FOSTERING FRIENDSHIPS

ELI COOPER
JENNIFER COOPER
KATI SKULSKI

DOWN SYNDROME CONNECTION OF THE BAY AREA
Importance of Friendships

- Developmental growth
- Connection and support
- Self esteem, emotional stability
- Future inclusion
- FUN
What Defines a Friendship?

- Mutual between two people
- Voluntary
- Enjoyable
What Defines a Friendship?

- Mutual between two people
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- Enjoyable
Possible Barriers to Friendships

- Nature/magnitude of disability
- Inappropriate social skills
- Over-reliance on adult helpers
- Lack of understanding and acceptance by peers
- Services delivered in separate environments.
- Lack of communication skills by student with disability
Strategies for Overcoming Barriers

- Intentional
- Ability Awareness
- Environment
- Scheduling
- Formal and Informal groupings
- Expectations
- Scaffolding
  - COMMUNICATION!
Ability Awareness

- Talk about different abilities in a safe, supportive manner.
- Equip peers for friendships.
- Allow students to ask questions and share information.
- If/when ready, empower students to participate in their own ability awareness.
Incorporate different abilities in environment and curriculum.

Proximity: place students with disabilities with students, not in the corner with an aide.

Beware of the hovering aide.

Have materials that are to be shared.
Scheduling

- Don’t schedule pull-outs during non-instructional times.
- Incorporate social goals and objectives into IEP.
- Have regular and repeated opportunities for interactions.
Formal and Informal Grouping

- Work groups
- Lunch Bunch
- Circle of Friends
- Best Buddies
- Extra-Curriculars
Expectations

- Have high and reasonable expectations.
- Expect student to initiate interactions.
- Expect student to form friendships.
- Expect student to learn social cues and norms.
- Expect student to communicate.
Scaffolding

- Ensure student has effective communication system.
- Teach conversation skills.
- Provide prompts, models and/or communication maps when necessary.
AAC

Bringing another variable into the mix!
What is AAC?

- **Alternative/Augmentative Communication (AAC):** a subset of AT; AAC involves the study of, and when necessary compensations put in place for individuals with severe speech and language disorders (ASHA, 2005)

- **Speech & Language Indicators**
  - **Expressive/Receptive Gap:** when receptive language skills are higher than expressive language skills; this typically warrants AAC intervention.
  - **Frustration** due to the inability to effectively communicate.
  - **Guarded Verbal Speech Prognosis:**
    - Limited progress with speech therapy
    - Physical limitations for speech production
No Tech

No Tech Systems an individual uses with no additional tools or technology

- Motor Behaviors
- Gestures
- Sign Language
- Vocalizations
- Verbalizations
- Proxemics
- Eye Gaze
- Facial Expressions
Low Tech

Communication aides which do not run from a power source

- PECS: Picture Exchange Communication System
- Communication board
- Eye gaze board
- Live Voice Scanning
Light Tech

System which are typically battery operated and have a static (non-changing) display

- Big Mac
- Step by Step
- Tech Talk
- Go Talks
High Tech Systems typically requiring an electronic power source and have a dynamic display (changing)

- NovaChat
- Accent
- iPad (e.g. ProLoQuo2Go, TouchChat)
One more...
How to begin...

Tools for analyzing communication partners and opportunities
Social Networks

“The Social Network Package is an assessment and intervention planning tool. The Manual and Inventory Booklet are designed to help professionals work with family members and individuals who have complex communication needs. Use this resource to help determine appropriate communication strategies and technologies for clients to use with their communication partners.”

Communication Sampling & Analysis (CSA)

"CSA is an assessment tool designed for infants, toddlers, and children with multiple physical, sensory, speech, and cognitive/linguistic challenges. CSA is an objective measure for sampling and analyzing communication behavior (means and functions) in natural interactions."

http://csa.acts-at.com/csa-info.html
"The Communication Matrix is a free assessment tool created to help families and professionals easily understand the communication status, progress, and unique needs of anyone functioning at the early stages of communication or using forms of communication other than speaking or writing."

https://www.communicationmatrix.org/
Teaching Tools

Tools to support peer interactions & developing friendships
Meaningful Vocabulary

Vocabulary needed by the user across contexts, partners, and environments.

Important personalized vocabulary for developing friendships
- Names of peers
- Social jargon ‘No doubt’
- Core
- Activity based
- Personal information and preferences
Social Scripts & Role Play

Role Play is targeting and practicing vocabulary and communicative interaction around specific pre-planned scenarios.

Script Categories
- Action Script
- Participation Script
- Conversation Script
PARTICIPATION SCRIPT

Increases the number of reciprocal communication exchanges around daily, cooperative activities (i.e. story leader, show and tell, picture description)

• **Partner:** Look what Tommy bought to school today (shows item)! What color is it?
• **User:** Black
• **Partner:** Can you think of a question to ask Tommy about his favorite thing?
• **User:** Who play?
• **Partner:** Tommy, Sam asked, who do you play this with?

CONVERSATION SCRIPT

Encourages users of AAC and partners to expand interactive, conversational exchanges (i.e. weekend news, movie discussion, etc)

• **Partner:** How was your weekend?
• **User:** It was fun
• **Partner:** What did you do?
• **User:** I go movies.
• **Partner:** Cool, what did you see? My weekend was busy.
Personal Books

Promoting communication, literacy, socialization, & leisure

Encouraging buy-in and motivation
• Relatable Material
• Enticing Material

Increasing Communication Skills
• Modeling
• Language Scaffolding
• Conversing
Peer Reading

Book Ideas

• Favorite things
  • People
  • Food
  • Places
  • Activities

• Accomplishments
  • Art projects
  • Bike rides
  • Performance

ENCOURAGE SHARING!
Bibliography


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- www.kidstogether.org
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Ability Awareness:
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- What’s it Like? Down Syndrome, Angela Royston (2005)
- I Know Someone with Down Syndrome, Vic Parker (2011)
- My Friend has Down Syndrome, Jennifer Moor-Mallinos (2008)
- Our Brother Has Down’s Syndrome, Shelley Cairo (1985)
- Just Like You Video (video can be found at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5M-xOyGUX4)
- www.tolerance.org