiar games and routines in different ways such as switching roles, including different people, adding a new step or element, or using new materials. Expansion of games or routines shows that the child is beginning to generalize social interaction skills to different people, settings, materials, or actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child switches roles during tag by chasing others instead of being chased.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child plays the tickle game with a different person, e.g., a different parent, a different staff person, siblings, or peers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child expands peek-a-boo by making a funny face after exposing his/her face</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child hides a toy under a bowl instead of hiding it under a blanket</li> </ul>
<p><b>SI6.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 6 Kaitlyn looks at her mom and says “Choo choo!” to signal that she wants to</i></p>  <p><b>Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child combines some type of gesture, such as pointing or reaching, and/or uses vocalizations while looking at that person to indicate that they want to continue a game or activity that has paused. This illustrates that the child is beginning to understand how to engage another person and that there is some shared enjoyment during a particular activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child looks up at an adult and pulls their hands to indicate that they want to be twirled around again.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child drops a ball in someone’s lap and looks at them to indicate that they want to play catch again</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child says “1, 2, 3, GO!” and while looking at their teacher to indicate that they want to race again</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child looks at the teacher and vocalizes because she wants to be squirted with the hose again during water play</li> </ul>





## Requesting


<p><b>RQ1.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 7 Mackenzie reaches for the sponge</i></p>  <p><b>Child reaches for out of reach object to show wanting the object</b></p>	<p>This occurs when an object is far enough away that the child cannot touch it, and the child reaches towards the object. This is often an open hand reach, but could also be an action in which the child opens and closes his/her hand repetitively. Reaching towards an out of reach object shows that the child wants the object and is beginning to understand that reaching will communicate to another person that s/he wants that object.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child reaches for a tool that s/he wants to use to play with play-dough</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child reaches for marbles that adult is holding so s/he can play marble track</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child reaches for a juice box across the table during snack time</li> </ul>
<p><b>RQ2.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 8 Alex pulls his teacher's hand to the container to request her to open it.</i></p>  <p><b>Child pulls person's hand toward objects to show request for help</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child is having difficulty with a task (e.g., opening a container) and pulls another person's hand toward the task to get help. Pulling someone's hand to request help shows that the child is beginning to understand that other people can help with difficult tasks, and that s/he can communicate to get help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child needs help operating a toy and pulls another person's hand to the toy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child pulls another person's hand towards the faucet in order to get help turning on the water</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child pulls person's hand towards the radio to indicate they want it turned on</li> </ul>
<p><b>RQ3.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 9 Abby gives her teacher the glue bottle to get help opening it.</i></p>  <p><b>Child gives objects to show request for help</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child is having difficulty with a task (e.g., operating a toy) and gives an object to another person to get help. Giving to request help shows that the child is beginning to understand that other people can help with difficult tasks, and that s/he can communicate to get help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child gives another person a closed bottle of bubbles so the bubbles are opened</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child gives another person a juice box to get assistance putting the straw in</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child pushes the ends of his/her coat towards another person to get help with zipping the coat</li> </ul>

<p><b>RQ4a.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 10 Liam follows Mr. Bob's point to the zebra he is asking to borrow.</i></p>  <p><b>Child looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request</b></p>	<p>This occurs when another person points to a near-by object to request that object and the child looks at that object. Nearby is defined as being within reach. Responding to another person's point by looking at a nearby object shows that the child is beginning to understand that pointing is a form of communication that references a nearby item.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Another person points to the red crayon and the child looks towards the crayon</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Someone points to the box of crackers during snack time and the child looks at the box of crackers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A peer points to the blue block and the child looks at the blue block</li> </ul>
<p><b>RQ4b.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 11 Tanya points to request a different sponge</i></p>  <p><b>Child points to nearby objects to request them .</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child points to a nearby object to indicate that s/he wants the object. Nearby is defined as being within reach. Pointing to nearby object as a form of requesting shows that the child is beginning to understand that another person can help him/her to get a desired item, and s/he can communicate his/her desires by pointing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The child points to the hat that s/he wants while playing dress-up</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The child points to the shovel while playing at the sensory table so s/he can dig in the sand</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The child points to the snack that s/he wants during lunch</li> </ul>
<p><b>RQ5a.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 12 Malik is looking as his teacher points to play-dough tools to request them.</i></p>  <p><b>Child looks at distant objects when another person points to the objects as a request</b></p>	<p>This occurs when another person points to a distant object to request that object and the child looks at the distant object. Distant is defined as being out of reach. Responding to another person's point by looking at a distant object shows that the child is beginning to understand that pointing can reference objects that are farther away and s/he is beginning to follow points as a line of sight. Also, the child is furthering his/her understanding that pointing is a form of communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child looks as the teacher points to request a book on the top shelf</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> On the playground, the child looks as a peer points to request a ball from the shed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> At the art table, the child looks as a peer points to request a glue stick from the shelf</li> </ul>









<p><b>RQ5b.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 13 At grocery store, Jason points to the vegetables that he wants his mom to buy.</i></p>  <p><b>Child points to more distant objects to request them</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child points to a distant object to indicate that s/he wants the object. Distant is defined as being out of reach. Pointing to distant object as a form of requesting shows that the child is growing in his/her understanding that another person can help him/her to get a desired item, and s/he can communicate his/her desires by pointing. Also, the child is furthering his/her understanding that pointing can reference objects that are farther away.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ On the playground, the child points to request the frisbee that is stuck in the tree</li> <li>□ The child points to request a toy that is located on a high shelf</li> <li>□ At circle time, the child points to request which center they want to play in</li> </ul>
<p><b>RQ6.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 14 Tanya looks at Miss Ann while reaching for the sponge.</i></p>  <p><b>Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person to request</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child gestures (e.g., giving, reaching, pointing) and/or vocalizes/verbalizes while making eye contact with another person in order to indicate that s/he wants an object or person. This can also be in the form of a depictive gesture (e.g., bouncing up and down to indicate a horsey game) combined with eye contact to indicate that s/he wants an action or game. Combining eye contact with another form of communication shows that the child is beginning to recognize that the person must see or attend to their gesture/vocalization/verbalization in order for his/her request to be understood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ The child looks at another person while pointing at a desired toy</li> <li>□ The child looks at another person, and says “my turn” to request a toy or action</li> <li>□ The child looks at another person, reaches for a needed item and makes a vocalization</li> </ul>




## Joint Attention

<p><b>JA1a.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 15 Mei looks at and touches the flower that her mother gave to her.</i></p>  <p><b>Child responds to another person giving objects just to share interest in the objects</b></p>	<p>This occurs when another person gives an object to the child for the purpose of sharing interest in the object, and s/he willingly accepts the object, looks at the other person, and looks at the object. Responding to another person giving an object to share that object shows that the child is beginning to understand that s/he can share interest with another person about an object through eye contact and gazing at the object.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Someone picks something out of the surprise bag, and says “Look”, while handing the object to the child. The child accepts the object and looks at it.</li> <li>□ While making items with play-dough, the teacher rolls a snake, says “I made a snake” and gives it to the child. The child takes the snake and looks at it.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>JA1b.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 16 Betsy gives Linda a picture that she drew.</i></p>  <p><b>Child gives objects just to share interest in objects with another person</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child gives an object of interest to another person for the purpose of sharing the object, and the child looks at the other person and the object during the giving process. Giving objects to another person to share the object shows that the child is beginning to understand that s/he can engage with another person and an item of interest through the gesture of giving.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> While writing with a vibrating pen, the child gives the pen to an adult, just to share interest in the novel item</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The child looks through a kaleidoscope and then gives it to a peer to share the interesting toy</li> </ul>
<p><b>JA2a.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 17 Jose looks while his father shows him a button on the camera.</i></p>  <p><b>Child responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects</b></p>	<p>This occurs when another person shows an object to the child for the purpose of sharing interest in the object, and the child looks at the object and the other person. Responding to another person showing an object to share the object shows that the child is furthering his/her understanding of sharing interest with others about objects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> While in the reading area, a peer says look, and shows the child a book. The child looks at the book.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Another person shows a picture that s/he drew, and the child looks at the picture</li> </ul>
<p><b>JA2b.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 18 Rose shows Claire a caterpillar that she found on the playground.</i></p>  <p><b>Child shows objects just to share interest in the objects with another person</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child shows an object of interest to another person for the purpose of sharing the object, and the child looks at the other person and the object while showing the object. Showing objects to another person shows the child is beginning to understand that s/he can initiate engagement about an object of interest through the gesture of showing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The child builds a car out of Legos® and shows the car to a peer to share what s/he has made</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The child finishes an art project and shows it to his teacher</li> </ul>




<p><b>JA3a.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 19 Malcolm looks at a picture in the book that his teacher is pointing out.</i></p>  <p><b>Child follows a point to nearby objects/events just to share interest in objects/events</b></p>	<p>This occurs when another person points to an object that is within reach, and the child follows the other person's point to the nearby object and looks at the other person. Following a near point shows the child is beginning to understand that pointing references nearby objects, and can be a method for sharing interest in objects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ While walking through the hallway, the teacher points at a new picture on the wall, and the child looks at the picture</li> <li>□ A peer points at another peer's dog puppet in the drama area to comment on the puppet, and the child looks at the puppet.</li> </ul>
<p><b>JA3b.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 20 Twyla points out something on the game board to her friends.</i></p>  <p><b>Child points to nearby objects/events just to share interest in objects/events with another person</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child points to an object that is within reach while looking at another person in effort to share engagement with the person. Pointing to nearby objects just to share them shows the child is continuing to further his/her understanding of gestures used to establish joint attention or shared engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ While on a nature walk, the child points to a leaf that s/he sees just to show another person</li> <li>□ The child points at decorations on the classroom door when s/he notices the new decorations</li> </ul>
<p><b>JA4a.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 21 Ashley looks when her dad is pointing to a dog at the park.</i></p>  <p><b>Child follows a point to more distant objects/events just to share interest in the objects/events</b></p>	<p>This occurs when another person points to an object that is out of reach, and the child follows the other person's point to the more distant object and looks at the other person. Following a point to a more distant object shows the child is learning to follow the line of sight in pointing and beginning to understand that pointing can reference objects that are farther away.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Child looks when someone points to a fire truck driving by</li> <li>□ Someone points to a squirrel in the yard and the child looks</li> <li>□ Child looks at a painting the teacher is pointing to at the museum</li> </ul>

<p><b>JA4b.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 22 Jennifer points to show her teacher a cardinal at the bird feeder.</i></p>  <p><b>Child points to more distant objects/events just to share interest in objects/events with another person</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child points to an object that is out of reach, while looking at another person, in effort to share engagement or attention with the person about an object of interest. Pointing to more distant objects just to share them shows the child is furthering his/her understanding that pointing can reference objects that are out of reach, and that pointing can be used to draw attention to a specific item.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child points to show a peer at a kite that someone is flying</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child points to a gigantic bubble floating by to show her teacher</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child points at a dog walking across the street to show her mom</li> </ul>
<p><b>JA5.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 23 Janelle follows her dad's gaze to look at a dolphin in the ocean.</i></p>  <p><b>Child follows gaze of another person to objects/events just to share interest</b></p>	<p>This occurs when another person looks at an object or event in the immediate environment and the child looks at the person and then looks at the object or event. Following the gaze of another person shows the child is beginning to understand that simply looking at an object or event can be used to share interest or engagement with another person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> While playing in the block area, the teacher says “Look what she is building” and then looks in the direction of a peer. The child follows the gaze to look at the peer and his/her tower.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> While on a nature walk, a peer says look at the big bird and looks in the direction of the bird. The child follows his/her peers gaze and looks at the bird.</li> </ul>
<p><b>JA6.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 24 Grace looks at her SLP while giving her a rock that she found just to share it.</i></p>  <p><b>Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child uses gestures, vocalizations, or verbalizations while making eye contact with another person to share an object or event of interest. Combining these various modalities with eye contact shows that the child is furthering his understanding of sharing engagement with others’ by combining multiple forms of communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The child looks at another person, points to his/her peer, and says “Look at Tommy’s new shirt.”</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The child looks at another person, points at a picture of a “scary” animal and gasps to share attention and his feelings about the animal.</li> </ul>






# Play Levels




## Exploratory

<p><b>E1.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 25 Tanisha picks up the new toy and looks at it.</i></p>  <p><b>Child picks up and looks at a toy</b></p>	<p>This occurs when a child picks up and looks at any toy. Picking up and looking at a toy shows that the child is beginning to show interest in the toy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Picks up stuffed animal and looks at it</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Grabs play-dough or putty and looks at it</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Picks up a bottle with glitter water and looks at it</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Grabs a “bobble ball” and inspects it</li> </ul>
<p><b>E2.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 26 Sophie bangs on the bucket with both hands.</i></p>  <p><b>Child plays with toys using both hands together</b></p>	<p>This occurs when a child uses two hands to play with a toy in any way. Playing with a toy using both hands shows the child is learning about the physical properties of the toy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Takes putty and stretches it using both hands</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Picks up a bottle with glitter water and turns in over from hand to hand</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bangs on a ball using both hands</li> </ul>
<p><b>E3.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 27 Simon splashes the cup in the pool and fills it to dump water on his head.</i></p>  <p><b>Child plays with one toy in three or more different ways</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child uses a toy in at least 3 different ways, or using at least 3 different actions. Playing with the same toy in several different ways shows that the child is beginning to expand play routines with a specific toy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shakes, turns, and bangs a rattle</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rolls, bounces, and throws a ball</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pinches, rolls, and pats play-dough</li> </ul>



## Relational




<p><b>R1.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 28 Ella takes apart the pipe toys.</i></p>  <p><b>Child takes pieces of toys apart</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child takes apart a toy that has multiple parts or pieces. Taking toys apart shows the child is beginning to understand that toys have different parts or components, and how the parts relate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Takes apart a tower of blocks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Removes a nesting cup from the stack</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Takes manipulatives out of a cup</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Takes a simple puzzle apart</li> </ul>
<p><b>R2.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 29 Andrew builds towers with blocks.</i></p>  <p><b>Child puts toys together in simple ways</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child puts pieces of a toy or multiple toys together in simple ways, such as putting a piece into another part of the toy or stacking toys. Putting toys together in simple ways shows that the child is furthering his/her understanding that toys have parts and starting to understand that the parts fit together or relate in meaningful ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Puts blocks together in any way</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Puts a small nesting cup in a larger nesting cup</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Puts manipulatives in a cup</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Puts puzzle pieces into a box or bag</li> </ul>
<p><b>R3.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 30 Rebecca puts together a puzzle.</i></p>  <p><b>Child puts several toys together in specific ways</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child puts pieces of a toy or multiple toys together in more perceptually complex ways, such as sorting or putting an object into something that requires a specific orientation. Putting toys together in more complex ways shows that the child is furthering his/her understanding of important perceptual features and how objects relate to each other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Puts blocks together to make a specific figure</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stacks the nesting cups in the intended order</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Puts manipulatives into containers based on shape, size, or color</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Places puzzle pieces in the correct place</li> </ul>

## Functional




<b>F1.</b>	<p><i>Figure 31 Kiesha irons in the dramatic play center.</i></p>  <p><b>Child plays with toys in functional or simple pretend ways</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child uses a toy in the way it was meant to be used. Playing with toys in simple, functional ways shows the child is beginning to understand the purpose and way to use simple toys.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Moves a car down a specific path or while making car noises</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Puts toy food in the toy oven</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Opens the door to a barn to put animals inside</li> </ul>
<b>F2.</b>	<p><i>Figure 32 Tamara pretends to call her sister on the phone.</i></p>  <p><b>Child plays with toys in simple pretend ways directed to self</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child uses a toy to act on his/her self. Playing with toys in a functional way directed to self shows the child is starting to understand that s/he can take an active role in play. It also shows the emergence of pretend play.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pretends to drink out of a cup</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pretends to wash face with wash cloth</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Puts a bandage on his/her own arm during play</li> </ul>
<b>F3.</b>	<p><i>Figure 33 Marley listens to the bear's heart with a stethoscope.</i></p>  <p><b>Child includes a doll/action figure in simple pretend play with toys.</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child uses a toy to act on a doll/action figure. Playing with toys in a functional way directed towards a doll/action figure shows the child is realizing that dolls/action figures represent a pretend person/animal in play.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Puts a doll in bed to sleep</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gives a bottle to the baby</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gives a piece of food to a dog puppet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses a tooth brush to brush a doll's teeth</li> </ul>






<p><b>F4.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 34 Elizabeth puts sunglasses on Mia.</i></p>  <p><b>Child includes other people in simple pretend play with toys</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child uses a toy to act on another person. Playing with toys in a functional way directed towards others shows the child is starting to understand that other people can be included in play.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Serves pretend food to another person</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Brushes another person's hair</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses stethoscope to listen to another person's heart</li> </ul>
<p><b>F5.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 35 Ella feeds a stuffed bear and a stuffed dog with a toy spoon.</i></p>  <p><b>Child uses the same action in simple pretend play with two different people or dolls/figures</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child uses a toy to act on two different people/dolls in sequence, which may or may not include acting on his/her self. Using the same act on two different people/dolls shows the child is expanding his/her play routines to include more participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Feeds his/her self and then feeds a doll</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Brushes a dolls hair, and then brushes another person's hair</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gives the dog a drink, and then gives the cat a drink</li> </ul>

<p><b>S1.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 36 Cory walks his firefighter to the fire truck.</i></p>  <p><b>Child makes doll/figure move or do things as if it were alive</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child is playing with a doll/action figure, and moves the doll/action figure's body as if it were alive. Moving a doll/action figure as if it were alive shows the child is beginning to understand that s/he can take on the role of a doll/action figure in play.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Makes doll walk up the stairs in a doll house</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Moves action figures foot to kick a ball</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Makes dog “jump” on the table to get food</li> </ul>
<p><b>S2.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 37 Cory is driving the backhoe and then uses the construction worker to move the control lever.</i></p>  <p><b>Child does 2 different pretend actions, one right after another, with the same toy</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child combines two actions to form a play routine with a logical order. Using 2 different pretend actions with one toy in a sequence shows the child is beginning to expand his/her play skills by putting steps together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reads doll a bed time story and then puts the doll to bed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Takes a cats temperature and then gives the cat medicine</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Makes spaghetti on a stove, and then serves it to a friend</li> </ul>
<p><b>S3.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 38 Ella puts pepperoni on the pizza, cuts the pizza, and then feeds it to her cat.</i></p>  <p><b>Child does 3 or more different pretend actions, one right after another, with the same toy</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child combines three or more actions to form a play routine with a logical order. Using 3 or more different pretend actions in with one toy in sequence shows the child is continuing to expand his/her play skills by putting together longer play routines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Heats up the bottle, feeds it to the baby, and burps the baby</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Makes the dinosaur drink from the pond, run away from a bigger dinosaur, and hide in a cave</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Picks up a student on the bus, drives the bus to the school, and drops the students off at school</li> </ul>



