Social Competence Series: Overview

Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence

Tuesday, May 10, 2011
Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence

Ohio is taking steps to address Autism and Low Incidence.

Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence | Latest News

Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence

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Funded in part through a grant from the Ohio Department of Education Office for Exceptional Children.

ocali.org | 866.886.2254
Go To Meeting Instructions

- Microphones should be muted
- Please do not click out of Go-To-Meeting window
- Content questions can be typed in the chat tool on right side of screen
- Please type in number of people at your location now
Outcomes

- Participants will be able to define social competence.
- Participants will be able to describe the difference between social competence and social skills.
- Participants will be able to list reasons why social competence is important for success and satisfaction in the lives of all persons.
- Participants will be able to identify the underlying characteristics of autism that affect an individual’s ability to independently acquire social competence.
A Real Story
A Real Story

Robyn Steward
Diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome
Social Emotional Learning

Goals for All Individuals

• Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success

• Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships

• Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts

Illinois Learning Standards for Social/Emotional Learning (SEL)
Social Competence

The ability to interact successfully with peers and adults; social effectiveness
Social Competence

The ability to interact successfully with peers and adults; social effectiveness

Assumes a certain set of expectations:

- Knowing the rules
- Reading facial expressions and body language of other people
- Reacting consistently to your own and others’ emotions
- Communicating appropriately with different groups
Social Competence
Description

“[S]ocial [competence] means one is able to adapt to an ever-changing landscape that takes into consideration the environment, the people in it, the thoughts, beliefs and needs of the individual and others who share the environment-whether or not they are in direct communication-as well as individual and collective history of knowledge and experience.”

(Winner, 2002, p. 21)
Social Skills

Need to know how and when to use them to be successful
Social Skills

Need to know how and when to use them to be successful

- Asking for help
- Using names
- Listening
- Sharing ideas
- Helping others
- Communicating clearly
- Following directions
- Taking turns
Social Skills

Need to know how and when to use them to be successful

- Asking for help
- Using names
- Listening
- Sharing ideas
- Helping others
- Communicating clearly
- Following directions
- Taking turns
- Greeting others
- Using good manners
- Using friendship skills
- Showing empathy
- Showing a sense of humor
- Knowing how to share
- Initiating a conversation
Differences

Social Skills are part of learning Social Competence.

Social Competence  Social Skills
Differences

Social Skills are part of learning Social Competence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Competence</th>
<th>Social Skills</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Overall ability to interact appropriately in a variety of social situations</td>
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Social Skills are part of learning Social Competence.

**Social Competence**
- Overall ability to interact appropriately in a variety of social situations
- Learn to read social environments

**Social Skills**
- Ability to perform a list of discrete interactions appropriate to one social situation
- Each skill learned separately

Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence

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Need for Social Competence
Need for Social Competence
Social Emotional Learning
Social Emotional Learning
Success in School
Top 10 Skills as identified by a survey of 8,000 teachers

(Elliot & Grisham, 2006)
Success in School
Top 10 Skills as identified by a survey of 8,000 teachers

- Listen to others
- Follow the steps
- Follow the rules
- Ignore distractions
- Ask for help
- Take turns when you talk
- Get along with others
- Stay calm with others
- Be responsible for your behavior
- Do nice things for others

(Elliot & Grisham, 2006)
How Does Social Competence Help School Success?

“If we increase social skills, we see commensurate increases in academic learning. That doesn’t mean that social skills make you smarter; it means that these skills make you more amenable to learning.”

(Elliot, 2008)
Prepares Young People for Success in Adulthood
Prepares Young People for Success in Adulthood

Common list of soft skills employers want:

- Social skills/interests/involvement
- Communication skills
- Interpersonal abilities
- Problem solving
- Teamwork
- Adaptability/flexibility
Current Trends

- Of adults 22 and older, 73% lived with their parents
- 11% live independently and 73% of those individuals are satisfied with living independently
- 90% could not gain or keep employment
- 95% had difficulty making or keeping friends

(Seltzer & Krauss, 2002) and (NLTS2, 2009)
Employment Status of Individuals with Disabilities

- Only 6% of individuals with ASD have full-time employment
- Only 12% of individuals with AS/HFA have full-time employment
- 94% of those who are employed earn less than $25,000 annually
- 54% of those employed earn less than $5,000 annually
- Adults say that finding a job would improve their lives more than anything else

(Barnard et al., 2001) and (NLTS2, 2009)
Necessity of Friendship

- Although work is rewarding, most humans are fulfilled by social time
- Individuals with autism struggle with social competence, especially friendship skills
- Persons with autism want to have friends
- To help individuals with autism develop social competence, we need to understand the autism
Friendship Interactions: Out-of-High School Youth

Table 62. Friendship interactions of out-of-high school youth, by disability category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friendship interactions</th>
<th>Speech(language)</th>
<th>Learning disability impairment</th>
<th>Mental retardation</th>
<th>Emotional disturbance</th>
<th>Hearing impairment</th>
<th>Visual impairment</th>
<th>Orthopedic impairment</th>
<th>Other health impairment</th>
<th>Autism</th>
<th>Traumatic brain injury</th>
<th>Multiple disabilities</th>
<th>Deaf-blindness</th>
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<td>In the past year, percentage who saw friends outside of school or work at least weekly</td>
<td>92.4% (3.99)</td>
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<td>84.1% (5.34)</td>
<td>81.9% (7.42)</td>
<td>91.6% (7.20)</td>
<td>64.9% (8.74)</td>
<td>78.5% (13.77)</td>
<td>59.2% (13.00)</td>
<td>72.6% (13.21)</td>
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<td>Percentage communicating by computer at least daily</td>
<td>24.5% (4.83)</td>
<td>33.4% (5.51)</td>
<td>11.6% (3.96)</td>
<td>18.6% (4.56)</td>
<td>39.4% (6.85)</td>
<td>44.6% (8.80)</td>
<td>46.4% (5.09)</td>
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# Friendship Interactions: Out-of-High School Youth

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*(NLTS2, 2009)*

2nd Lowest
Friendship Interactions: Out-of-High School Youth

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**NLTS 2 Data: Individuals with ASD**

Phone calls from friends in the last 12 months:
- 15% daily
- 12% weekly
- 17% 1-2 a month
- 40% NEVER

Meet friends on their own in the last 12 months:
- 19% 4+ weekly
- 26% 1-3 times/week
- 17% sometimes, but not weekly
- 39% NEVER
Underlying Characteristics of ASD: Effect on the Development of Social Competence
Neurotypical Social Development

By Six Months Infants:

- Understand human vs. nonhuman
- Use objects for sensory information
- Begin using face & body movements to interact
- Use intellect & emotions to gain understanding
- Begin to understand intentions of others

Social Competence Considerations

Classic Autism

High Functioning Autism/Aspergers
Social Competence Considerations

Classic Autism  High Functioning Autism/Aspergers
Social Competence Considerations

There is a spectrum of social competence just as there is a spectrum of autism.
Social Competence Considerations

There is a spectrum of social competence just as there is a spectrum of autism.

- Age
- Ability levels
- Situation
- Audience
- Environment
- History

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Underlying Characteristics

• Social
• