

One Size Doesn't Fit All: Developing Effective Early Education Programs for Children with Autism

Sara McCracken, Psy.D., BCBA

Jane Kim, M.S., BCBA

The Help Group

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- Early Education Program, Sherman Oaks:
- Nonpublic Schools (Young Learners, Bridgeport and Sunrise) for children with Autism Spectrum and Related Diagnoses
 - Preschool Classes, Mild to Severe Disability
 - Bridgeport K-2, Mild to Moderate Disability
 - Sunrise K-3, Moderate to Severe Disability
- Full Day, 9-3p

Goal of Presentation

- Identify important components of effective, individualized early educational programs for children with autism
 - Multidisciplinary Team
 - Assessment
 - Evidence Based Intervention and Instruction
- Jane Kim, BCBA
 - Functional Analysis: Individualized Behavior Intervention



Multidisciplinary Team

Multidisciplinary Team

- Child and family/significant others
- Home, school and community organizations
- Who are some other members of the team?
 - Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Adaptive PE Coaches, Behavior Specialists, Counselors, Psychologists, Medical Practitioners, Caseworkers, Vision or Hearing Specialists



Multidisciplinary Team

- Collaborative model of service provision
 - Therapists push in to the curriculum
 - Teacher & service provider collaborate to target goals
 - Work with children individually, in small groups, larger groups, in classroom or other settings
 - Collaborate on IEP goal development
 - Train staff, family and other members of the team
 - Input in curriculum design
 - Providers have expertise and training working with young children with autism

Multidisciplinary Team

- Family/Guardian Involvement
 - Daily Communication Log
 - Conferences
 - Observations with training component
 - Monthly training and support group
 - In home consultation
 - IEP Development

Multidisciplinary Team

- Staff Development
 - All staff working with and around the children should have an understanding of autism
 - Credentialed, specialized teachers and service providers
 - Experienced, trained teaching assistants
- Training Curricula Examples:
 - It's Time for School! Building Quality ABA Educational Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders
 - SKILLS (E-learning)



ASSESSMENT

Multidisciplinary Assessment

- Programming must be individualized and flexible and based on comprehensive assessment
 - Medical
 - Cognitive abilities
 - Communication
 - Motor
 - Sensory
 - Daily Living Skills
 - Social/ Emotional
 - Behavior
 - Executive Functioning
 - Academic Ability

Use this information to put together appropriate goals and treatment strategies!

Assessment


- In addition to Standards and Alternative Curriculum Guides
 - Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP; Sundberg)
 - Piloting SKILLS (Center for Autism and Related Disorders)
 - Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS; Lord)

VB-MAPP

- The VB-MAPP is a criterion-referenced assessment tool, curriculum guide, and skill tracking system that is designed for children with autism, and other individuals who demonstrate language delays.
- Incorporates verbal behavior, developmental milestones and research from behavior analysis
- Components of the VB-MAPP include: Milestones Assessment, Barriers Assessment, Transition Assessment, Task Analysis and Skills Tracking, Placement and IEP Goal Development
- 5 components of the VB-MAPP provide:
 - baseline level of performance
 - a direction for intervention
 - a system for tracking skill acquisition
 - a tool for outcome measures
 - a framework for curriculum planning

VB-MAPP Milestones


- 170 measurable learning and language milestones that are sequenced and balanced across 3 developmental levels (0-18 months, 18-30 months, and 30-48 months)
- The skills assessed include mand, tact, echoic, intraverbal, listener, motor imitation, independent play, social and social play, visual perceptual and matching-to-sample, linguistic structure, echoics, group and classroom skills, and early academics.



Case Example: VB-MAPP Milestones

VB-MAPP Barriers Assessment

- Assessment of 24 common learning and language acquisition barriers faced by children with autism or other developmental disabilities.
- By identifying these barriers, the teacher can develop specific intervention strategies to help overcome these problem areas, which can lead to more effective learning.



Case Example: VB-MAPP Barriers

VB-MAPP Transition Assessment

- Contains 18 assessment areas and can help to identify whether a child is making meaningful progress and has acquired the skills necessary for learning in a less restrictive educational environment.
- This assessment tool can provide a measurable way for a child's IEP team to make decisions and set priorities in order to meet the child's educational needs.

VB-MAPP Transition Assessment

- Language, Social and Academic levels
 - What skills does the child have?
 - What barriers stand in the way?
- Learning Patterns
 - Generalization
 - Range of reinforcers
 - Rate of skills acquisition and retention
 - How learning from environment
- Self Help, Adaptability to Change, Self Directed Leisure Time

VB-MAPP:

Task Analysis and Skills Tracking

- Provides a further breakdown of the skills
- There are approximately 900 skills presented covering the 16 areas of the VB-MAPP
- Once the Milestones have been assessed and the general skill level has been established, the task analysis can provide further information about a particular child.
- They also provide parents and teachers with a variety of activities that can facilitate generalization, maintenance, spontaneity, retention, expansion, and the functional use of skills in a variety of educational and social contexts.