S4.	<p><i>Figure 39 Karmen uses sand to make a cake.</i></p>  <p><b>Child uses one toy/object to represent or stand for another</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child uses an object/toy to represent something else. Using an object to stand for a different object shows the child is starting to understand that objects can symbolize something else in play routines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pretends a block is a piece of pizza</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pretends his/her finger is a tooth brush</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pretends a piece of cardboard is a mirror</li> </ul>
S5.	<p><i>Figure 40 Ella blows on the hot “soup”.</i></p>  <p><b>Child uses pretend qualities in play</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child pretends that a toy/object feels a certain way (e.g., a hot plate of food) or moves a certain way (a bumpy car ride). Using pretend characteristics in play shows the child is furthering his/her understanding of pretend play and that s/he can pretend an object has a quality that is not actually present.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Moves hands and body back quickly when pretending to ride a “fast” rocket</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Holds nose when changing the doll’s “stinky” diaper</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Drops hands and body towards ground when moving a “heavy” box</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Makes a face when eating “yucky” spaghetti</li> </ul>
S6.	<p><i>Figure 41 Thomas is singing into an imaginary microphone.</i></p>  <p><b>Child uses pretend objects in play</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child pretends that s/he has an object that is not actually present. Using imaginary objects in play shows the child is beginning to understand that s/he can pretend with something that is not represented directly by an object.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Forms hand in the shape of a cup when pretending to drink juice</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pets an imaginary puppy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Makes a ringing noise and picks up an imaginary phone</li> </ul>

<p><b>S7.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 42 Dana takes her teacher's suggestion and agrees to be the empress.</i></p>  <p><b>Child takes on a pretend role in play that other people direct</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child pretends to be another person or character in a play routine when another person suggests it. Taking on a role in play shows the child is beginning to understand that s/he can pretend to be someone other than him/her self during play routines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Acts like the dad while playing house based on a peer's suggestion</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pretends to be a waiter while playing restaurant based on a teacher's suggestion</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Acts like the nurse based on therapist's suggestion</li> </ul>
<p><b>S8.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 43 Alex suggests that Ms. Jones can be the customer, Jack can be the waiter, and he will be the chef.</i></p>  <p><b>Child suggests pretend roles in play to self or other people</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child begins to assign his/her self or other play partners to be certain people or characters in play routines. Suggesting roles in play themes to self or other people shows that the child is beginning to understand that s/he can have some control in the play routines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Suggests that a peer be a customer while playing grocery store</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Asks a teacher to be the veterinarian as the child brings an animal to the vet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tells a friend to be the princess while pretending to live in a castle</li> </ul>
<p><b>S9.</b></p>	<p><i>Figure 44 Ella and Thomas are playing Cinderella and then Ella decides to turn into a turtle princess.</i></p>  <p><b>Child expands pretend play with other people into (a) new roles, (b) new themes, (c) fantasy roles</b></p>	<p>This occurs when the child begins to give ideas for new characters or new play routines while engaging in pretend play with other people. Expanding play themes shows the child is beginning to show more creativity in his/her pretend play, and developing more advanced imagination skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adds a new role of neighbor while playing house</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Suggests playing zoo as an extension of an activity with animals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pretends to be Superman and rescue the child from a burning building</li> </ul>

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## SAMPLE ASSESSMENTS & INTERVENTION

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## Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Worksheet: Puzzles (Time: 3-4 minutes)

**Materials:** Two 4-7 piece form board puzzles with different themes

What Adult Does	Child's Communication (Check all that apply)	
	Unprompted	Prompted
Offer child a choice of puzzles, holding them out of child's reach	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RQ1: Reaches for nearby object to show wanting the object <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b: Points at nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6: Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ1: Reaches for nearby object to show wanting the object <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b: Points at nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6: Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Hold back one or two puzzle pieces out of the child's reach when you give a puzzle to the child	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RQ1: Reaches for nearby object to show wanting the object <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b: Points at nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6: Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ1: Reaches for nearby object to show wanting the object <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b: Points at nearby object to request it <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RQ6: Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Watch child work on puzzle without assisting him/her  Stay quiet unless the child initiates communication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RQ2: Pulls person's hand toward objects to show request for help <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RQ3: Gives objects to show request for help <input type="checkbox"/> JA1b: Gives object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA2b: Shows object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA3b: Points to nearby object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6: Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ2: Pulls person's hand toward objects to show request for help <input type="checkbox"/> RQ3: Gives objects to show request for help <input type="checkbox"/> JA1b: Gives object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA2b: Shows object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA3b: Points to nearby object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6: Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
When child has completed puzzle (or lost interest in doing so), point to the puzzle board or a puzzle piece and say to the child "Give it to me." Two attempts to get a response are enough. Then put the puzzle away	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ4a: Looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ4a: Looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

## Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Worksheet: Action Toys (Time: 2-3 minutes)

**Materials:** 2-3 different “action” toys, such as wind-up toys or switch-operated, battery-powered toys that can be turned on to create an interesting spectacle and then turned back off. These toys should be relatively novel to the child rather than toys that are commonly available in the classroom.

What Adult Does	Child's Communication (Check all that apply)	
	Unprompted	Prompted
<p>Keep the toy out of the child's reach and activate it briefly. Let it wind down or turn off the switch. Wait without saying anything for the child's response.</p> <p>Try a second toy if the child doesn't seem interested in the first one.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RQ1. Reaches for nearby object to show wanting the object <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b. Points at nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> JA3b. Points to nearby object/event just to share interest in object/event with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ1. Reaches for nearby object to show wanting the object <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b. Points at nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> JA3b. Points to nearby object/event just to share interest in object/event with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>Give the toy to the child (even if s/he doesn't request it), and let the child play with it briefly.</p> <p>Stay quiet while the child has the toy unless the child initiates communication with you.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ2: Pulls person's hand toward objects to show request for help <input type="checkbox"/> RQ3. Gives objects to show request for help <input type="checkbox"/> JA1a. Responds to another person giving object just to show interest <input type="checkbox"/> JA2b. Shows object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA3b. Points to nearby object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ2: Pulls person's hand toward objects to show request for help <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RQ3. Gives objects to show request for help <input type="checkbox"/> JA1a. Responds to another person giving object just to show interest <input type="checkbox"/> JA2b. Shows object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA3b. Points to nearby object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>After the child has had 1-2 minutes to play with the toy, point to the toy and ask the child to give it to you or to put it in the “finished” bag or box.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ4a. Looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ4a. Looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

## Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Worksheet:

### Physical Game (Time: 3-4 minutes)

**Materials:** Most physical games do not require any materials, but you might choose one that requires a prop, such as a hand puppet to tickle the child with, or a blanket to use in a “peek-a-boo” type game.

What Adult Does	Child's Communication (Check all that apply)	
	Unprompted	Prompted
Physical Game #1: Do a first round of the game to let the child know what the routine is.  Repeat the game for two more rounds. You might alter the timing of the game (e.g., creeping fingers more slowly) to see if the child will look closely at you.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SI1. Watches the adult closely <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> SI1. Watches the adult closely <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Physical Game #1, cont. Once you have played three rounds of the game, pause before starting another round to see if the child will indicate s/he wants to play the game again.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SI2. After a brief pause, child shows wanting the game to continue (e.g., looks, moves body to make a motion of the game, touches the partner, vocalizes) <input type="checkbox"/> SI5. Child expands games or routines, e.g., switches roles with other person (e.g., finder versus hider) <input type="checkbox"/> SI6. Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> SI2. After a brief pause, child shows wanting the game to continue (e.g., looks, moves body to make a motion of the game, touches the partner, vocalizes) <input type="checkbox"/> SI5. Child expands games or routines, e.g., switches roles with other person (e.g., finder versus hider) <input type="checkbox"/> SI6. Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Physical Game #2: Do a first round of the game to let the child know what the routine is.  Repeat the game for two more rounds. You might alter the timing of the game (e.g., changing the tempo of bouncing the child) to see if the child will look closely at you.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SI1. Watches the adult closely <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> SI1. Watches the adult closely <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Physical Game #2, cont. Once you have played three rounds of the game, pause before starting another round to see if the child will indicate s/he wants to play the game again, OR if the child indicates s/he wants to play Physical Game #1 again.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SI2. After a brief pause child shows wanting the game to continue (e.g., looks, moves body to make a motion of the game, touches the partner, vocalizes) <input type="checkbox"/> SI4. Child initiates familiar games or routines (i.e., not right after an adult does the action ); that is, the child indicates s/he wants to play Physical Game #1 again. <input type="checkbox"/> SI5. Child expands games or routines, e.g., switches roles with other person (e.g., finder versus hider) <input type="checkbox"/> SI6. Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> SI2. After a brief pause child shows wanting the game to continue (e.g., looks, moves body to make a motion of the game, touches the partner, vocalizes) <input type="checkbox"/> SI4. Child initiates familiar games or routines (i.e., not right after an adult does the action ); that is, the child indicates s/he wants to play Physical Game #1 again. <input type="checkbox"/> SI5. Child expands games or routines, e.g., switches roles with other person (e.g., finder versus hider) <input type="checkbox"/> SI6. Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

## Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Worksheet:

### Surprise Bag (Time: 8-10 minutes)

**Materials:** An opaque bag with four “surprise” toys inside; these can be individualized to the child’s interests, but might include such things as a pair of sunglasses, a musical instrument such as a bell with a handle or a tambourine, a toy car, and a ball. There should be at least one toy that can be rolled back and forth between the examiner and child, such as a car or ball. The adult should have duplicates of at least two of these toys to allow both the child and the adult to have one.

What Adult Does	Child’s Communication (Check all that apply)	
	Unprompted	Prompted
<p>Pull one toy from the bag, and show it to the child, making a delighted facial expression. Comment as you show it (e.g., “Oh, look at this truck!”). Wait to observe child’s response.</p> <p>Offer the toy to child, making another comment (e.g., “This is a neat truck.”).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ1. Reaches for out of reach object to show wanting it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b. Points to nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> JA1a. Responds to another person giving objects just to share interest in the objects <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JA2a. Responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ1. Reaches for out of reach object to show wanting it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b. Points to nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> JA1a. Responds to another person giving objects just to share interest in the objects <input type="checkbox"/> JA2a. Responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>Give the surprise bag with the remaining toys to the child.</p> <p>Do not talk to the child about the toys unless s/he initiates communication with you.</p> <p>(If the child doesn’t begin to explore toys, try to engage the child’s interest by shaking bag or partially uncovering a toy in the bag.)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> JA1b: Gives objects just to share interest in objects with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA2b: Shows object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA3b: Points to nearby object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6: Combines gesture and/or +vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> JA1b: Gives objects just to share interest in objects with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA2b: Shows object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA3b: Points to nearby object just to share interest in object with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6: Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>After the toys are out of the bag, point to an object and say to the child “Give it to me.”</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ4a. Looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ4a. Looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>“Accidentally” drop or roll a toy off the table so that it is a little distance away from you &amp; the child.</p> <p>Wait without saying anything to see if the child communicates about the dropped object.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> JA4b. Points to more distant object/event just to share interest in the object/event with another person <input type="checkbox"/> RQ1. Reaches for out of reach object to show wanting it <input type="checkbox"/> RQ4b. Points to nearby object to request it <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> JA4b. Points to more distant object/event just to share interest in the object/event with another person <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>Point to the dropped object from a distance (beyond arm’s length) and say to the child “Give it to get me.”</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RQ5a. Looks at distant object when another person points at the object as a request. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ5a. Looks at distant object when another person points at the object as a request. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

<p>Wait until the child is playing with one of the duplicate toys.</p> <p>Use the other duplicate toy to imitate what the child does with the object</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> SI3. Plays back-and-forth game with actions or object (e.g., exchanges object back-and-forth; back-and-forth game of imitating actions)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> SI3. Plays back-and-forth game with actions or object (e.g., exchanges object back-and-forth; back-and-forth game of imitating actions)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>
<p>With the rolling toy or ball, try to initiate a game of rolling the toy back and forth to one another.</p> <p>If the child engages in taking several turns with you, then pause before taking your next turn.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SI1. During face to face games, physical activities, or routines, child watches the adult closely</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SI2. After a brief pause, shows wanting the game to continue (e.g., looks, moves body to make a motion of the game, touches the partner, vocalizes)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SI3. Plays back-and-forth games with objects or actions (e.g., exchanges objects back-and-forth; back-and-forth game of imitating actions)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SI6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> SI1. During face to face games, physical activities, or routines, child watches the adult closely</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SI2. After a brief pause, shows wanting the game to continue (e.g., looks, moves body to make a motion of the game, touches the partner, vocalizes)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SI3. Plays back-and-forth games with objects or actions (e.g., exchanges objects back-and-forth; back-and-forth game of imitating actions)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SI6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>



## Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Worksheet:

### Book (Time: 3-4 minutes)

**Materials:** A picture book with two “defaced” pages embedded in the book—one page that is torn, and one page that has been scribbled on with a marker.

What Adult Does	Child’s Communication (Check all that apply)	
	Unprompted	Prompted
<p>Give the defaced book to the child, making a simple, interested comment (e.g., “I like this book!”).</p> <p>If the child begins to look at the book, say nothing more unless the child initiates communication with you.</p> <p>(If the child does not begin to look at the book, make no more than 2 attempts to get the child started.)</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JA1a. Responds to another person giving objects just to share interest</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JA1b. Gives object just to share interest in object with another person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JA2b. Shows object just to share interest in object with another person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JA3b. Points to nearby object just to share interest in object with another person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JA6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> JA1a. Responds to another person giving objects just to share interest</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JA1b. Gives object just to share interest in object with another person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JA2b. Shows object just to share interest in object with another person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JA3b. Points to nearby object just to share interest in object with another person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JA6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>
<p>Sometime toward the end of the book, point to an object on a page in the book and say “Look at the _____ (name of object).”</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> JA2a. Responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> JA2a. Responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>

**Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Worksheet:  
Colorful Pre-Placed Pictures or Objects (Time: 1-2 minutes)**

**Materials:** A colorful picture on the wall (such as a picture of a favorite cartoon character), or a colorful object, placed in front of the child out of reach but in his or her line of sight. This picture or object should be novel (i.e., not usually in the room where the child can see it), and put in place before beginning the assessment. A colorful picture (or colorful object) that is placed slightly behind the child to his/her left or right side, out of the child's reach. This picture or object also should be something novel, and should be put in place before beginning the assessment.

What Adult Does	Child's Communication (Check all that apply)	
	Unprompted	Prompted
<p>The presence of the pictures and/or objects offers opportunities for the child to initiate Joint Attention.</p> <p>For the first half of the session, do not direct the child's attention to them.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> JA4b. Points to more distant objects/events just to share interest in objects/events with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> JA4b. Points to more distant objects/events just to share interest in objects/events with another person <input type="checkbox"/> JA6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>The presence of the pictures and/or objects also offers opportunities for the child to initiate Requesting. The adult should simply observe whether this occurs.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ5b. Points to more distant objects to request them. <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RQ5b. Points to more distant objects to request them. <input type="checkbox"/> RQ6. Combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person to request <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>During the second part of the session, choose a time when the child is generally looking in your direction. First, cock your head to look around the child, and look with interest at a picture or object located behind him/her. Do not point or talk yet —just use your gaze along with an interested facial expression.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> JA5. Follows gaze of another person to objects/events just to share interest <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> JA5. Follows gaze of another person to objects/events just to share interest <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>If the child does not respond to you directing your gaze to the picture, then point to the picture and say, "Look at that!"</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JA4a: Follows a point to more distant objects/events just to share interest in the objects/events <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> JA4a: Follows a point to more distant objects/events just to share interest in the objects/events <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

## Structured Assessment of Social-Communication Summary Score Sheet

Child's Name: C. W.

Examiner's Name(s): A.M.

Date(s) of Evaluation: 08/02/2008

Examiner's Role(s) (e.g., teacher, therapist): Therapist

### Evaluation Session (check one):

- ☒ Part I: Focused practice with an Adult  
☐ Part II: Classroom Social-Communication Observation (Small Group). Number of peers present: \_\_\_\_\_

Other notes about the context(s) of the session: \_\_\_\_\_

### Directions:

Now that you have assessed the child's social-communication and related abilities, it is time to transfer that information from the Worksheet to this Social-Communication Summary Score Sheet. Under each Social-Communication Category and Skill Level is listed the skill targeted and the task that elicited the skill within the Structured Assessment (see next page). For example under SI1 "While playing face to face games, physical activities or routines, child looks in anticipation when activity stops," the **Physical Games Task** from the Structured Assessment is listed. Within this task there are several opportunities to elicit and observe a child participating in physical games and routines. The professional can then move back and forth between the **Social-Communication Worksheet** and record the observed behaviors for each skill level on the **Social-Communication Summary Score Sheet**. Check off the "Example" boxes to indicate when a child has demonstrated an unprompted behavior and write out the specific behavior observed (e.g., "pointed to distant toy car"). Remember, an example can only be credited if the behavior occurred in a different context, with a different object, or in a different way, as the child does not receive credit for repeating the exact same behavior (even if on different days). All examples of scored behaviors must occur without any prompting by another person. You can note if prompting was helpful to elicit a given skill; however, prompted behaviors do not get checked as examples and are not credited in the summary score. The number of checked boxes is the Summary Score, which should be noted in the last column. For example, if the child demonstrates reaching to request (RQ1) in two different situations, two boxes should be checked and the Summary Score is "2." If no unprompted behavior is observed at a level, write "0" in the Summary Score column. The Summary Score for each skill for both the one to one and classroom observations should be transferred to the "Focused Practice" and "Observation" columns on the *Developmental Profile of Communication Skills* and the highest skill level achieved for each category (i.e., Social Interaction, Requesting, Joint Attention) should be circled in both columns.

### Summary Score Guidelines:

- ? = unsure of child's skill
- 0 = child has not display this skill (or displayed only with prompts)
- 1 = child has displayed one example of this skill without prompts
- 2 = child has displayed two examples of this skill without prompts
- 3 = child has displayed three examples of this skill without prompts

\* **Prompt Levels-** UP=unprompted, FP=full physical, PP=partial physical,  
FM=full model, PM=partial model, VM= verbal model, G=gesture,  
P=positional, EV=environmental/pictorial

SOCIAL-COMMUNICATION CATEGORY AND SKILL LEVELS	Examples	Examples, Prompts, and Notes  Write in examples of behaviors observed. Note if a behavior was prompted. Prompted behaviors are scored 0. If no examples were observed, leave blank and score 0 to indicate that child did not display the skill.	Summary Score ? - unsure 0 – no examples 1 – 1 example 2 – 2 examples 3 – 3 examples
<b>SOCIAL INTERACTION</b>			
<b>SI1.</b> While playing face to face games, physical activities, or routines, child watches the adult closely <b>Structured Assessment: Physical Games</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1. Watched the examiner during the tickle game 2. Watched the examiner during horsey 3. Watched the examiner while rolling the ball during Surprise Bag	3
<b>SI2.</b> While playing face to face games, physical activities, or routines, after a brief pause child shows wanting the game to continue (e.g., looks, moves body to make a motion of the game, touches the partner, vocalizes) <b>Structured Assessment: Physical Games, Surprise Bag</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1. Reached and looked for continuation of tickle game 2. Looked at examiner to request more horsey 3. Verbally asked examiner to roll ball again during Surprise Bag	3
<b>SI3.</b> Child plays back-and-forth games with objects or actions (e.g., exchanges objects back-and-forth; back-and-forth game of imitating actions) <b>Structured Assessment: Surprise Bag</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Back-and-forth exchange of ball during Surprise Bag 2. 3.	1
<b>SI4.</b> Child initiates familiar games or routines (i.e., not right after an adult does the action) <b>Structured Assessment: Physical Games, Surprise Bag</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>SI5.</b> Child expands games or routines, e.g., ▪ Includes a third person in the game/routine ▪ Reverses roles with other person <b>Structured Assessment: Physical Games, Surprise Bag</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>SI6:</b> Child combines gesture and/or verbalization/vocalization with looking at person to signal wanting game to continue <b>Structured Assessment: Physical Games, Surprise Bag</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0

SOCIAL-COMMUNICATION CATEGORY AND SKILL LEVELS	Examples	<b>Examples, Prompts, and Notes</b>  Write in examples of behaviors observed. Note if a behavior was prompted. Prompted behaviors are scored 0. If no examples were observed, leave blank and score 0 to indicate that child did not display the skill.	<b>Summary Score</b> ? - unsure 0 – no examples 1 – 1 example 2 – 2 examples 3 – 3 examples
<b>REQUESTING</b>			
<b>RQ1.</b> Child reaches for out of reach object to show wanting the object <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys, Surprise Bag, Colorful Pictures/Objects</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1. Reached for entire puzzle board 2. Reached for missing puzzle piece 3. Reached for wind-up toy	3
<b>RQ2.</b> Child pulls person's hand toward objects to show request for help <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Pulled adult's hand to get help with puzzle 2. 3.	1
<b>RQ3.</b> Child gives objects to show request for help <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Gave puzzle to examiner to get help 2. With a <u>gesture prompt</u> , looked at examiner and gave wind-up toy 3.	1
<b>RQ4a.</b> Child looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request (i.e., objects within reaching distance) <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys, Surprise Bag</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Looked at puzzle when examiner pointed and requested it 2. Looked at toy during Surprise Bag when examiner requested it 3.	2
<b>RQ4b.</b> Child points to nearby objects to request them <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys, Surprise Bag</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>RQ5a.</b> Child looks at distant objects when another person points to the objects as a request (i.e., objects that are beyond reach) <b>Structured Assessment: Surprise Bag (object rolling away)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Looked at ball during Surprise Bag 2. 3.	1
<b>RQ5b.</b> Child points to more distant objects to request them (i.e., objects that are beyond reach) <b>Structured Assessment: Colorful Pictures/Objects</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>RQ6.</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to request <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys, Surprise Bag, Colorful Pictures/Objects</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0

SOCIAL-COMMUNICATION CATEGORY AND SKILL LEVELS	Examples	Examples, Prompts, and Notes  Write in examples of behaviors observed. Note if a behavior was prompted. Prompted behaviors are scored 0. If no examples were observed, leave blank and score 0 to indicate that child did not display the skill.	Summary Score ? - unsure 0 – no examples 1 – 1 example 2 – 2 examples 3 – 3 examples
<b>JOINT ATTENTION</b>			
<b>JA1a.</b> Child responds to another person giving objects just to share interest in the objects <b>Structured Assessment: Action Toys, Surprise Bag, Book</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Took book and flipped through pages during Book activity 2. 3.	1
<b>JA1b.</b> Child gives objects just to share interest in objects with another person <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Surprise Bag, Book</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1. Gives and takes toothbrush (from Play Assessment) 2. Gives and takes a cup (from Play Assessment) 3. Gives and takes a block (from Play Assessment)	3
<b>JA2a.</b> Child responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys, Surprise Bag, Book</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Labeled toy and looked at examiner during Surprise Bag 2. 3.	1
<b>JA2b.</b> Child shows objects just to share interest in the objects with another person <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys, Surprise Bag, Book</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>JA3a.</b> Child follows a point to near-by objects/events just to share interest in objects/events <b>Structured Assessment: Surprise Bag, Book</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>JA3b.</b> Child points to near-by objects/events just to share interest in objects/events with another person <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys, Surprise Bag, Books</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>JA4a.</b> Child follows a point to more distant objects/events just to share interest in the objects/events <b>Structured Assessment: Colorful Pictures/Objects</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Followed examiner's point to picture on the wall 2. 3.	1
<b>JA4b.</b> Child points to a more distant objects/events just to share interest in the objects/events with another person <b>Structured Assessment: Surprise Bag (object rolling away), Colorful Pictures/Objects</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>JA5.</b> Child follows gaze of another person to objects/events just to share interest <b>Structured Assessment: Colorful Pictures/Objects (Any time during assessment when elicited by adult)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>JA6.</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/ event <b>Structured Assessment: Puzzles, Action Toys, Surprise Bag, Book, Colorful Pictures/Objects</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b> Add final column of summary scores (possible range of 0-69 points).			21

## DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILE OF SOCIAL-COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Directions: In the Focused Column, write in the Summary Score (0, 1, 2, 3) established for each skill during the Part I: Focused Practice with an Adult.

In the Observation Column, write in the Summary Score (0, 1, 2, 3) established for each skill during the Part II: Classroom Social-Communication Observation.

SOCIAL INTERACTION	Focused	Observation	REQUESTING	Focused	Observation	JOINT ATTENTION	Focused	Observation
<b>SI0.</b> No SI level mastered			<b>RQ0.</b> No RQ level mastered					
<b>SI1.</b> While playing face to face games, physical activities, or routines, child watches the adult closely	<b>3</b>		<b>RQ1.</b> Child reaches for out of reach object to show wanting the object	<b>3</b>				
<b>SI2.</b> Child shows wanting the game to continue after a brief pause	<b>3</b>		<b>RQ2.</b> Child pulls person's hand toward objects to show request for help	<b>1</b>				
<b>SI3.</b> Child plays back and forth games with objects or actions	<b>1</b>		<b>RQ3.</b> Child gives objects to show request for help	<b>1</b>		<b>JA0.</b> No JA level mastered		
<b>SI4.</b> Child initiates familiar games or routines	<b>0</b>		<b>RQ4a.</b> Child looks at nearby objects when another person points to the objects as a request	<b>2</b>		<b>JA1a.</b> Child responds to another person giving objects just to share interest in the objects	<b>1</b>	
			<b>RQ4b.</b> Child points to nearby objects to request them	<b>0</b>		<b>JA1b.</b> Child gives objects just to share interest in the objects with another person	<b>3</b>	
<b>SI5.</b> Child expands games or routines	<b>0</b>		<b>RQ5a.</b> Child looks at distant objects when another person points to the objects as a request	<b>1</b>		<b>JA2a.</b> Child responds to another person showing objects just to share interest in the objects	<b>1</b>	
			<b>RQ5b.</b> Child points to more distant objects to request them	<b>0</b>		<b>JA2b.</b> Child shows objects just to share interest in the objects with another person	<b>0</b>	
<b>SI6:</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person to show wanting game to continue	<b>0</b>		<b>RQ6.</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/ verbalization with looking at person to request	<b>0</b>		<b>JA3a.</b> Child follows a point to near-by objects/events, just to share interest in objects/events	<b>0</b>	
						<b>JA3b.</b> Child points to near-by objects/events, just to share interest in objects/events with another person	<b>0</b>	
						<b>JA4a.</b> Child follows a point to more distant objects/events, just to share interest in the objects/events	<b>1</b>	
						<b>JA4b.</b> Child points to more distant objects/events just to share interest in objects/events with another person	<b>0</b>	
						<b>JA5.</b> Child follows gaze of another person to objects/events just to share interest	<b>0</b>	
						<b>JA6.</b> Child combines gesture and/or vocalization/verbalization with looking at person just to share interest in an object/event	<b>0</b>	

## Structured Assessment of Play Worksheet

Child's Name: C.W.

Examiner's Name(s): A.M.

Date(s) of Assessment: 08/04/2008

Examiner's Role(s) (e.g., teacher, therapist): Therapist

### Assessment Method Used (check one):

☒ One to One Session with Adult

☐ Classroom Play Observation (small group observation) \_\_\_\_\_ Number of peers present

Other notes about the context(s) of the session:

**Directions:** This assessment of play skills was developed for those professionals who prefer a more structured approach to assessment. This method can be used in combination with the more unstructured approach (completed by the same or another professional) to provide an additional perspective on the child's skills. The attached worksheet can guide the professional in the administration of the tasks as well as to facilitate recording the child's responses. The worksheet is organized around three Play Scenarios (Mealtime, Nighttime, & Farm Set). For each Scenario, common behaviors that might displayed by a child within that Scenario are listed for each Play Category (Exploratory, Relational, Functional, and Symbolic). In addition, the behaviors within a Category are listed in a hierarchical sequence. For example under the Exploratory Category, behaviors representing E1-E3 levels are listed sequentially. As the child plays with the toys in each Scenario, the adult then checks off the behaviors observed under the appropriate Category. Once the assessment is completed, the results are then transferred from the Worksheet to the Summary Score Sheet.



# Structured Assessment of Play Worksheet

**General Directions:** Present the set of toys without any initial prompts for play. Observe the child's spontaneous play then elicit the highest level of play from the child using prompts from least directive to most directive (verbal → verbal with physical → model). You may comment on the child's play but the less talk and action on the part of the examiner is preferred. Make a note of prompts used to elicit behavior.

## Mealtime Set

Materials: large doll/stuffed animal/action figure      2 plates      2 cups      large spoon      a few shapes/blocks  
serving utensils such as spatula      2 spoons      pot/pan      sponge      a piece of writing paper

Check the types of play observed

### EXPLORATORY PLAY:

- ☒ Picks up & visually inspects objects      ☐ Pat doll/bear/figure
- ☒ Gathers blocks      ☒ Manipulates doll/bear/figure      ☐ Folds paper
- ☐ Bangs plates, spoons, cups, pot/pan, utensils on table or other object
- ☐ Gives and takes doll/bear/figure      ☐ Gives and takes sponge
- ☒ Gives and takes shape/block      ☐ Gives and takes paper
- ☒ Gives and takes spatula/plate/spoon/cup/pot or pan
- ☐ Mouths, bangs, rolls cup
- ☐ Other 3+ actions on a single toy \_\_\_\_\_

### RELATIONAL PLAY:

- ☒ Takes lid off pot      ☐ Takes clothes off doll/bear/figure
- ☒ Puts lid on pot      ☒ Puts utensil in cup/pot/pan      ☐ Puts blocks in cup
- ☐ Lines up any objects
- ☐ Bangs utensil on pot/pan      ☐ Puts utensil on plate
- ☐ Stacks blocks/shapes/cups/plates
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### FUNCTIONAL PLAY:

- ☐ Stirs utensil in pot/pan      ☒ Stirs spoon in cup
- ☐ Hugs, rocks, kisses doll/bear/figure
- ☒ Feeds self with utensil      ☒ Drinks from cup
- ☐ Feeds doll/bear/figure with utensil      ☐ Feeds doll/bear/figure with cup
- ☒ Feeds examiner with utensil      ☐ Feeds examiner with cup
- ☐ Feeds examiner with utensil then feeds doll/bear/figure with same utensil

- ☐ Feeds examiner with cup then feeds doll/bear/figure with cup
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### SYMBOLIC PLAY:

- ☐ Walks/moves doll/bear/figure as if alive
- ☐ Makes doll/bear/figure eat as if alive
- ☐ Has doll/bear/figure use cooking item as if alive
- ☐ Other form of animating doll/bear/figure \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Stirs food in pot/pan then serves food on plate
- ☐ Pretends to fill cup with liquid then feeds to doll/bear/figure/other
- ☐ Other 2 step pretend action \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Feeds doll, wipes dolls mouth, puts doll to bed with paper as blanket
- ☐ Mixes pretend ingredients, cooks, serves food, feeds other
- ☐ Other 3+ step pretend action \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Used block/shape as food      ☐ Uses sponge as food
- ☐ Uses cup as a hat      ☐ Other substitution \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Makes "yuck" or "yum" gesture regarding pretend food
- ☐ Blows on food to pretend hot
- ☐ Other pretend characteristics \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Picks up imaginary food      ☐ Uses imaginary cooking or eating tool
- ☐ Other imaginary object \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Takes suggested role of chef      ☐ Takes suggested role of dad/mom
- ☐ Suggests role to examiner \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Expands play to new roles, new theme, and/or fantasy role

### **Nighttime Set**

Materials: large doll/stuffed animal/action figure      toothbrush      diaper      an empty shoebox      a stick  
doll-sized blanket or small towel      plastic comb/brush set      baby bottle      a few shapes/blocks

Check the types of play observed:

#### ***EXPLORATORY PLAY:***

- ☐ Picks up & visually inspects objects    ☐ Pats doll/bear/figure
- ☐ Gathers blocks    ☒ Manipulates doll/bear/figure
- ☐ Shakes, folds blanket
- ☒ Fingers bristles on toothbrush or brush
- ☐ Bangs toothbrush, comb, or hairbrush on table or other object
- ☐ Bangs bottle, shoebox, or blocks    ☐ Shakes bottle
- ☐ Gives and takes doll/bear/figure    ☐ Gives and takes shoebox
- ☐ Gives and takes shape/block    ☐ Gives and takes stick
- ☐ Gives and takes blanket    ☐ Gives and takes diaper or bottle
- ☒ Gives and takes **toothbrush**, comb, brush
- ☐ Mouths, bangs, fingers brush    ☐ Mouths, bangs, rubs block
- ☐ Other 3+ actions on a single toy \_\_\_\_\_

#### ***RELATIONAL PLAY:***

- ☒ Takes blocks out of box    ☐ Puts blocks in box
- ☐ Takes stick out of box    ☐ Puts stick in box
- ☐ Puts brushes and comb in box    ☐ Stacks blocks/shapes
- ☐ Puts blanket, bottle, diaper in box
- ☒ Takes clothes off doll/**bear**/figure
- ☒ Other: **puts blocks together in small groups**

#### ***FUNCTIONAL PLAY:***

- ☐ Covers self with blanket    ☒ Brushes own teeth
- ☒ Brushes/combs own hair    ☐ Feeds self with bottle
- ☐ Hugs, rocks, kisses doll/bear/figure
- ☐ Covers doll/bear/figure with blanket    ☐ Puts diaper on doll/bear/figure
- ☐ Brushes doll/bear/figure's teeth    ☒ Feeds **doll**/bear/figure with bottle
- ☐ Brushes/combs doll/bear/figure's hair

- ☐ Covers examiner with blanket    ☐ Brushes examiner's teeth
- ☐ Brushes/combs examiner's hair    ☐ Feeds examiner with bottle
- ☐ Brushes examiner's hair then brushes doll/bear/figure's hair
- ☐ Brushes examiner's teeth then brushes doll/bear/figure's teeth
- ☐ Feeds examiner with bottle then feeds doll/bear/figure with bottle

#### ***SYMBOLIC PLAY:***

- ☐ Walks/moves doll/bear/figure as if alive
- ☐ Has doll/bear/figure brush own teeth
- ☐ Has doll/bear/figure brush own hair
- ☐ Has doll/bear/figure feed self with bottle
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Feeds doll/bear/figure pretend food, brushes doll/bear/figure's teeth
- ☐ Changes doll/bear/figure's clothes, puts doll/bear/figure to bed
- ☐ Other 2 step pretend action \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Feeds doll, wipes doll's mouth, puts doll to bed w/ paper as blanket
- ☐ Puts doll in pajamas, puts doll to bed, reads bedtime story
- ☐ Other 3+ step pretend action \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Uses stick as toothpaste    ☐ Uses block as cup
- ☐ Uses shoebox as sink
- ☐ Uses blanket as mirror    ☐ Other substitution \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Makes "stinky" gesture for diaper    ☐ Pretends hair is knotted
- ☐ Makes "yuck" gesture for toothpaste    ☐ Pretends bottle is empty
- ☐ Other pretend characteristic \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Reads imaginary bedtime story    ☐ Puts imaginary pajamas on doll
- ☐ Other imaginary object \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Takes suggested role of big brother
- ☐ Takes suggested role of dad/mom
- ☐ Suggests role to examiner \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Expands play to new roles, new theme, and/or fantasy role

## **Farm Set**

Materials:      three miniature “people” figure (e.g., weebles, Fisher Price people)      small open box  
four miniature plastic farm or domestic animals (e.g., cow, pig, cat, dog, horse, sheep)      a stick  
a toy tractor and/or truck with room to “haul”      a few shapes/blocks

Check the types of play observed:

### ***EXPLORATORY PLAY:***

- ☐ Picks up & visually inspects objects    ☐ Gathers blocks
- ☒ Gathers animals    ☐ Gathers people    ☐ Manipulates people
- ☒ Manipulates animals    ☐ Fingers tractor/truck
- ☐ Bangs blocks, stick, box    ☐ Gives and takes people
- ☐ Gives and takes animals    ☐ Gives and takes shape/block
- ☐ Gives and takes stick    ☐ Gives and takes box
- ☐ Rolls truck/tractor back and forth
- ☐ Mouths, bangs, rubs people or animals
- ☐ Mouths, bangs, rubs box/stick/or blocks
- ☐ Other 3+ actions on a single toy \_\_\_\_\_

### ***RELATIONAL PLAY:***

- ☐ Takes blocks out of tractor/truck    ☐ Takes blocks out of box
- ☐ Takes animals/people out of tractor/truck
- ☒ Takes animals/people out of box
- ☒ puts people/animals in truck/**tractor**    ☐ Put blocks in truck/tractor
- ☐ puts blocks in box    ☐ Puts people/animals in box
- ☐ puts lid on box    ☐ Stacks blocks/shapes
- ☐ puts people and animals in truck/tractor
- ☒ Bang stick on box
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### ***FUNCTIONAL PLAY:***

- ☒ Pushes truck/tractor on a purposeful path
- ☐ Puts blocks in truck/tractor, drives truck/tractor
- ☐ Drives tractor w/animal up to self
- ☐ Drives tractor w/animal up to play people
- ☐ Gives different animals a “ride” in sequence
- ☐ Drives tractor w/animal up to examiner
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### ***SYMBOLIC PLAY:***

- ☐ Walks/moves people as if alive    ☒ Moves animals as if alive
- ☐ Animals bite each other or people
- ☐ People feed self food (block)    ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Feeds animals pretend food, put animals in pretend barn
- ☐ Feeds people pretend food, puts people in pretend house
- ☐ Other 2 step pretend action \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Feeds people, has people drive the tractor, has people go home
- ☐ Waters animals, takes animals for a ride, puts animals in barn
- ☐ Other 3+ step pretend action \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Uses block as food to feed animals    ☐ Uses blocks or stick as fence
- ☐ Uses box as a water tray    ☐ Use blocks as barn
- ☐ Other substitution \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Pretends animals got loose
- ☐ Other pretend characteristic \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Feeds animals imaginary food    ☐ Puts animals in imaginary barn
- ☐ Other imaginary object \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Takes suggested role of farmer
- ☐ Takes suggested role of auctioneer
- ☐ Suggests role to examiner \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Expands play to new roles, new theme, and/or fantasy role

## Structured Assessment of Play Summary Score Sheet

Child's Name: C.W.

Examiner's Name(s): A.G.

Date(s) of Evaluation: 08/04/2008

Examiner's Role(s) (e.g., teacher, therapist): Therapist

### Evaluation Session (check one):

☒ Part I: Focused practice with an Adult

☐ Part II: Classroom Play Observation (Small Group). Number of peers present: \_\_\_\_\_

Other notes about the context(s) of the session: \_\_\_\_\_

### Directions:

Now that you have completed the Structured Assessment of Play Worksheet, it is time to transfer that information to this Summary Score Sheet. For each of the 20 skill levels (e.g., 3 for Exploratory, 3 for Relational, 5 for Functional, and 9 for Symbolic), you will look across each of the play contexts (i.e., mealtime, nighttime, farm set) for examples of the targeted behaviors. For example, for Exploratory Play E1 "Child picks up and looks at a toy," you will look for unprompted examples of this behavior across the three play contexts. If the child displays one or more of the behaviors without prompting, check that number of "Example" boxes and write out the specific play behavior(s) observed. All examples of play must occur without any prompting by another adult or peer. Remember, additional examples can only be credited if the play act occurs in a different context, with a different object, or in a different way, as the child does not receive credit for repeating the same exact play act (even if on different days). There are three boxes in the Examples column for each level because a child must demonstrate three examples of each skill in order for the skill to be considered mastered. The number of checked boxes is the Summary Score, which should be noted in the last column. For example, if the child demonstrated taking pieces of toys apart (R1) in two different situations, two boxes should be checked and the Summary Score is "2." If no unprompted play act is observed at a level, write "0" in the Summary Score column. You also can make notes to indicate if any prompting (e.g., verbal, physical) was helpful to elicit a given skill; however, prompted acts do not get checked as "Examples" and are not credited in the Summary Score. The Summary Score for each skill for both the one to one and classroom observations should be transferred to the "Focused Practice" and "Observation" columns on the "Developmental Profile of Play Skills" and the highest skill level achieved for each category (i.e., Exploratory, Relational, Functional, Symbolic) should be circled in both columns.