VB-MAPP: Placement & IEP Goals

- Correspond with the four assessments areas
- Provides direction for Milestones
- Suggestions for IEP goals

SKILLS (CARD)

- Web Based assessment and programming guide
- Curriculum Areas
 - Language
 - Play
 - Adaptive Skills
 - Motor
 - Executive Functions
 - Cognition
 - Social Skills
 - Academic

SKILLS (CARD)

- Each activity provides information such as:
 - Average age ranges for when skills develop
 - Prerequisites necessary before teaching the skills in the activity
 - Sample Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals related to the skill
 - Ideas for setting up teaching materials and scenarios
 - Teaching points for ensuring the child's success in learning targeted skills
 - Ideas for programming for generalization
 - Printable materials such as teaching guides, tracking forms, visual aids, worksheets, and target checklists
 - Demonstration videos

Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule

(Lord, Rutter, DiLabore, Risi, 1999)

- ADOS is a semi-structured, standardized assessment for:
 - Communication
 - Social Interaction
 - Play & Imagination
 - Stereotyped Behaviors and Restricted Interests



Case Example: ADOS



Evidence Based Interventions

Evidence Based Interventions

- National Autism Center (2009): Evidence Based Practice and Autism in the Schools
 - 11 “established” treatments
 - thoroughly effective, well researched
 - 22 “emerging” treatments
 - some evidence but needs more research
 - “Unestablished” treatments
 - no sound evidence

NAC: 11 Established Treatments

- Antecedent Interventions
- Behavioral Interventions
- Comprehensive Behavioral Treatment for Young Children
- Joint Attention Intervention
- Modeling
- Naturalistic Teaching Strategies
- Peer Training
- Pivotal Response Treatment
- Schedules
- Self Management
- Story Based Interventions

Data

- Data collection is important to help assess progress and evaluate programming and changes to programming
- Examples
 - Frequency
 - Response rate
 - Time sampling
 - Duration
 - Latency
 - Correct/Incorrect
 - Level of prompting
 - Intensity
- Make data collection meaningful
 - No one wants to take data that isn't going to be used!
 - No one wants to try to use data that isn't accurate!



Antecedent Interventions

Antecedent Interventions

- How we modify the environment ahead of time to support learning and decrease likelihood of problem behaviors?
 - This is where the majority of programming should occur!

Structured Classroom Schedule

- Instruction and programming are scheduled throughout the entire day
- Meal times, bathroom, & playground times are all instructional times
- Create a schedule of the day:
 - What goals are you addressing during each part of the day
 - How are you targeting? What data collecting?
- Down time is often equated with self stimulatory and other maladaptive behaviors

Individualized Goals

- Developmentally appropriate
- Assessment based
- Meaningful
- Data driven
- When will goals be worked on
 - Provide NUMEROUS learning opportunities
 - Teachable moments occur every moment of the day

Classroom Design

- Low student to adult ratio
- Structured and organized
- Distraction free teaching areas
- Visual supports/ organizational aides
- Sensory items/modifications
- Communication tools readily accessible
- Motivating items visible but out of reach
- Multidisciplinary team consultation

Schedules

- Increases predictability
- Aids executive functioning
- Helps with transitioning
- Helps to promote greater independence
- Various types of schedules
 - First then
 - Full Day
 - Steps of an activity
 - Pointing to it/ crossing off
 - Removable
 - Pictures and/or words
 - Pictures: Digital photos, Generalized Photos, Icons

Reinforcement

- Motivates learning!
- Use to establish, strengthen and maintain behaviors
- Identifying reinforcers– ongoing process
- Pair potential reinforcers with established reinforcers (including staff!)
- High frequency and immediate reinforcement early on
- Fade to more natural reinforcement

Teaching Technique Examples

- Time Delay Prompting
- Discrete Trial Teaching
- Priming
- Shaping
- Chaining
- Behavioral Momentum
- Group Instruction
 - Sequential Presentation
 - Choral Responding
- Modeling
- Imbedding Instruction

Resources

- A Work in Progress (Leaf & McEachin, 1999)
- Behavioral Intervention for Young Children with Autism: A Manual for Parents and Professionals (Maurice, Greene & Luce, 1996)
- Effective Instruction for Children with Autism: An Applied Behavior Analytic Approach (Gullick & Kitchen, 2007)
- It's Time for School! Building Quality ABA Educational Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (Leaf, Taubman, McEachin, 2008)
- SKILLS (CARD, 2012)
- The Verbal Behavior Approach: How to Teach Children with Autism and Related Disorders (Barbera & Rasmussen, 2007)
- Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (Sundberg, 2008)

The Help Group

- www.thehelpgroup.org
- smccracken@thehelpgroup.org
- Main Number: 818-781-0360
- Sherman Oaks Campus