### Summary Score Guidelines:

- ? = unsure of child's skill
- 0 = child has not display this skill (or displayed only with prompts)
- 1 = child has displayed one example of this skill without prompts
- 2 = child has displayed two examples of this skill without prompts
- 3 = child has displayed three examples of this skill without prompts

\* **Prompt Levels-** UP=unprompted, FP=full physical, PP=partial physical, FM=full model, PM=partial model, VM= verbal model, G=gesture, P=positional, EV=environmental/pictorial

PLAY CATEGORY AND SKILL LEVELS	Examples	Examples, Prompts, & Notes	Summary Score ? - unsure 0 – no examples 1 – 1 example 2 – 2 examples 3 – 3 examples
<b>EXPLORATORY PLAY</b>			
<b>E1. Child picks up and looks at a toy</b> ■ Examples: Picks up, looks at, puts down block; picks up, looks at, puts down	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Teddy Bear 2. 3.	1
<b>E2. Child plays with toys using both hands together</b> ■ Examples: Pushes buttons on pop up; rolls ball; gathers blocks; turns pages in book	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1. Teddy Bear 2. Fingers toothbrush bristles 3. Gathers blocks	3
<b>E3. Child plays with one toy in three or more different ways</b> ■ Examples: Rolls, bounces, and pats ball; mouths, bangs, and stretches slinky	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>RELATIONAL PLAY</b>			
<b>R1. Child takes pieces of toys apart</b> ■ Examples: Takes apart large pop beads; takes off lid from container	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1. Takes off lid of pot 2. Takes blocks out of box 3. Takes clothes off of bear	3
<b>R2. Child puts toys together in simple ways</b> ■ Examples: Drops blocks in cup; puts lid on container; bangs two objects together	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Put lid on pot 2. Put utensil in pot 3.	2
<b>R3 Child puts several toys together in specific ways</b> ■ Examples: Strings beads; sorts shapes into a shape sorter, puts pieces of puzzle together	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Put people in tractor 2. Bangs stick on box 3.	2
<b>FUNCTIONAL PLAY</b>			
<b>F1. Child plays with toys in functional or simple pretend ways.</b> ■ Examples: Stirs spoon in cup; pushes truck in purposeful path	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Stirs spoon in cup 2. Pushes tractor in purposeful path 3.	2
<b>F2. Child plays with toys in simple pretend ways directed to self</b> ■ Examples: Feeds self with empty spoon; brushes own hair with plastic hairbrush.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1. Feeds self with spoon 2. Drinks from cup 3. Brushes own teeth	3
<b>F3. Child includes a doll/action figure in simple pretend play with toys</b> -Examples: Brushes doll's hair with brush; diapers doll	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Fed doll with bottle 2. 3.	1
<b>F4. Child includes other people in simple pretend play with toys</b> ■ Examples: Feeds adult with spoon; combs adult's hair with comb	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Fed clinician with spoon – <i>Prompted with Verbal Model</i> 2. 3.	0
<b>F5. Child uses the same action in simple pretend play with two different people or dolls/figures</b> ■ Example: Places cup to adult's lips, then places cup to doll's mouth.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0

PLAY CATEGORY AND SKILL LEVELS	Examples	Examples, Prompts, & Notes  Write in examples of behaviors observed. Note if a behavior was prompted. Prompted behaviors are scored 0. If no examples of unprompted behaviors were observed, leave blank and score 0 to indicate that child did not display the skill.	Summary Score ? - unsure 0 – no examples 1 – 1 example 2 – 2 examples 3 – 3 examples
<b>SYMBOLIC PLAY</b>			
<b>S1. Child makes doll/figure move or do things as if it were alive</b> ■ Examples: Walks a doll; manipulates toy animal to “eat” from container; doll brushes own hair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Moved farm set animals as if alive 2. 3.	1
<b>S2. Child does 2 different pretend actions, one right after another, with the same toy</b> ■ Examples: Stirs spoon in bowl and then pretends to feed doll; fills up car with gas and drives into garage	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>S3. Child does 3 or more different pretend actions, one right after another, with the same toy</b> ■ Example: Feeds doll, wipes doll’s mouth, puts doll to bed, kisses goodnight; drives ambulance to hospital, takes patient out of ambulance, and places on hospital bed	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2.d 3.	0
<b>S4. Child uses one toy/object to represent or stand for another</b> ■ Examples: Uses block as a hairbrush or cup; puts sponge in bowl as food; uses paper as blanket or diaper for baby	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>S5. Child uses pretend qualities in play</b> ■ Examples: Blows on spoon as if soup is hot; makes “yucky” gesture when pretending to eat play dough	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>S6. Child uses pretend objects in play</b> ■ Examples: Shakes imaginary salt shaker; holds hand to ear as if talking on telephone; shapes hand as if holding a tool and creates tool’s action	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>S7. Child takes on a pretend role in play that other people direct</b> ■ Examples: Plays house when adult suggests it; plays construction worker when another child suggests it	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>S8. Child suggests pretend roles in play to self or other people</b> ■ Example: Plays hospital suggesting roles to others such as, “I’ll be the nurse, you be the patient.”	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>S9 Child expands pretend play with other people into (a) new roles, (b) new themes, (c) fantasy roles</b> ■ Examples: Spiderman rescues victims; princess and prince marry and go to live in haunted castle; monsters fighting.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.	0
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b> Add final column of summary scores. (Possible range 0-60 points)			18

## DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILE OF PLAY SKILLS

Directions: In the Focused Column, write in the Summary Score (0, 1, 2, 3) established for each skill during the Part I: Adult-Child Structured Play Assessment. In the Observation Column, write in the Summary Score (0, 1, 2, 3) established for each skill during the Part II: Classroom Play Observation.

EXPLORATORY PLAY	Focused	Observation	RELATIONAL PLAY	Focused	Observation	FUNCTIONAL PLAY	Focused	Observation	SYMBOLIC PLAY	Focused	Observation
<b>E0.</b> No E level mastered											
<b>E1.</b> Picks up and looks at objects/toys	1										
<b>E2.</b> Plays with objects/toys using both hands	3		<b>R0.</b> No R level mastered								
<b>E4.</b> Plays with one toy in three or more different ways	0		<b>R1.</b> Takes objects/toys apart	3							
			<b>R2.</b> Puts objects/toys together in simple ways	2		<b>F0.</b> No F level mastered					
			<b>R3.</b> Puts several objects/toys together in specific ways	2		<b>F1.</b> Plays with objects/toys in functional or simple pretend ways	2				
						<b>F2.</b> Plays with objects/toys in simple pretend ways directed to self	3				
						<b>F3.</b> Uses or includes doll/action figure in simple pretend play	1		<b>S0.</b> No S level mastered		
						<b>F4.</b> Plays with objects/toys in simple pretend ways directed to/involving others	0		<b>S1.</b> Uses/moves doll or other action figure as if alive	1	
						<b>F5.</b> Child uses the same action in simple pretend play with two different people or dolls/figures	0		<b>S2.</b> Performs 2 different pretend actions on same object in sequence	0	
									<b>S3.</b> Performs 3 or more different pretend actions on same object in sequence	0	
									<b>S4.</b> Uses objects/toys to stand for/represent something else	0	
									<b>S5.</b> Uses pretend qualities/responses in play	0	
									<b>S6.</b> Uses pretend objects in play	0	
									<b>S7.</b> Takes on pretend role in play suggested by peers	0	
									<b>S8.</b> Suggests pretend roles in play to self or other people	0	
									<b>S9.</b> Child expands pretend play with other people into (a) new roles, (b) new themes, and/or (c) fantasy roles	0	

## PREFERENCE ASSESSMENT FORM

**Directions:** In order to decide “with what” materials to use to teach social-communication and play skills it is important to get a sense of the child’s likes and dislikes. First, indicate if the child likes or dislikes the activity (if applicable). Then, if the child likes the activity (or at least does not dislike it) list the specific toys/materials/games/adult actions (e.g., tickling) s/he likes that are part of that activity.

Class Activities	Does the child <i>like</i> or <i>dislike</i> the activity?	What specifically does the child like?
Circle time	<input type="checkbox"/> Likes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dislikes <input type="checkbox"/> Neither likes nor dislikes	Short Attention.
Dramatic Play	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Likes <input type="checkbox"/> Dislikes <input type="checkbox"/> Neither likes nor dislikes	Playing Restaurant.
Manipulatives/ Block Center	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Likes <input type="checkbox"/> Dislikes <input type="checkbox"/> Neither likes nor dislikes	Sorting blocks and lining up blocks according to size.
Gross Motor/Outdoor Play	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Likes <input type="checkbox"/> Dislikes <input type="checkbox"/> Neither likes nor dislikes	Catch; sliding down the slide; Tag
Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Likes <input type="checkbox"/> Dislikes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neither likes nor dislikes	Prefers finger painting.
Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Likes <input type="checkbox"/> Dislikes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neither likes nor dislikes	Prefers dancing with music.
Library	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Likes <input type="checkbox"/> Dislikes <input type="checkbox"/> Neither likes nor dislikes	Prefer books that have pictures of him or other children.
Other Classroom Materials/Toys/ Activities/Games	<input type="checkbox"/> Likes <input type="checkbox"/> Dislikes <input type="checkbox"/> Neither likes nor dislikes	
Snack	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Likes <input type="checkbox"/> Dislikes <input type="checkbox"/> Neither likes nor dislikes	Pudding Snack Pack and Juice Box; Fruit snacks



**Classroom Activity Matrix**  
**Activity/Center**

Child	Goal	Circle Time	Dramatic Play	Manipulatives Center	Grs Motor / Play-ground	Art	Sensory Play	Music	Library	Snack		
C.W.	SI3: Plays back and forth games with objects or actions		X	X	X							
	RQ2: Pulls person's hand toward objects to request assistance		X	X						X		
	F3: Plays with objects/toys in simple pretend ways directed to doll/figure	X	X									
	F4: Plays with objects/toys in simple pretend ways directed to another person	X	X									
C2												
C3												

**Directions:** Use this activity matrix to help you determine during which activities you will target particular goals for a particular child. This activity matrix can be used to plan for up to three children at a time. Write the child's name in an empty box in the "**Child**" column. Write in goals (up to 4) that you are working on with that child next to his/her name in the "**Goals**" column. Several activities/centers in which the goals may be targeted have already been listed. You may add other activities/centers in the two blank columns provided. If you plan to target a particular goal in a particular activity/center for a particular child, mark an "**X**" in the corresponding box.

### Planning Goal Sheet

Focused Practice Version

Child's Name: C.W.

Date: 08-08-2008

Goals:	Activities: (underline materials)	Results:  * Prompt Level	Did the child engage?	Reinforcers:  T = Tangible S = Social N = Natural	Notes:
SI3: Child plays back-and-forth games with objects or actions	1. Toy Phone 2. Car & Chutes 3. Bounce ball				
RQ2: Child pulls person's hand toward objects to show request for help	1. Opening glass container 2. Play dress-up 3. Open snack container				
F3: Child includes a doll/action figure in simple pretend play with toys	1. Doctor 2. Play dress-up 3. Kitchen				
F4: Child includes other people in simple pretend play with toys	1. Play dress-up- Brush hair/Put on sunglasses 2. Kitchen 3. Doctor				

"Just in case" activities: Bug Hunt

How was performance compared to the last session? \_\_\_\_\_

\* **Prompt Levels-** UP=unprompted, FP=full physical, PP= partial physical, FM=full model, PM=partial model, VM=verbal model, G=gesture, P=positional, EV=environmental/pictorial

## Completed Goal Sheet

Focused Practice Version

Child's Name: C.W.

Date: 08-08-2008

Goals:	Activities: (underline materials)	Results: * Prompt Level	Did the child engage?	Reinforcers: T = Tangible S = Social N = Natural	Notes:
SI3: Child plays back-and-forth games with objects or actions	1. Toy Phone 2. Car & Chutes 3. Bounce ball	VM PP UP	No Yes Yes	T: Fruit Snack S S	
RQ2: Child pulls person's hand toward objects to show request for help	1. Opening glass container 2. Play dress-up 3. Open snack container	VM VM UP	Yes  Yes Yes	T: Fruit Snack  N N	
F3: Child includes a doll/action figure in simple pretend play with toys	1. Doctor 2. Play dress-up 3. Kitchen	VM VM VM	Yes Yes Yes	S S S	
F4: Child includes other people in simple pretend play with toys	1. Play dress-up-Brush hair/Put on sunglasses 2. Kitchen 3. Doctor	UP Mastered  UP UP	Yes  Yes Yes	S  S S	

“Just in case” activities: Bug Hunt

How was performance compared to the last session? First session – responsive and engaged the entire time

\* **Prompt Levels-** UP=unprompted, FP=full physical, PP= partial physical, FM=full model, PM=partial model, VM=verbal model, G=gesture, P=positional, EV=environmental/pictorial

# 7

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# INTERVENTION

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## The Importance of Effective Teaming

This intervention approach targets complex skills and behaviors across multiple developmental domains, and thus requires effective teaming and collaboration between service providers. Effective collaboration among team members is defined by:

- *Ongoing communication*—team members discuss the child’s progress with one another as well as strategies that individual team members have found to be successful.
- *Shared goals*—members of the team have a common sense of purpose and direction. Team members are “on the same page” in their interactions with the child and family.



*Making time for teaming*—team members make time to plan and meet to discuss the child’s progress. This can be difficult in a school setting where there often is not adequate planning time; however, these team meetings do not have to be formal, “sit down meetings”. Meetings may occur “on-the-fly” during which team members simply talk briefly during the course of the school day or leave notes for one another. The key here is that communication and time for teaming are occurring in some fashion.

We also recognize that the team members who comprise an educational team can differ greatly based on the needs of individual children and the services deemed appropriate to meet those needs.

For ASAP, the child should be provided intervention both in focused and generalized settings. With focused practice, the child should receive the intervention at least 40 minutes distributed across the week. For the generalized component of the intervention, the intervention strategies used to target social-communication and play should be embedded into the classroom’s natural routines and activities across the school day.

Since a number of activities in classrooms already occur during a group, it is often more difficult for classroom staff to provide the prescribed amount of focused practice time. We have suggested that a related service provider (SLP, OT, PT) help provide the focused practice time. However, some children with autism may not receive related services OR may receive consultative OR the therapist’s caseload may limit the amount of focused practice time s/he can provide to the child.

There is no hard and fast rule about *who* delivers the focused or generalized intervention components. This decision will need to be made based on some of the following factors: (a) the related services included on the child’s IEP, (b) make-up of child’s team, and (c) teacher and therapist preferences. The focused practice time does not always have to be provided by the same team member, but might be provided by two or more different team members. The most important aspect is not who but *how much*...The child should receive at least 40 minutes of focused practice time each week. These 40 minutes of focused practice time do not have to be done in one day; in fact, distributing them across the school week so that the child has 20 minutes of focused work twice a week or 10 minutes of focused work four times a week is a great approach. The decision of who will provide the focused practice time has to be made by the team and will require effective teaming and collaboration.

Below are some of the possible combinations for implementing the social-communication and play intervention.

- *Teacher and Classroom Assistant*—Perhaps the child does not receive related services or only receives those services on a consultative basis; then the teacher and classroom assistant could provide both the focused and generalized components of the intervention. The teacher and assistant may decide that the teacher will take

sole responsibility for the generalized practice component and the assistant will provide focused practice (or vice versa), or they could decide to co-implement the two intervention components.

- *Teacher and Related Service Provider*—The teacher and therapist may use a more traditional implementation model with the therapist conducting the focused sessions and the classroom staff providing the generalized intervention, or the classroom staff and therapist could help to implement both the focused and generalized components.
- *Teacher, Related Service Provider, and Assistant*—The team may decide to distribute implementation of the focused and generalized components of the intervention among more than two members of the team.



**Effective teaming is an essential part of the ASAP intervention and includes:**

- (1) making time in the schedule to touch base
- (2) ongoing communication about intervention implementation and student progress
- (3) collaboration to ensure students receive the recommended intervention dosage

## **The ASAP Intervention**

The Advancing Social-Communication and Play (ASAP) intervention is designed to target preschoolers on the autism spectrum in a school setting. The intervention includes two primary content components, *social-communication* and *play*, targeted across two types of teaching sessions, *focused* and *generalized practice*. The intervention is designed to complement existing programming for preschool students with autism, and can be implemented using a variety of teaching strategies and tools.

### **General Guidelines for Conducting Focused Practice Teaching Sessions**

**\*\*We know from research and experience that direct instruction, or ensuring we set aside time to work on and target a particular skill, is important. For example, we know that typically developing children generally do not learn to do math or to punctuate written sentences if we do not directly teach those skills. Since most children with autism do not naturally develop some social-communication or play skills, it is important that we directly teach these skills. Therefore, we make the following recommendations for conducting the focused practice teaching sessions:\*\***

1. ***Work with the child for at least 40 minutes per week for focused practice.*** This does not mean to work for 40 consecutive minutes. Conducting multiple focused teaching sessions that occur at scheduled times across the school week is great. These multiple teaching sessions would be shorter in duration (e.g., 10 minutes on Monday, 20 minutes on Wednesday, and 10 minutes on Friday) but should add up to a total of 40 minutes each week. During the teaching session, attempt to intersperse skills the child has already mastered with new skills you are trying to teach so the child will continue to have success. Also, it is important to use a variety of toys/materials to elicit skills to help with generalization.



2. **KEEP THE CHILD ENGAGED AND HAVE FUN!** One of the most important aspects of this intervention is simply keeping the child engaged with you and/or the toys/materials you are using throughout the teaching session. If the child is not paying attention then it is unlikely he will learn the targeted social-communication or play skill. For some children it may be easier to keep them engaged with you through the use of physical games, such as tickling or swinging. These physical games can be used to actually target skills (e.g., initiating games or routines), to reinforce the child for displaying a

targeted skill, OR to refocus the child's attention if it appears s/he is becoming distracted. For other children the actual toys or materials may be the most helpful in maintaining their engagement. Thus having interesting and motivating toys, and perhaps rotating toys so the same ones are not used each teaching session, becomes the critical ingredient. Also, remember to have fun while working on these skills with the child.

3. ***Decide who will deliver the sessions and how sessions will be delivered for each child.*** Teaching sessions can be delivered by different service providers and using different forms of service delivery. Depending upon the child and the skill being taught, these sessions may be conducted during pull-aside focused practice teaching time in the classroom or possibly in a pull-out focused practice session if a child has a hard time focusing in the classroom setting. Also, the team should decide who will implement the focused practice component. There is no hard and fast rule about this decision; the most important aspect is that effective teaming and planning occur to ensure the child receives 40 minutes of focused practice time each week.
4. ***Target at least 1 social-communication and 1 play skill per teaching session.*** You may target more than 1 goal under social-communication or play based on the child's initial assessment results or your ongoing progress monitoring. It may help to target social-communication and play skills that appear amenable to being worked on together during the same activity. Even if there are times when you are targeting more goals per teaching session, be sure to spend some time working on both social-communication and play during the direct instruction activity. Focused practice work provides an ideal time for the child to have multiple opportunities to acquire and practice a new skill. We recommend you target no more than 4 goals at a time for a particular child.
5. ***Purposefully work on the generalization of skills.*** As the child begins to learn new skills it is important to collaborate with the intervention team to promote generalization. To do this, choose 2 – 3 class activities into which the skill can be embedded to allow naturally occurring moments for the child to display the skill. As skills are being generalized to different settings or activities, it is important to remember that the child may require some additional support. For example, it can be helpful to use the same materials from the focused practice session and just move them into a generalized activity, or sometimes it may be necessary to initially use more directive prompts in the generalized setting (again, these prompts should be faded as soon as possible).
6. ***Monitor the child's progress and your own performance.*** At the end of each teaching session make sure to consider the child's progress in learning the target skills, and every so often make sure to reflect on your own performance in teaching the skill. The focused practice versions of the child performance and self-monitoring forms may be helpful.

## General Guidelines for Conducting Generalized Practice



1. ***Embed teaching episodes for a particular child across a minimum of 3 classroom activities per school day that last for at least 10-15 minutes.*** The teaching session may be shorter in duration depending on the attention capacity of the children; however, *it is essential to provide focused times during the classroom day where your primary objective is to target social-communication and play skills.* If it is difficult to keep the children engaged, you may consider increasing the number of activities in which you will embed social-communication and play skills (e.g., 4-5 activities) while decreasing the duration of those activities (e.g., 5-10 minutes).
2. **KEEP THE CHILDREN ENGAGED IN THE GENERALIZED PRACTICE AND HAVE FUN!** One of the most important aspects of this intervention is simply keeping the child engaged with you and/or the toys/materials you are using throughout the teaching session. See the Tips and Troubleshooting Section (Book I—Section 8) for suggestions for keeping children engaged during the generalized practice and preventing problem behavior that may occur from lack of child interest and engagement.
3. ***Target at least 1 social-communication and 1 play skill per child.*** You may target more than 1 goal under social-communication or play based on the child's initial assessment results, or your ongoing monitoring of the child's progress. It may help to target social-communication and play skills that appear amenable to being worked on during the same activity. Even if there are times when you are targeting more goals per teaching session be sure to spend some time working on both social-communication and play during the generalized practice. However, we recommend you target no more than 4 goals at a time for a particular child. Use the activity matrix to select the classroom group activities/routines during which you plan to embed targeted social-communication and play skills.
4. ***Provide the child multiple opportunities per teaching session to display the targeted skill.*** We recommend offering the child a minimum of 3 opportunities to display each target skill in a given session.
5. ***Intersperse maintenance skills during intervention sessions.*** It is important to incorporate already mastered skills while working on new skills the child is attempting to acquire. Interspersing skills in this manner will allow the child (and you) to continue to experience a feeling of accomplishment and success.
6. ***Monitor the child's progress and your own performance.*** At the end of each teaching session make sure to consider the child's progress in learning the target skills, and every so often make sure to reflect on your own performance in teaching the skill. The classroom-based versions of the child performance and self-monitoring forms may be helpful.

## Using ASAP in Your Classroom

Social-communication and play are complex skills to teach. Both sets of skills can be affected by obvious child characteristics, such as the child's cognitive or language abilities, and even by less obvious classroom factors, such as the number of opportunities provided across the day for the child to engage in those behaviors. *This section of the manual provides some suggestions for teaching these complex skills to preschool-aged children with autism in the classroom setting.*



This approach involves three basic steps:

- (1) Setting up the teachable moment
- (2) Engaging the child in the teachable moment
- (3) Wrapping up the teachable moment

In Book II—Section 1: Activities, we provide some examples of activities that use common classroom materials to promote the play and social-communication skills of young children with autism. We hope to provide concrete examples and steps to help make teaching social-communication and play skills easy (or at least a little bit easier) to use in your classroom!

*\*\*It is important to point out that the ASAP program is not intended to replace your existing classroom curriculum (e.g., Creative Curriculum or High Scope) or any existing comprehensive intervention model used in your classroom (e.g., ABA, Floortime, or TEACCH). Instead, we think the ASAP intervention components can be easily woven into those classroom practices to supplement what you are currently doing with children. These steps involve elements of both relationship or affect-based play routines and activities as well as direct teaching of skills where structure, prompting, and reinforcement may be needed. You will combine these elements differently based on the individual needs of your students.*

**Setting up the teachable moment.** To set up the teachable moment, the therapist or teacher needs to prepare him or herself, prepare the environment, and prepare the child. For the therapist or teacher to get prepared, s/he must be aware of what goal or objective the teaching session (or teachable moment) is targeting. Having a clear idea of what you want to work on with the child is essential in any teaching activity. To prepare the environment, you should have all of the necessary materials needed to conduct the teaching session readily available. In addition, it is important to use materials that are age- and developmentally-appropriate, and of high motivational interest to the child. To prepare the child, you need to make sure the child is appropriately forewarned about the activity. Therefore, the teaching session could occur during normal focused or generalized teaching activities that are part of the usual classroom routine, or if the teaching activity is not part of the usual classroom routine, the child could be forewarned about the new activity using a transition system that is appropriate to his/her developmental abilities. For example, you may use language with one child, giving a verbal warning that something different is going to happen; and for another child you may use picture symbols; and for yet another child, you might use a transition object associated with the upcoming activity. The key here is just to make sure the child is aware that the teaching session is going to occur.



#### **Key aspects of *Setting Up*:**

- (1) clearly defining the teaching objective
- (2) having needed materials accessible
- (3) appropriately transitioning the child to the activity

**Engaging the child in the teachable moment.** To engage the child in the teachable moment the environment must be appropriately arranged to focus the child's attention on the teaching activity. In this case, environmental arrangement involves thinking about where the child is seated, whether or not peers will participate in the

activity, and how the environment should be structured to facilitate child engagement. Some questions that you may need to ask yourself are: (a) is the child easily distractible? (b) does the child have trouble with organizing him/herself? (c) how long can the child sustain attention to an activity? The answers to these questions may affect the duration of the teaching session as well as what additional environmental supports are needed to engage the child, such as the use of visual schedules (to show the child what will occur) or strategically placed classroom dividers (to reduce unnecessary environmental distractions or to help the child remain in the activity area).

The second aspect of engaging the child in the teachable moment is to think of activities that will facilitate the child displaying the targeted skill. We have attempted to provide some examples of activities; however, this is where your creativity and experience also come into play. There are lots of stimulating toys and materials in classrooms that can be used to motivate the child. One of the keys here, though, is to make sure the child has multiple opportunities to display the skill. **We recommend providing multiple opportunities (e.g., using 2-3 different intervention activities or providing 2-3 separate prompts to cue the behavior) during each focused practice activities or generalized practice activities for the child to display the targeted skill.** Obviously, there also are some other important principles to consider when teaching a skill, and some of these are covered in more detail in later sections of the manual. In general, you want to make sure you are responsive to the child's social-communicative attempts; thus, when the child attempts to communicate you should immediately and warmly acknowledge those attempts, giving a response that lets the child know you understood the intention of his or her communication. Also, you want to display your interest in objects that engage the child's attention (instead of constantly trying to switch the child's attention to other objects). You want to plan opportunities throughout the day for the child to display the targeted skill. You want to plan for generalization of the skill by having the child work on the skill with different people, across classroom activities and using different toys/materials. You want to use natural or logical reinforcers/consequences when the child displays a targeted behavior. For example, if the child points to a toy on a high shelf to request it, then a logical reinforcer is to let the child play with the toy.

The final aspect of engaging the child is to find intervention activities that are fun for both you and the child. The ultimate goals of this social-communication and play intervention approach are for children with autism to use these skills to initiate and respond to everyday social-communicative interactions. The children will only sustain their use of "natural," unprompted social-communication and play behaviors if they associate the use of these skills with pleasurable social interactions. Undoubtedly, teaching these skills will be hard work for you and learning the skills will be hard work for the child with autism, but it is important for both of you to enjoy the hard work! **Please remember to HAVE FUN!!**



#### **Key aspects of *Engaging the Child*:**

- (1) thinking about the environmental arrangement or structure needed to support teaching the skill,
- (2) engaging the child in the teaching activity by using motivating toys that lend themselves to working on play (such as dolls or action figures) or social-communication skills (such as bubbles)
- (3) having fun

**Wrapping up the teachable moment.** To wrap up the teachable moment, the therapist or teacher needs to record information about the child's performance as well as his/her own performance. **This information is used to guide future instruction.** The HOW DID THE CHILD DO? form (Book II - Forms), as well as several formats of social-communication and play data sheets designed for individual children and classroom data are included to help monitor child progress. A self-monitoring form (the LET'S SELF-REFLECT form, Book II -

Forms) is included to help the teacher or therapist monitor how well the teaching session was conducted. We recommend that the self-monitoring form be completed once every two to three weeks, and the child performance form be completed after each teaching session. There are always things that can be done to tweak or improve our teaching interactions with children. The self-monitoring form helps us to make informed decisions about how best to accomplish this. Also, as part of wrapping up the teachable moment, the therapist or teacher should consider how the child will be appropriately transitioned back into the classroom routine if the teaching activity does not occur as a part of the normal routine.

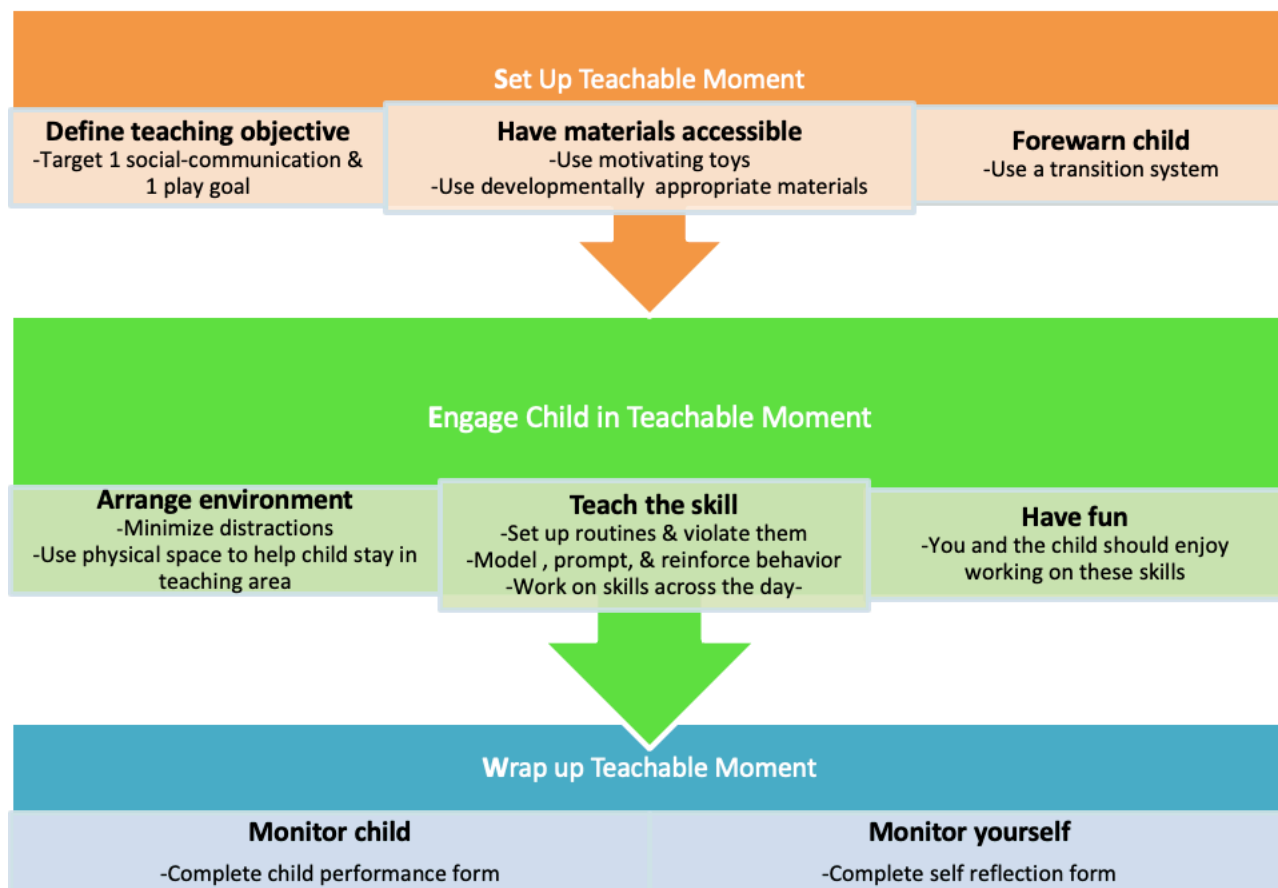
\*\*\*We recognize that classroom staff and therapists are bombarded with paperwork. The purpose of the child and self-monitoring forms is not to add to that paperwork, but to provide ready-made forms that can be used. If you already have other ways of collecting data to monitor child progress and/or other useful strategies to monitor your own work with children, then continue to use those methods. You should use what works for you. *Yet, we should all keep in mind the importance of data-driven decision making. That is, we should use data that show whether or not the child is progressing to guide instructional decisions.*



#### Key aspects of *Wrapping Up*:

- (1) monitoring the child's performance in learning play and social-communication skills
- (2) monitoring your progress in helping the child obtain these skills

**Figure 1.3. Pictorial Overview of Using ASAP in the Classroom (Set Up, Engage, Wrap-Up)**



## Weaving ASAP into Classroom Activities and Routines



For classroom teachers, teaching assistants, and therapists, it is important to consider how to use ASAP throughout the variety of routines and activities that occur over the course of the typical preschool day. **Embedding ASAP into ongoing classroom activities and routines may help to promote the child's learning and generalization of targeted social-communication and play skills.** Importantly, the use of embedded learning opportunities is a research-based strategy that has been demonstrated to be successful in targeting a variety of skills for children with varying disabilities. In addition, it has been found that early childhood educators can be successful at using these strategies. Embedded learning is not a novel teaching concept. In this section of the manual we already have touched on many of the strategies that are a part of the “embedded learning package,” such as the use of naturalistic behavioral teaching strategies and natural reinforcers. We provide a re-introduction to embedded learning and how to adapt this approach to specifically target the social-communication and play skills of preschool-aged children with autism.

Embedded learning involves three primary components: **(1)** surveying the classroom landscape to decide where, when, with what materials, and with whom children will be taught targeted skills. For example, if you want to teach a child to engage in functional play with cars, then you may decide to target this skill during block center (where), during the morning (when block center play typically occurs in the classroom), to use the child's favorite toy car (with what materials), and to have the teaching assistant work with the child (with whom); **(2)** purposefully planning to embed teaching sessions across a variety of classroom activities and routines by using such organizational tools as lesson plans or activity matrices; and **(3)** using naturalistic behavior teaching strategies to work on targeted skills, such as incidental teaching methods, appropriate prompting procedures, and natural or logical reinforcers (see pp. 125-126).

In addition, embedded learning uses a teaching technique referred to as distributed learning trials. *Distributed learning trials* involve interspersing or weaving instruction for one targeted task or skill with instruction for other related targeted tasks or skills into a single teaching episode, whereas massed discrete trials focus on one task or skill at a time. Distributed learning trials naturally lend themselves to working on both social-communication and play skills during teaching sessions. We discuss distributed learning trials later in this section of the manual.



### **Embedded learning is about:**

- (1) surveying the classroom landscape
- (2) purposefully planning teaching sessions
- (3) using naturalistic behavior teaching strategies

### Surveying the Classroom Landscape



To accomplish the **ASAP** (setting up the teachable moment) in classrooms it is important to answer the where, when, with what, and with whom questions that were posed above. To help narrow down the “*where*” and the “*when*” we have included a Classroom Activity Matrix (see Book II - pg. 173) that can guide decisions around the activities/routines in your classroom that are most conducive to working on the social-communication and play goals you have targeted for one or more children in the classroom. The use of the Classroom Activity Matrix also provides a tool to help purposefully plan embedded learning opportunities for the child across the classroom day. The ASAP Weekly Planning form (see Book II - pg. 174) also can be helpful.

To help you accomplish the “*with what*” we also have included a Preference Assessment form (see Book II - pg. 184) that may help you decide the materials in your classroom that are of high motivational interest and value to the child. This form will give you a sense of what the child likes. *Do not feel compelled to use any of these forms; they are simply additional resources if you need them.*

You are in the best position to answer “*with whom*” based on the make-up of children in your classroom as well as the experience and training of the different adults. **It is important to have an adult present to facilitate the child’s learning of social-communication and play skills.** Again, children with autism may not acquire these skills on their own, thus, **we must use purposeful planning and direct teaching** of these behaviors to help the child learn to display them.



#### **Surveying the classroom landscape involves:**

- (1) determining potential activities and routines for targeting ASAP goals (“*where*” & “*when*”)
- (2) identifying appropriate materials for the sessions (“*with what*”)
- (3) selecting effective groupings of children and staff to teach the targeted skill (“*with whom*”)

#### **Purposefully Planning Teaching Sessions**

To engage the child in the teachable moment in classrooms it is important to provide the child multiple opportunities across classroom activities/routines to display the targeted skill. As mentioned above, the use of Classroom Activity Matrix and the ASAP Weekly Planning forms will help you to accomplish this goal. This type of pre-planning and thinking purposefully about times throughout the classroom day when you can target children’s learning of social-communication and play skills will allow you to maximize the number of teachable moments to work on these skills and minimize the number of missed opportunities. The Activities Section (Book II—Section 1) provides some examples of ways to embed ASAP into a variety of classroom activities and routines.



It also is important to think about the number and duration of teaching episodes that should occur across the classroom day. In addition, since a number of activities in classrooms occur as part of generalized activities (small or large group) it is important to remember the basics of group behavior management. **We recommend embedding teaching episodes for a particular child across a minimum of 3 classroom activities per school day.** *We recommend that you aim for activities that are at least 10-15 minutes long. The length of the teaching session may be shorter in duration depending upon the attention capacity of the child; however, it is essential to provide focused times during the classroom day where your primary objective is to target social-communication and play skills.* If it is difficult to keep the child engaged for 10-15 minutes consecutively, you may

consider increasing the number of activities across the day in which you will embed social-communication and play skills (e.g. 4-5 activities across the day), but decrease the duration of those activities (5-10 minutes).

We all know that transitions make up a large part of the preschool day. Waiting time, lining up, handing out materials and even toileting provide multiple opportunities and additional teachable moments to target these skills naturally throughout the day (see Table I.5 for some examples related to transition times and snack).



**Purposefully planning teaching sessions involves:**

- (1) selecting at least 3 activities/routines per school day to address ASAP goals
- (2) planning the specific lessons that will occur within those activities
- (3) ensuring the lesson is engaging and fun for the child

Table I.5. *Examples of Embedding ASAP into Transition and Snack Times*

Transition Time	Objective(s)
Snack Time	<p><b>Reaches to request; Points to request</b>            Snack time provides a natural opportunity to work on requesting with a child. To target reaching or pointing to request, you can offer the child a choice of two snack/lunch items. Hold one item in each hand, out of reach of the child and prompt the child to reach by asking “Which one do you want?” Give the child an opportunity to make a choice. If the child does not reach, give him/her a small amount of the snack and try again.</p> <p><b>Gives objects to request assistance</b>            To target this goal during snack time, place preferred snacks in clear jars with tightened lids. Hand the jar to the child and wait for him/her to hand it back to you to request assistance.</p>
Transition Songs	<p><b>Looks in anticipation during games or routines</b>            Often teachers have different means of signaling to children when a transition is about to occur. Some teachers provide a verbal warning (“5 more minutes to clean-up”), some may use an audible cue, such as a bell or timer, and others may sing familiar songs. Sometimes stopping in the middle of a song that is familiar to child (and is expected as part of the transition routine) will get the child to look up at you to continue the song (even if you’re not a great singer).</p>
Checking Schedule/ Lining Up	<p><b>Shows objects to share them with another person</b>            Checking the picture schedule and lining up are two transitions that can be used to target showing. You can give the child the job of showing the other students the photo/symbol for the next classroom activity (e.g., circle time) or where the class is going after lining up (e.g., cafeteria; gym).</p>

Distributed Learning Trials

Distributed learning trials involve interspersing opportunities for the child to display multiple targeted skills (2-3 skills) *within and across* different classroom activities. It is possible that the same toy or material could be used to target multiple skills. To carry out distributed learning trials it is important to think about the toys and materials you are going to use to target the skills, and also to have back-up materials just in case those do not work. In addition, keep in mind the other naturalistic behavior teaching strategies we have discussed (a) starting with the least directive prompt needed to get the child to display a targeted skill(s), (b) providing wait time before moving to a more directive prompt, and (c) reinforcing the child once s/he displays the targeted skill. The ASAP Weekly Planning form can be helpful in planning distributed learning trials.



### **Using naturalistic behavior teaching strategies and distributed learning trials involves:**

- (1) determining appropriate teaching strategies for each child (see strategies, pp. 121-127 and tips and trouble-shooting, Book I - Section 8)
- (2) awareness of the toys and materials being used in distributed trials to promote generalization
- (3) individualized reinforcement for each child

### **When to Move On to the Next Skill**

Sometimes it can be difficult to determine if a child has sufficiently “mastered” a skill, and therefore whether or not it is time to move on to teaching a higher level skill. This can become even more unclear when working on social-communication skills with children with autism, as the child may consistently show the skill with an adult but not with a peer. Mastery is influenced by a number of factors such as how often the child displays the skill, the context(s) in which the child displays the skill, and the quality of the skill. Mastery for children with autism is further complicated by the fact that the child may show an uneven or scattered developmental profile, and thus may be engaging in higher levels skills (e.g., responding to another person showing an object to share) but not displaying some skills that are thought to be prerequisite or lower level skills (e.g., giving an object to another person just to share).

There are a number of issues that should be considered when thinking about mastery and we have attempted to simplify those issues to avoid the teacher or therapist (or child) getting “stuck” working on a particular skill. **Our definition of mastery involves the child showing at least 3 spontaneous (or unprompted) occurrences of the targeted skill.** *The 3 occurrences should be shown on the same day either during the teachable moment or outside of the actual teachable moment, such as during free play. Also, it is important that those 3 occurrences are varied.* For example, the child performing the act of pushing 3 or 4 different cars across the floor is not really different or varied, but if the child pushed a car across the floor, opened and closed the doors on the car, and drove the car around a race car track then those are 3 varied and different acts. If a particular social-communication or play goal has been added to the child’s IEP, mastery could also be defined as the child achieving the established criterion performance for that goal.

As you use the ASAP program with preschoolers with autism, you will have questions about mastery, such as, “What if the child never shows 3 spontaneous and varied occurrences on the same day?”, or “What if those occurrences of the skill still look different in quality from his/her peers?” The answers to these questions lie in your judgment and knowledge of a particular child as you decide whether to simply “move on” to a different skill. Before moving on you may want to try changing your teaching procedures, such as using a different teaching strategy (discrete trial vs. naturalistic) or using a different prompt level, OR changing the materials you are using to target the skill. However, it may be that for a particular child, s/he will not quite master the “lower” level skill of substituting objects but may learn to engage in the higher level skill of engaging in thematic or fantasy play. Part of the ASAP intervention just involves exposing the child to many different situations/materials/toys that promote a variety of social-communication and play skills. Thus, you want to make sure to provide the child multiple opportunities to display as many of the discrete skills or behaviors that comprise these two broader or more complex categories of behavior.



### **Decision-making about mastery of skills involves:**

- (1) observation of a child’s performance
- (2) collaborative data collection
- (3) using data and clinical judgment to determine if the child showed 3 *spontaneous, varied occurrences* of the target skill

## **General Teaching Strategies**

### **How Do You Teach Complex Skills?**

In the National Research Council's report on Educating Children with Autism (2001), four broad categories of teaching strategies were listed to target skills when working with these young children. The strategies listed were **(a) discrete trials, (b) massed discrete trials, (c) naturalistic behavioral strategies, and (d) peer-mediated strategies**. This section provides an overview of those teaching strategies (peer-mediated or support strategies are discussed in Book I—Section 8: Tips and Troubleshooting). *Please keep in mind that this list of strategies is not definitive, as the selection of teaching strategies is heavily influenced by child characteristics and teacher or therapist preferences and trainings.*

**Discrete trial teaching** involves:

- ☐ Breaking a complex skill down into smaller, more manageable teaching units
- ☐ Prompting the correct behavior or skill
- ☐ Having the child engage in the behavior or skill
- ☐ Providing the child a reinforcer for engaging in the targeted behavior or skill



### Case Study 1

Susan is a 5-year-old with autism who is nonverbal. Susan demonstrates exploratory play and the teaching team wants her to next develop relational play skills.

*Teaching Objective:* Susan will take pieces of toys apart (Level R1 in ASAP play sequence).

*How do to this with Susan:*

- ☐ Have Susan seated across from you at a table or on the floor in close proximity.
- ☐ Place several small toys Susan likes in a bottle-shaped container. Hand the container to Susan.
- ☐ Tell Susan, “Dump them out!”
- ☐ If Susan dumps the toys from the container, praise her (or use another social reinforcer that seems to be effective for her) and let her play with the toys briefly. Other, “non-natural” reinforcers, such as a small bit of food or a sip of a drink, often are used in discrete trial teaching as well if natural reinforcers are not sufficiently motivating for the child.
- ☐ If Susan does take the top off and remove the contents of the container, then you may say “let’s try again,” and repeat the trial but this time use a physical prompt to get Susan to remove the top and dump out the contents.

*Things to think about:*

- ☐ What type of prompt is needed to get the child to correctly display the behavior?
- ☐ How will you correct the child if s/he does not provide the appropriate response?
- ☐ How will you reinforce the child for correctly displaying the behavior?

**Massed discrete trials** simply involve the consecutive presentation of multiple discrete trial teaching episodes. For example, the teacher may prompt Susan 10 consecutive times to give him/her the object.

**Naturalistic behavior strategies** include many related teaching strategies that go by a variety of names, such as activity-based instruction, embedded instruction, milieu teaching, and incidental teaching. A brief example of incidental teaching is provided.

**Incidental teaching** involves:

- ☐ Purposefully arranging the environment based on pre-planned teaching goals or objectives
- ☐ Arranging the environment to entice the child to initiate around a preferred object
- ☐ Prompting the child to elaborate on his/her first initiation attempt
- ☐ Providing the child access to the preferred object





## Case Study 2

Rodrigo will give objects to request help (RQ3 in the ASAP social-communication sequence)

*Teaching Objective:* Rodrigo will give objects to request help (RQ3 in the ASAP social-communication sequence).

*How to do this with Rodrigo?*

- ☐ Thomas the train is placed in a sealed, see-through container on the floor in the play area of the classroom (environmental arrangement).
- ☐ Rodrigo tries to open the container to get Thomas but cannot, and begins to show mild frustration but does not look at you or otherwise indicate that he wants your help.
- ☐ You then place your open hands closer to the container (erompt).
- ☐ Rodrigo places the container in your hand. You say, “I want Thomas” (Labeling the Child’s Intention—see below) and open the container and allow him to play with Thomas (natural reinforcer).

*Things to Think About:*

- ☐ What are the child’s preferences?
- ☐ What are some naturally occurring opportunities to work on the targeted skill?
- ☐ How will you prompt the child to elaborate on his/her first initiation attempt?
- ☐ What is an acceptable response from the child?

## Other Teaching Strategies

Loose Shaping Contingencies: A number of research studies on naturalistic behavior strategies have suggested that “loose shaping contingencies” are effective strategies. This means that you do not have to accept just a single type of response from the child, but rather that ***you can reinforce the child for any appropriate attempt that s/he makes to engage in the desired behavior***. In the case study above with Rodrigo, this means that you can reinforce him for placing the container in your hand to request one time, reinforce him for saying “need help” the next time, and reinforce him for saying “help” on yet another attempt, rather than only reinforcing him for the most sophisticated request that he is capable of making. All of these attempts on his part are appropriate attempts in contrast to having a tantrum, and if you provide language models each time, research suggests that eventually a child like Rodrigo will learn to use verbal requests while experiencing less frustration along the way.

Speaking/Labeling the Child’s Intentions: When children communicate without using words, we recommend that you acknowledge what the child is communicating by speaking the child's intentions. For example, if the child is communicating that s/he wants to play ring-around-the-rosie with you by grabbing your hands, then you could respond by saying, "You want to play ring-around-the-rosie! Okay!" and then play the game. Or if the child points to a picture of a truck in a book, you could say, "Yes, that's a cement mixer truck." By speaking the child's intentions, you will help the child learn the words that express what s/he wants to say.

## Prompting and Fading

Prompts are a way of providing support to a child's learning. Prompts are a useful tool in teaching. When a child is learning a new skill, s/he may require a strong level of support. However, as a teacher, therapist, or parent, **it is important to systematically fade prompts as soon as possible** to avoid prompt dependency, which often occurs with children with autism. As a skill is acquired, prompts are reduced in strength through fading to encourage the child to achieve independence in displaying the skill. Prompt fading should be an integral part of the teaching plan. **We recommend starting with the least directive prompt** (e.g., environmental or positional) needed to help the child display the targeted skill, although we recognize that some children will require more assistance. Please do not feel compelled to stick to the order of the prompt hierarchy provided in Table I.6. Use your intuition and judgment as practitioners in deciding how to move up or down the hierarchy.



### Guidelines for Prompting and Fading:

1. **Define the targeted skill level.** After assessment, begin to plan for intervention by defining exactly what social-communication and play skills you want to teach.
2. **Identify suitable prompts.** Choose a prompt that will reliably produce this target skill.
3. For the ASAP intervention, we recommend starting with less directive prompts and moving up to more directive prompts as needed. This is called **Least-to-Most Prompting**. For children learning a new skill, use of least-to-most prompting lowers the risk that children will become dependent on the prompts in order to show a skill. However, students may experience more errors with lower levels of support, may become frustrated, or may fail to ever learn to use the skill you are trying to teach. Thus, it is important to monitor child's progress and consider increasing the level of prompting if errors continue to occur.
4. **Prompt, reinforce and fade.** You prompt behavior because it makes it more likely the child will display the targeted skill. Once the child does display the skill it is important to reinforce that behavior. Reinforcing a behavior increases the likelihood that the child will display the behavior again given the opportunity. What is reinforcing will vary from child to child, and from situation to situation with the same child. We encourage the use of natural reinforcers whenever possible. With prompting, it is also important to provide the child time to respond to your prompt before moving to a more directive prompt. *We recommend waiting at least 3-5 seconds between prompts.* This wait time will allow you to see if the child is learning to independently display the skill. As the child begins to display the skill more consistently and independently, start to fade the prompt and/or move to a less directive prompt level.
5. **Monitor the child's performance** to determine if s/he is progressing satisfactorily.

Table I.6. *Prompt Hierarchy*

Prompt Level 5= Most directive 1=Least directive	Type of Prompt	Description	Example
5	Full Physical Assistance	Teacher uses "hand-over-hand" with the child to ensure a correct response.	When teaching the child to roll play-dough, the teacher will take the child's hand and guide him/her to roll the play-dough.
4.5	Partial Physical Assistance	Teacher uses partial physical assistance to help complete a task.	When teaching the child to roll play-dough the teacher guides the child's hand to the play-dough by the elbow.
4	Full Model	Teacher models the targeted skill.	When teaching the child an "up and down" game the teacher raises her hands up and down while s/he is telling the child "up and down."
3	Partial Model	Teacher models only part of the target skill.	When teaching the child an "up and down" game the teacher puts her hands out but does not raise them up.
2.5	Verbal Model	Teacher verbally models desired child response.	When teaching the word "roll," the teacher models the word "roll."
2	Gesture	Teacher uses a point or other gesture to prompt the expected response.	When teaching a functional play schema, the teacher shapes her hand like a cup to model drinking juice.
1.5	Positional	Teacher positions the correct response in a particular location, so that the child is more likely choose it.	When teaching the child to put toys together, teacher places the next size nesting cup closest to the child.
1	Environmental Visual/Pictorial Prompts	Teacher uses a picture or other two dimensional representation (words, symbols, etc.) as a stimulus for the targeted skill.	Teacher uses a picture sequence to target a symbolic play schema.

## Reinforcement

A reinforcer is something that is provided to the child after s/he engages in a target behavior. **A reinforcer is defined by its effect on the behavior - it increases the chances of the behavior occurring.** The reinforcer can be social in nature (e.g., hug, pat on the back, high-five, verbal praise, imitating the child's play behavior, "answering" a child's communication) or tangible in nature (e.g., snack, access to a favorite toy, adding a related toy to the child's play routine, such as an additional unit of train track).

### Principles of Reinforcement:

There are some general principles that help guide the selection and implementation of reinforcers:

1. ***The selection of reinforcers should be individualized to the child.*** Children, like adults, have different likes and dislikes; therefore, it is important to find out each child's preferences. For example, some children with autism like hugs but others may not. In addition to social reinforcers, you also want to find out what are the child's favorite snacks and activities/toys. Observing the child play and seeing what activities and toys s/he gravitates towards, or asking parents/caregivers are great ways to find out what the child likes. Also, observe what kinds of responses the child likes to get from you—does the child notice and respond positively if you imitate his/her play, or does the child protest that type of response from you?
2. ***Reinforcers should be provided contingently.*** After the child engages in appropriate behavior, consistent with the ASAP goals, then a reinforcer should be provided. If the child engages in inappropriate behavior (e.g., throwing a tantrum about a toy s/he can't reach), then you will want to redirect the child and prompt appropriate requesting behavior rather than reinforcing the inappropriate behavior (e.g., by giving the child the toy when s/he tantrums).
3. ***Reinforcers should be provided immediately.*** When children are learning or acquiring new skills it is important they are provided some motivation to continue to try, as learning new skills can be hard.
4. ***Reinforcers should be faded over time.*** Once children are beginning to demonstrate skills more proficiently, the frequency of the reinforcers can be reduced (i.e., faded). Also, children can begin to learn the concept of "delay of reinforcement," which means they learn to tolerate some time delay between displaying the behavior and getting access to the reinforcer. This is less of an issue with natural reinforcers, but even when natural reinforcers are very effective for a child, sometimes the child will not be able to have immediate access to the objects s/he wants, and sometimes the teacher or therapist will need to give attention to a child's classmate and may not be able to always respond contingently to the ASAP target child.

### **Visual Supports**



Language, both receptive and expressive, is an area that tends to be delayed in children with autism. The inability to solely depend on language when communicating with these children leads us to look at alternative solutions. Since children with autism tend to be visual learners, it can be helpful to incorporate visual supports into your routine. Visual supports can range from showing actual objects to using real photographs or picture symbols. Each child has unique needs, so the type of strategy you choose will depend on what works best for that particular child. Once you figure out what works, these items can be incorporated both at home and in the classroom.





One way to use visual supports is through picture schedules. These are particularly helpful for a child who has difficulty moving from one activity to the next or who becomes anxious when they are unsure of what is happening. The schedule allows the child to see exactly what is going on and helps to prepare the child for what's happening next. This also helps to ensure that other adults in the classroom who are working with the child know the routine since consistency is extremely important when working with children with autism.

In order to create visual supports, you can use a variety of resources. There is computer software available that has thousands of images to choose from. However, you can also find images online if you do not have access to specialized software ([www.dotolearn.org](http://www.dotolearn.org)). Using a digital camera to take pictures of items in the child's environment is another easy way to create visual supports. For food choices, many people may simply cut out labels from different food packages and laminate them. For some children who are having difficulty using picture symbols or photos, objects may be used as a stepping stone to using photos and symbols. The selection

of the type of visual support should be based on the developmental abilities of the child, in particular the child's ability to grasp abstract concepts and symbols. Obviously, objects and photographs are more concrete visuals than line drawings.

**One type of visual support that may be extremely helpful for young children with autism are “embedded” or “within” activity supports.** Daily activity schedules take the child from location to location throughout the classroom day. Embedded or within activity schedules tell the child what to do once s/he gets to that location. Within activity schedules simply provide the sequence of events that are going to occur during a particular activity. For example, if you are working with the child in block center on play skills, then you may have a picture (or object) representing each of the 3 activities/toys you are going to use that day.

Figure I.4. *Example of a child's within activity schedule for block center play*

Amir's Schedule			
1. Cars	2. Blocks	3.Tool set	4. All
			

# 8

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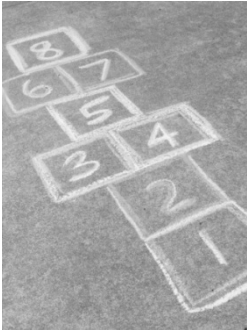
## TIPS & TROUBLESHOOTING

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## Tips and Troubleshooting with Individual Children

### Progress and Mastery



As you move through the intervention, the team will be making decisions about mastery and moving on to the next skill level. Mastery is defined as the child showing at least 3 varied, spontaneous (or unprompted) occurrences of the targeted skill in one day. However, this definition does not eliminate the importance of clinical judgment. The team will need to use their knowledge of the child to make decisions about each child's progression through the social-communication and play skill sequences. If the team has been targeting a skill for a while without seeing much progress, it may help to move to another goal. The team can always return to the skill later, or the child may independently acquire the skill as other related skills are targeted.

*If the child becomes **stuck on one skill** try:*

- ⇒ Using a different teaching strategy. For example, if you are currently using a naturalistic teaching strategy then you may want to shift to using discrete trials.
- ⇒ Using a different prompt level. You may need to move to a more directive prompt level to elicit the skill.
- ⇒ Using different activities or materials. The toys or materials you are using may not be of high motivational interest or value to the child or the child may have lost interest in the toy, so it may be helpful to introduce some novel toys.
- ⇒ Moving to a different category or higher level if you notice emerging skills in those other areas.
- ⇒ Going back to previously mastered skills and building the child's repertoire of activities.

*If the child is **progressing in the focused practice teaching sessions but is not making as much progress in the classroom/generalized practice sessions** (or vice versa), try:*

- ⇒ Observing other team members to see if you are using similar teaching approaches.
- ⇒ Using the same materials across the focused and generalized sessions to work on the targeted skill.
- ⇒ Having the person who is having success in one context work with the child in the second context.

*If the child is **inconsistent with demonstration of a skill**, try:*

- ⇒ Increasing the number of opportunities to practice the skill.
- ⇒ Using the strategy of "errorless learning." Use as high of level of prompting as needed to ensure that the child performs the skill correctly. Initially, this may involve hand-over-hand prompts, but you would want to fade as the child's consistency in demonstrating the skill increases.
- ⇒ Using more social praise or reinforcers to increase likelihood of demonstrating the target skill.

*If the child is **not showing enough variety in demonstration of a specific skill**, try:*

- ⇒ Removing familiar materials and introducing different toys.
- ⇒ Moving the session to a different center or location.
- ⇒ Having a different staff member target the skill.

*If the child shows the skill consistently with prompts/models, but has **difficulty using the skill independently**, try:*

- ⇒ Priming the child by using massed discrete trials immediately prior to a naturalistic activity.
- ⇒ Using visual prompts that can be incorporated into the child's environment on a regular basis. While this is not completely independent, it is a low level of prompting.

## Child Characteristics and Behaviors



All children are unique and the strategies and techniques used in the intervention will need to be individually tailored to each child. Based on our experiences with the ASAP intervention and previous clinical knowledge, here are some tips on working with children who have characteristics or behaviors consistent with autism.

*For a child who has **difficulty staying engaged** during the activity try:*

- ⇒ Using a visual schedule or visual cues to help the child understand when the activity will end.
- ⇒ Following the child's lead during activities. If a child is already engaged with a certain toy or activity, follow his/her focus rather than re-directing the child to a different activity.
- ⇒ Removing distractions from the area in which you are conducting the session. This may require bringing toys or materials to a more "sterile" environment (e.g., a table facing the wall, rather than the dramatic play area).
- ⇒ Changing the frequency or type of reinforcement.

*For a child who is **very active**, try:*

- ⇒ Using physical barriers to "section off" the teaching space.
- ⇒ Incorporating activities that involve more movement (e.g., chase, swinging) or action (e.g., bowling) in between more structured activities.
- ⇒ Putting the materials for the session in a bag or container so it is easy to move with the child to other areas.
- ⇒ Implementing the intervention in shorter, but more frequent sessions.

*For a child who is **very passive in activities**, try:*

- ⇒ Checking in with the occupational therapist about potential sensory needs or other methods to help increase active engagement.
- ⇒ Alternating floor/table activities with physical activities to encourage participation or help increase energy level.
- ⇒ Using more directive prompts (e.g., partial physical assistance) to help with initiation of participating in the activities.

*If it is **difficult to keep the child's attention during generalized activities**, try:*

- ⇒ Conducting the generalized sessions in smaller groups, potentially even a dyad with one preferred peer.
- ⇒ Giving the child a more active role in the activity. For example, have the child in control of some of the materials, encouraging more interaction and engagement.
- ⇒ Using activities and materials that have been successful and motivating in the focused practice sessions.
- ⇒ Incorporating maintenance goals into the generalized activities in order to help increase success and decrease the difficulty of the activity.

*For a child who is **focused on perseverative interests** try:*

- ⇒ Incorporating the interests into an activity. For example, if a child perseverates on the alphabet, try having a bear eat food in alphabetical order.
- ⇒ Alternating activities between perseverative/other high-interest items and items of less interest to the child.
- ⇒ Using the perseverative interests as reinforcement. It may be helpful to use a visual reinforcement board, such as a first - then board or an earning board.



*For a child who is **demonstrating repetitive, scripted social-communication or play behaviors**, try:*

- ⇒ Removing the materials that the child uses for the scripted behaviors.
- ⇒ Introducing new routines or scripts on a regular basis. Children can learn social-communication and play skills through routines and scripts, so providing a wider variety of routines and scripts can be helpful.
- ⇒ Modeling other play behaviors for the child. Sometimes children engage in scripted, routine-oriented behaviors because they have few other appropriate behaviors in their play repertoire. Having an adult or classroom peer model other play behaviors may help expand the child's play skills.

*For a child who **resists being directed**, try:*

- ⇒ Offering choices for activities, materials, or even location when possible (e.g., do you want to sit in the blue chair or the red chair?).
- ⇒ Limiting the number of materials available to the child. It may be easier to guide the session if the child does not have access to many toys or materials.
- ⇒ Using visual supports such as schedules or cue cards to guide the session rather than using verbal directions.



*For a child who has a **negative reaction (e.g., anxiety) to focused attention from adults**, try:*

- ⇒ Reserving the most highly motivating materials for focused practice sessions
- ⇒ Allowing the child to have a choice of adult with whom s/he works during focused practice sessions.
- ⇒ Using primarily visual prompts and reduce verbal input which may be anxiety provoking for the child.

*For a child who is **dependent on peers for comfort or motivation**, try:*

- ⇒ Offering a warm-up period with peers prior to focused practice sessions.
- ⇒ Using social praise from peers as a reinforcer.
- ⇒ Conducting your focused practice sessions in a small group setting. Remember, it is important to provide focused practice attention and maximal opportunities for skills performance to the target child even within the small group setting.

*For a child who is **nonverbal**, try:*

- ⇒ Focusing on teaching the child nonverbal means of communication, including conventional gestures (e.g., reaching, pointing), descriptive gestures (e.g., moving body up and down to indicate horse ride game), vocal approximations of words, and eye contact.
- ⇒ Verbalizing what the child is communicating with their nonverbal communication. For example, if a child reaches for a ball, say "You want the ball."
- ⇒ Using Book II—Section 2: Augmentative and Alternative Communication as a resource for additional ideas.



\*\*\*Much of the intervention focuses on nonverbal methods for interacting with communication partners, such as eye contact, reaching, and pointing. These nonverbal means of communication are important in the development of social-communication!

*For a child who **uses verbal communication but does not incorporate gestures**, try:*

- ⇒ Using novel materials or pictures that the child may not be able to label because s/he does not have the word in his/her vocabulary. In this situation, the child has to use nonverbal methods for communication.
- ⇒ Telling the child you are going to play a game that involves using gestures but no words.
- ⇒ Explicitly teaching the child that it helps others to understand him/her when pointing or other gestures are paired with talking.

*For a child who **shows limited or no interest in object play**, try:*

- ⇒ Incorporating objects into familiar social interactions/physical activities that are motivating to the child. For example, you may get a child engaged in the kitchen area by using plates during peek-a-boo or hiding objects under the cups, and then move on to using the plates/cups in functional play.
- ⇒ Making silly or dramatic sounds when playing with objects in order to get the child engaged with the objects.
- ⇒ Using toys with built in sensory input. For example, doll houses with sounds/lighting effects.

*For a child who has **difficulty simultaneously engaging with objects and people**, try:*

- ⇒ Placing your face in same line of vision as the object during play.
- ⇒ Imitating what the child is doing with an object – this may help the child to take notice of the people playing near him/her.

## Difficulty with Specific Skills



There are 24 levels of social-communication skills and 20 levels of play skills targeted in the intervention. During the studies conducted during the development of this intervention, there were some skills that seemed to present more challenges for the teams and the children. Here are some ideas for working on some of those skills:

*If a child is **not pointing** (RQ4b, RQ5b, JA3b, & JA4b), try:*

- ⇒ Explicitly teaching the child how to point using a technique such as massed trials.
- ⇒ Using environmental arrangement and put highly preferred materials far enough away that the child has to use a point.
- ⇒ Accepting approximations of a point, especially if the child has difficulties forming a point due to fine motor issues.

*If the child is **not initiating joint attention independently** (early JA goals), try:*

- ⇒ Bringing in novel, strange, or broken items and toys. Children may be more likely to call attention to something that is different rather than something that is usual or typical.
- ⇒ Introducing joint attention in a structured game (e.g., “I Spy”). Structured activities allow the child to pick up on the routine and provide repeated opportunities for practice.
- ⇒ Follow the child’s lead to make sure you are engaging with toys and activities that may motivate the child to initiate joint attention.

If the child is **not making eye contact** to meet the highest level of skill in the social-communication categories (SI6, RQ6 & JA6), try:

- ⇒ Holding objects in close proximity to your face to encourage eye contact.
- ⇒ Changing the level or type of reinforcement in order to increase the likelihood of eye contact.
- ⇒ Telling the child to look at you and then fading to less direct prompts (e.g., pointing to your eyes).

If the child is **not responding to models for simple pretend play** (early functional play goals), try:

- ⇒ Being more animated or silly in your pretend play to draw the child's attention to the activity. The child may find this funny and be more likely to imitate.
- ⇒ Using hand-over-hand prompting initially to teach the simple pretend play and fading prompts as soon as possible.
- ⇒ Having pictures or photos with materials to provide visual cues to structure and encourage pretend play.



If the child is **only including other people in play with prompts** (F4), try:

- ⇒ Creating a routine within a play script (e.g., brush own hair, brush doll's hair, brush staff's hair). Even though it will be a routine at first, it may expand to other play scripts or activities.
- ⇒ Using a preferred peer as the "other" person. Sometimes children are more eager or willing to include their peers than staff.
- ⇒ Being silly and giving dramatic reactions when the child includes you (e.g., saying "Oow, hot" if the child feeds you certain foods).

If the child is **struggling to use object substitution** (S4), try:

- ⇒ Removing miniatures from the center (e.g., take the cars/trucks out of the block area or take the pretend food out of the kitchen area). This may help the child to be more creative and pretend with objects that are not just miniature replicas of real life objects.
- ⇒ Using substitute objects that closely resemble the real object. For example, use wooden dowels for candles or paper for a blanket to ease the transition into symbolic use of objects.
- ⇒ Modeling symbolic play with familiar play scripts.



## Tips for Generalizing Skills

Generalization difficulties are a potential impediment to independence. Children with autism may perform a task independently in one situation or setting or with one person, yet may not be able to apply what they have learned in a novel situation. Children with autism may also overly focus on the specific details of an activity and miss the central principles. Here are some suggestions for helping children generalize newly learned social-communication and play skills.

**Work with a variety of activities/toys** - Work on expanding the targeted skill by using a variety of activities and toys with the child. For example, after the child learns to take apart play dough figures in relational play, have the child take apart nesting cups or blocks. For a child who has learned functional play with cooking toys, branch out to functional play skills with housekeeping toys (e.g., broom or vacuum).

**Work on skill in a variety of settings** - Work on targeted skills in variety of settings. Sometimes a child may learn a play schema in one particular setting and get stuck repeating the schema over and over (e.g., baking

a pretend cake). It is important to try to target skills at a variety of centers, (e.g., art, sand table) and at different times of the day (e.g., snack).

***Work on skill with different adults and/or peers*** - To help the child generalize newly learned social-communication and play skills, work on targeted skills with a variety of adults and peers. Having multiple teachers work on the skill will help the child to learn to engage in social-communication and play across different people. Also, incorporating a variety of peers will help the child to learn to “tune in” to other children and achieve greater flexibility in their play.

### **Tips and Troubleshooting in the Classroom**

#### **Classroom Characteristics**



Since the ASAP intervention is designed to complement existing curricula and comprehensive intervention models, we recognize that teams will be implementing this intervention across a wide variety of classroom models. In addition, school districts vary in their preschool models, so teams may be working in inclusive, resource, or self-contained settings. Children in each classroom may have similar or very different abilities and needs. Team members may have different levels of training and experience in working with children with autism. Here are some tips for implementing the intervention with varied classroom characteristics:

*If the children in your classroom have very **diverse social-communication and play skill levels**, try:*

- ⇒ Grouping children with varied levels for ASAP activities. (i.e., heterogeneous groups). Children at higher levels can serve as peer models during activities.
- ⇒ Grouping the children with similar skill levels for ASAP activities (i.e., homogenous groups). Targeting a narrower range of skills may help with planning and implementation.
- ⇒ Having different roles for children working on different skill levels.

*If it is **difficult to find time to for focused practice** because of the number of children working on the ASAP intervention, try:*

- ⇒ Setting up a station rotation during free-play or work times. You could have some children working one-to-one or in small groups on focused practice with a team member, while other children are working in a small group on other IEP goals with a different team member, and still other children are working independently in a separate area.



- ⇒ Implementing the intervention during transition times or daily routines. Remember snack, packing up, or hygiene times can be great activities to target skills.
- ⇒ Using the Classroom Activity Matrix or the ASAP Weekly Planning sheets to identify an intervention plan addressing “who”, “when”, “where”, and “what” for each child. Having a plan for how each team member will contribute can be helpful.

*If it is **difficult to meet dosage for ASAP** because you are in a half-day program, try:*

- ⇒ Using transition times such as lining up, bathroom breaks, and clean-up to target ASAP goals. These transition times can work especially well with the social-communication goals.
- ⇒ Working on ASAP goals during specials or at recess.

- ⇒ Inviting parent volunteers to work with students other than their own child to complete some of the focused practice time.

*If the classroom **primarily uses individual work times with highly structured activities**, try:*

- ⇒ Incorporating dyads/triads into teaching sessions to allow for more work on generalization in a peer group.
- ⇒ Targeting ASAP intervention goals during circle time, recess, snack, or other large group activities.
- ⇒ Using structured play bins to help the children learn to play within a familiar format/layout to their other work.

## **Incorporating Peers in the Intervention**

Incorporating peers is an important part of the ASAP intervention. We know that ASAP may be implemented in classrooms with a variety of service delivery models. Some classrooms may be self-contained classrooms – serving only children with autism *or* children with a variety of developmental delays. Other classrooms may be inclusive settings, with both children who are typically developing, as well as children who have autism or other developmental disabilities. Here are a few tips for selecting and supporting peer models in your classroom.



*When **choosing peer models**, try to select a child who:*

- ⇒ Exhibits good social skills
- ⇒ Generally does what adults ask him/her to do
- ⇒ Volunteers or wants to participate
- ⇒ Attends school on a regular basis

*Teachers can **support peers** by:*

- ⇒ Modeling the appropriate behaviors/target skills
- ⇒ Giving the peer models time to practice and role play with adults and other children before interacting with the child with autism
- ⇒ Providing prompts to the peer during the role play that promote better interactions and appropriate pacing of interactions

*Once the peer is comfortable interacting with others, **have the peer begin an interaction with the child with autism**. When trying this, you should:*

- ⇒ Provide feedback to the peers and the child with autism during the interaction
- ⇒ Interactions should occur during naturally occurring opportunities
- ⇒ Offer the peer reinforcement then reduce the frequency of that reinforcement as the peer becomes more comfortable interacting with the child with autism
- ⇒ Train multiple peers to engage with the child with autism to promote generalization

## Tips for Group Management



Working on skills in groups is usually not an easy feat. There often are a number of obstacles, including the different personalities and skill levels of the children, and the comfort level of the teacher in conducting group activities. We have included some suggestions for managing the behavior of children with autism in generalized settings.

### *Strategies for PREVENTING Behavior Issues*

- 1) ***Remaining in proximity:*** Having an adult(s) in close proximity to the group activity often can help to prevent behavior problems.
- 2) ***Reducing distracting stimuli:*** If there are a number of distracting materials (such as pictures on the wall) in the child's visual field during a group activity, the child may overly focus on those irrelevant materials and not participate in the group.
- 3) ***Reviewing the rules:*** Reviewing the rules for group participation before starting the activity may help. It is important to state written rules positively (such as "keep hands in lap" vs. "do not hit"), to limit the number of classroom rules (3-5), and to use visuals to help children understand the rules (you may have a picture of a child sitting with hands in lap next to the written words).
- 4) ***Using motivating materials/activities:*** Make sure the activities you are using during small or large group are of interest to the child. It may help to intersperse highly engaging activities, such as singing songs, with less engaging activities.
- 5) ***Using visual schedules and manipulatives:*** Group activities often do not have a clear ending. The use of visual schedules can help communicate to the child with autism how long the activity will last. The visual schedule can be used to show the sequence of activities you are going to do in group on a given day. Also, for some children having an object to hold in their hand during the group provides a concrete way for the child to participate (e.g., during the song "itsy bitsy spider" everyone could hold a fake, plastic spider).
- 6) ***Layering groups:*** When children have vastly different cognitive levels and/or attention capacities, then it may be helpful to stagger their participation in group activities. Thus, children with shorter attention spans may participate in group for the first 5 minutes (or less) with the most engaging and motivating activities taking place during this time, such as singing or playing games. Those children would then leave the group before behavior problems start, and children with longer attention capacities would stay for the remainder of the group to participate in higher level activities, such as reading instruction.
- 7) ***Shortening the duration of group activities:*** If the majority of children in the classroom are having trouble staying at group activities, then you should consider shortening the duration of the group until the children learn to stay for longer periods of time.

### ***Strategies for RESPONDING to Behavior Issues***

- 1) ***Remaining in proximity:*** Having an adult(s) in close proximity to the group activity often can help to prevent behavior problems.
- 2) ***Reducing distracting stimuli:*** If there are a number of distracting materials (such as pictures on the wall) in the child's visual field during the group activity then the child may overly focus on those irrelevant materials and not participate in the group.
- 3) ***Reviewing the rules:*** Reviewing the rules for group participation prior to starting the activity may help. It is important to state written rules positively (such as "keep hands in lap" vs. "do not hit"), to limit the number of classroom rules (list 3-5 rules), and use visuals to help children understand the rules (you may have a picture of a child sitting with hands in lap next to the written words).
- 4) ***Using motivating materials/activities:*** Make sure the activities you are using during small or large group are of interest to the child. It may help to intersperse highly engaging activities, such as singing songs, with less engaging activities.

# 9

## RESEARCH

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## RESEARCH FOUNDATIONS FOR THE ASAP PROGRAM

### ***Background***

Deficits in social-communication functioning are core diagnostic features of autism (Sigman & Ruskin, 1999). More importantly in terms of intervention planning, the quality and quantity of social-communication behaviors during the preschool years is highly predictive of long-term developmental and functional outcomes. Joint attention and symbolic play theoretically are two pivotal skills for social-communication development in that they constitute early foundations upon which later social-communication skills are built (Laakso, Poikkeus, Eklund, & Lyytinen, 1999; Mundy & Crowson, 1997).

### ***Typical Development of Joint Attention***

Joint attention refers to an intentional sharing of attention to objects or events that are external to either communication partner. Behaviors that represent this type of sharing include pointing, showing, giving, and coordinated looking between the communication partner and the object or event of interest. Investigations of joint attention in young children have studied children's ability to respond to the joint attention bids of others as well as to initiate joint attention bids themselves. Although requests for objects can entail the coordination of attention to an object and a communicative partner, the epitome of joint attention is the coordination of attention *for the purpose of sharing interest (and not primarily to gain an object)*.

Joint attention plays an important role in language acquisition. For example, in seminal work discussing the comprehension strategies of typically developing infants and toddlers, Chapman (1978) highlighted the importance of being able to follow a communicative partner's cues in order to focus on the object to which the partner was referring. This seemingly simple achievement of responding to a bid for joint attention provides a bootstrap by which the young language-learner can begin to map words onto the appropriate referents, an essential part of early language acquisition. Engaging in joint attention during infancy has been related to the later development of expressive and receptive language, theoretically due to the social motivational roots of communicating to share another's interest (Laakso et al., 1999; Slaughter & McConnell, 2003). In addition, there are important transactional effects related to a child's initiation of joint attention; when young children initiate joint attention bids, they engage their communicative partners and elicit types of verbal input that promote language learning (Calandrella & Wilcox, 2000; Yoder & Warren, 2002; Yoder, Warren, Kim & Gazdag, 1994). Indeed, children's learning has been enhanced when the adult focuses on the child's topic of interest rather than the adult's (Tomasello & Farrar, 1986).

### ***Typical Development of Symbolic Play***

Functioning at a symbolic level is another essential achievement for the development of language beyond the most basic level of associating a sequence of sounds with a particular stimulus. For example, symbolic functioning permits us to understand that "cat" does not just refer to the cat that may reside in our home, but rather to a whole class of animals. In addition, the capacity for symbolism permits meaningful exchanges in the absence of the concrete referents about which we speak. Success in academic and many life settings is highly dependent on the ability to function at a symbolic level.

Symbolic play is characterized by the ability to pretend, as demonstrated by such behaviors as using one object to "stand for" another object (e.g., using a banana as though it is a telephone), pretending to act on an absent object, pretending a doll is acting as an independent agent, or taking on an imaginary role. In early childhood, symbolic play and language development are important manifestations of emerging symbolic capacity. In current theoretical models, symbolic play is not a prerequisite for language or vice versa (Bates, Benigni, Bretherton, Camaioni & Volterra, 1979; Lyytinen, Laakso, Poikkeus, & Rita, 1999; McCune-Nicholich, 1981). Rather, they share the underlying developmental capacity for symbolizing.

### *How Are Joint Attention and Symbolic Play Linked Together?*

We posit that pretend play and social-communication development interact with one another and with other developmental processes in essential ways that lead to a normal trajectory of social and language development. Chapman (1978) elucidated how joint attention and functional play can operate together as an important foundation for language comprehension in young language learners. One set of nonverbal strategies for comprehension among early language learners is to (a) attend to the object mentioned [i.e., use joint attention skills], and (b) do what you usually do with the object. Thus, if an adult communication partner is talking to a toddler about doing something with a ball, there is a high probability the adult will be talking about rolling or throwing the ball (functional play), but a much lower probability that the adult will be talking about licking or smelling the ball. So a toddler who has the joint attention skills to look at the object identified by the adult, and also has acquired functional play skills will be able to apply nonverbal strategies that are likely to help him or her make an appropriate interpretation of the adult's message, but a child who fails to focus on the object of interest or whose toy play behaviors are at an exploratory or nonconventional level will not have access to the same strategies.

As a second example of an important linkage, developmental progress toward symbolic play skills exerts transactional effects on the communicative interaction strategies of caregivers, such that more sophisticated play on the part of the child evokes more beneficial language input from adults (Laasko et al, 1999). Children with varied play behaviors and schemes at the functional and symbolic levels provide caregivers more "topics" to talk about with young children. Considerable research has linked the extent to which adult partners talk about the young child's focus of attention (e.g., ongoing play objects and activities) to the child's progress in language development (Baumwell, Tamis-LaMonda & Bornstein, 1997; Rollins, 2003; Siller & Sigman, 2002; Tomasello & Farrar, 1986).

A third link between the development of symbolic play and social-communication competence lies in the area of peer interactions. As children progress to levels of functional and symbolic play, they typically use toy play as a primary context for peer interactions. Toddlers reciprocally imitate one another as they engage in object play (Eckerman, Davis, & Didow, 1989; Nadel-Brulfert, 1982). At preschool age, successful peer interactions are related to the child's ability to engage in representational play, including symbolic use of objects (pretending that an object is something other than what it is), role-playing (pretending to be someone other than who you are), pretending that things or people exist that are represented only by words and/or gesture, and creating a shared imagination among the play partners (Colwell & Lindsey, 2005; Doyle & Connolly, 1989). Without the development of symbolic play, the child's opportunities to participate in and learn from peer interactions will be gravely restricted during the preschool years (Weinberger & Starkey, 1994). Further, adult and peer interactions provide the opportunities for children to engage in and refine joint attention acts.

Thus, joint attention and symbolic play are theoretically and empirically linked to improvements in social-communication functioning, including language comprehension, language expression, child to adult interaction, and peer interaction. Preschool competence in language and social interaction, in turn, is associated with better academic and adaptive outcomes in areas such as emergent literacy (Doctoroff, Greer & Arnold, 2006; Sénéchal, LeFerve, Smith-Chant, & Colton, 2001), conventional literacy (Griffin, Hemphill, Camp, & Wolf, 2004; Roth, Speece & Cooper, 2002; Sulzby 2000), and adult social adaptation, including success in employment and interpersonal relationships (Clegg, Hollis, Mawhood, & Rutter, 2005). In the next section, we will present our intervention model, reviewing the empirical research supporting the proposed components.

### ***What is the ASAP Intervention Model?***

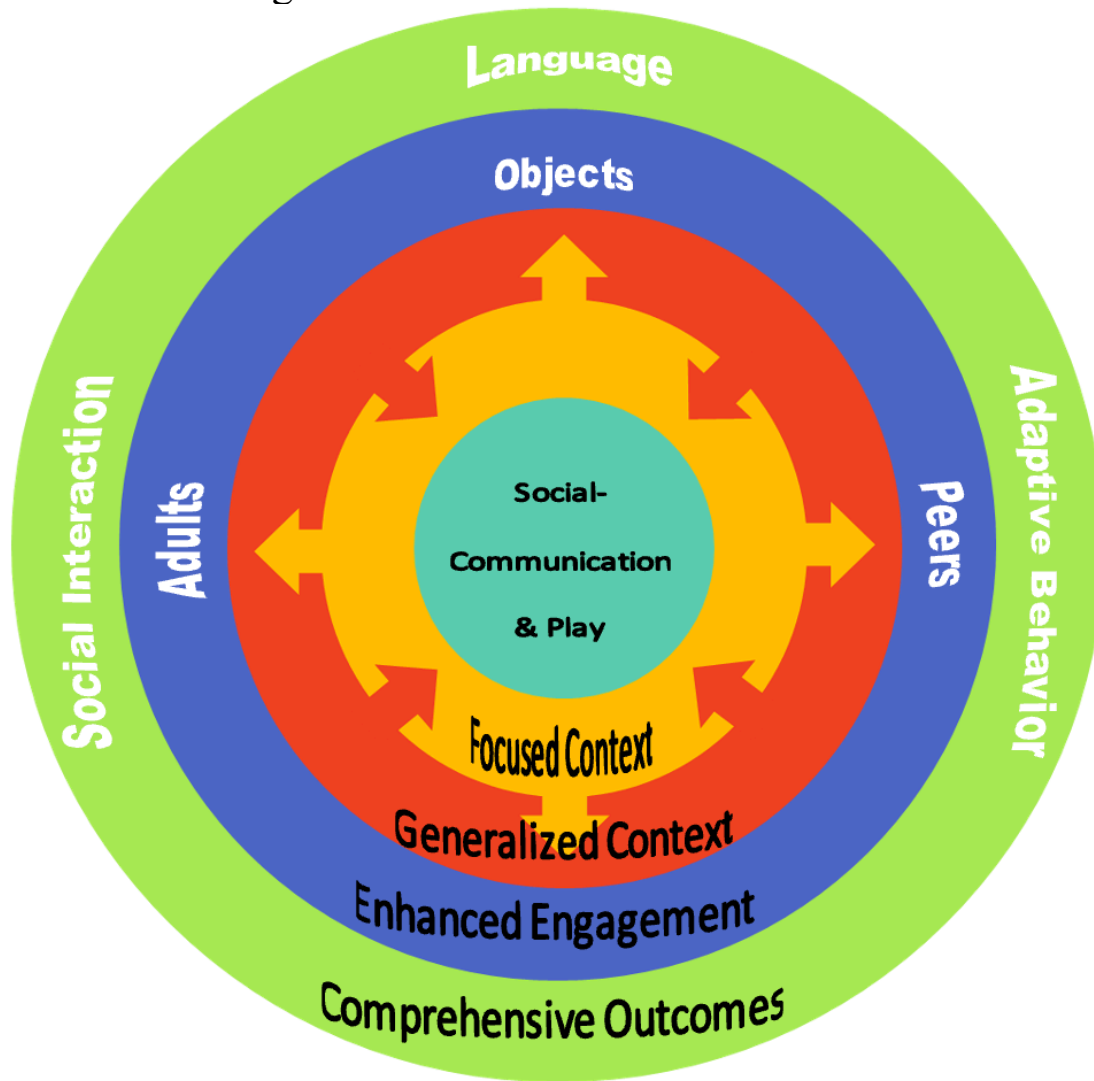
Our intervention model, which we will refer to as ASAP, consists of two content components and two context components. The two content components are social-communication and play. The two context components are focused practice intervention and classroom activity-based intervention. Figure I.5 presents this model in the context of the theoretical outcomes of the intervention program. In our model, we work on social-communication and play together in intervention due to their theoretical linkages with one another and with broader outcomes. Newly emerging skills are taught initially in the focused practice context, and then as those skills emerge in the focused practice context, they also are taught in the classroom. Our model assumes that the focused practice context promotes more efficient skill acquisition than intervention in the classroom context alone, and that implementing the intervention in the classroom context fosters better generalization, elaboration, and maintenance of skills than the focused practice setting alone. The instructional staff provides the ASAP intervention in these two contexts at the same time, working collaboratively. In our model, we expect that improvements in social-communication and play behaviors will lead to improved engagement with adults, peers, and objects in the environment. This is because changes in the child's behavior allow more opportunities for adaptive interactions with the environment and elicit input from other people that facilitates growth across a comprehensive range of developmental and functional domains.

### ***Research on the Importance of Including Social-Communication in ASAP***

Broad research evidence exists for specific social-communication deficits in joint attention among children with autism (e.g., Charman, 1998; McEvoy, Rogers, Pennington, 1993; Mundy & Crowson, 1997; Sigman & Ruskin, 1999). These children show delays in developing joint attention that are striking even in the context of their overall communication delays. Learning to communicate for other purposes, such as to regulate the behavior of another person (e.g., request an object, or protest) or to engage in a social routine (e.g., patty-cake, waving bye), is considerably easier for young children with autism than engaging in communication to share interest with another person. Joint attention skills are important for acquiring language, for learning through communicative interactions with others, and for skillfully negotiating reciprocal social interactions. For instance, early response to and initiation of joint attention bids predict later vocabulary and general language outcomes in both typically developing children (Carpenter, Nagell & Tomasello, 1998; Markus, Mundy, Morales, Delgado & Yale, 2000; Morales et al., 2000; Mundy & Gomes, 1998) and children with autism (McDuffie, Yoder & Stone, 2006; Mundy, Sigman, Ungerer & Sherman, 1986; Sigman & McGovern, 2006; Sigman & Ruskin, 1999). For children with autism, the frequency of initiation of joint attention at preschool age predicted social engagement with peers during middle childhood years (Sigman & Ruskin, 1999).

The effects of child prelinguistic communication on adult language input has been demonstrated in several studies of children with typical development as well as those with developmental disabilities. For example, Yoder et al. (1994) found that mothers and teachers of preschool children with developmental disabilities were more likely to put a child's intention into words when the children communicated intentionally rather than pre-intentionally. That is, if a child reached for a ball and made eye contact with his caregiver, the caregiver was more likely to say something like, "You want the ball," than if the child just reached without signaling his communicative intent. This adult interaction strategy, called "linguistic mapping," fosters language growth in young children. Yoder et al. demonstrated that after the children participated in intervention that increased their rate of intentional prelinguistic communication, their parents subsequently increased their rate of linguistic mapping. Findings of this type suggest that if children with autism improve their joint attention skills, the quantity and quality of language input they hear will be enhanced, thereby promoting better language development.

Figure 1.5: ASAP Intervention Model



The model of the proposed ASAP intervention addresses the pivotal behaviors of social-communication and play. Emerging behaviors are first strengthened in the focused practice context, then generalized & expanded in the classroom context. Via collaborative assessment & intervention in the two contexts, the foundational skills in social-communication & play are established, and lead to enhanced engagement with adults, peers & objects in the environment. Further learning occurs via this enhanced engagement, leading to comprehensive improvements in social interaction, language, and adaptive behavior.

Autism intervention research reveals recent increased efforts to determine if joint attention of young children with autism is positively affected by treatment. Studies employing group designs (Drew et al., 2002; Kasari et al., 2006; Mahoney & Perales, 2003, 2005; Yoder & Stone, 2006) and single subject designs (Whalen & Schreibman, 2003; Zercher, Hunt, Schuler & Webster, 2001) have reported that parent-based intervention, therapist-delivered intervention, and peer-mediated intervention all have been associated with enhanced joint attention behaviors in this population. Importantly, Kasari et al. (2006) and Yoder and Stone (2006) have provided evidence via randomized control trials for generalization of joint attention skills to new partners and situations. In addition, Kasari and her colleagues (Kasari, Paparella, Freeman, & Jahromi, 2008) recently reported that advantage apparent at the end of the intervention programs were maintained over a follow-up twelve-month period. Further, and perhaps most important for the purposes of supporting the ASAP intervention, the children who received either symbolic play intervention or joint attention intervention had

better language skills than children who participated only in an intensive applied behavior analysis program but did not receive focused intervention to improve either joint attention or symbolic play.

### ***Research on the Importance of Including Play in ASAP***

Children with autism demonstrate a paucity of symbolic play, particularly in unstructured situations (e.g., Jarrold et al., 1993; Libby et al., 1998; McDonough et al., 1997; Warreyn et al., 2005). Symbolic play makes unique contributions to predicting language outcomes for children with autism (Toth et al., 2006). Warreyn et al. (2005) conducted research on mother-child interactions among preschool children with autism, and their findings support the hypothesis that symbolic abilities and interpersonal abilities are two separate though intercorrelated clusters of behaviors among children with autism. Preschool functional play (a developmental stage of symbolic play) predicts expressive language skills and social engagement with peers in middle childhood (Sigman & Ruskin, 1999). In a more recent follow-up study (Sigman & McGovern, 2006), preschool functional play continued to be significantly related to language skills in adolescents with autism.

Autism intervention research provides some information on child outcomes in programs directed at improving play. Investigators have reported positive changes in functional and symbolic play associated with a variety of play interventions, including social stories (Hess, 2006), video modeling (MacDonald, Clark, Garrigan, & Vangala, 2005), play scripts (Neville & Bachor, 2002; Sherratt, 2002), peer-mediated intervention (Yang, Wolfberg, Wu, & Hwu, 2003; Zercher et al., 2001), pivotal response training (Stahmer, 1995; Thorp, Stahmer & Schreibman, 1995), and a researcher-administered intervention combining discrete trial training and milieu therapy (Kasari et al., 2006). Some evidence for generalization of improved play skills to new toys, settings, and/or partners has been provided in uncontrolled studies (e.g., Hess, 2006; Sherratt, 2002), single subject design studies (Stahmer, 1995; Thorp et al., 1995), and in one randomized control trial (Kasari et al., 2006). Follow-up data from Kasari et al. (2008) showed that 12 months after concluding the intervention program, children who had participated in the symbolic play intervention continued to demonstrate better play skills than a control group, and also exhibited better language skills by that point in time.

### ***Research on the Importance of Using Focused Instruction in ASAP***

In syntheses of research on early intervention with children with autism, reviewers have drawn the conclusion that multiple opportunities for adult-child interaction in one-to-one or small group settings are a key commonality of programs that appear to be effective (Dawson & Osterling, 1997; National Research Council [NRC], 2001). Focused instruction by an adult is widely used in a variety of programs, especially for initial skill instruction. This strategy is consistent with a Vygotskian model that focuses on adult scaffolding to mediate learning for the child. Incorporating focused instruction in ASAP also is supported by evidence that social-communication and play are enhanced when young children with typical development (Bakeman & Adamson, 1984; Bornstein et al., 1996; Turkheimer, Bakeman & Adamson 1989), Down syndrome (Legerstee & Weintraub, 1997) and autism (Rice, 2001) interact with their caregivers compared to peers. Furthermore, research suggests that young children with pervasive developmental disorders (Pierce-Jordan & Lifter, 2005) and other developmental disabilities (Lieber & Beckman, 1991) exhibit more frequent or more complex symbolic play when they are playing *alone* than when they are playing with peers. As noted by Pierce-Jordan and Lifter (2005), both social interaction and play activities require cognitive resources, explaining the trade-off between sophistication of object play and social engagement with peers. These findings also support the strategy of helping children to develop some mastery of social-communication and object play skills in supportive interactions with adults rather than relying on peer group interactions as the primary strategy for *establishing* these pivotal behaviors.

### ***Research on the Importance of Including Classroom Instruction in ASAP***

Along with the evidence that focused instruction may be an important component of effective interventions for young children with autism, there also is accumulated evidence that focused instruction is not sufficient for promoting comprehensive developmental changes (Hwang & Hughes, 2000; NRC, 2001). Thus, the National Research Council (NRC) report on *Educating Children with Autism* (2001) stressed in its recommendations that intervention needs to occur throughout the day in varied settings and with varied interaction partners in order to promote generalization of skills. The consensus of the NRC panel was that, “Generalized instruction provides an important environment for maintenance, generalization, and normalization of skills that may have first been taught individually” (p.138). With respect to individual, discipline-specific therapy, the NRC further states that “The value of focused therapy lies in generalization, which must be planned and directly addressed” (p. 139). Another important aspect of the classroom component of our program is the opportunity to promote peer interactions in the preschool generalized setting. Peer interactions are highlighted by the NRC as especially important for children with autism who are preschool age and older, given their characteristic problems in learning to interact appropriately with age-mates who typically are not as supportive and accommodating as adult caregivers and instructional staff. In addition, our program highlights enhancing the child-teacher interactions within the classroom setting. Thus, empirical evidence supports the importance of the classroom context as a component of our program to promote, generalize and maintain improved social-communication and play skills and to realize the broader developmental benefits of improved social, language, and cognitive skills and behavioral adaptation in the school environment.

### ***Research on Intervention Strategies for Children with Autism***

As mentioned in the ASAP intervention section, the National Research Council’s report on *Educating Children with Autism* (2001) included four broad categories of teaching strategies that are effective when working with these young children. The strategies listed were (a) discrete trials, (b) massed discrete trials, (c) naturalistic behavioral strategies, and (d) peer-mediated strategies. Each of these practices has an evidence-base. Discrete trial teaching (DTT) is a focused instructional approach used to teach skills in a systematic manner by breaking complex skills into smaller steps. DTT is characterized by having a clear beginning and ending to the teaching episode, which involves prompts to cue correct responses and positive reinforcement for those responses. DTT has been found to effective for improving the communication/language skills of children with autism as well as improving their play skills (Kok, Kong, Bernard-Optiz, 2002; Whalen & Schreibman, 2003). Massed discrete trials simply involve the repetition of single discrete trials; this intervention strategy is most commonly associated with the empirically-validated UCLA Lovaas Model (Cohen, Amerine-Dickens, & Smith, 2006). Naturalistic behavior strategies refer to a collection of behavioral approaches characterized by environmental arrangement, teaching episodes occurring during natural routines, and the use of logical and natural reinforcers. This intervention strategy also has an established evidence base for children with autism (Ingersoll, Lewis, & Kroman, 2007; McGee, Almeida, Sulzer-Azaroff, & Feldman, 1992). Finally, peer-mediated strategies primarily involve the use of typically developing peers to help the child with disabilities learn targeted skills. This approach could involve such instructional methods as peer imitation or modeling, peer tutoring, peer buddy systems, or peer grouping strategies. In the field of autism, peer-mediated strategies mostly have been used to increase the social interactions of the child with his/her typically developing peers (Garfinkle & Schwartz, 2002; Kohler et al., 1995).

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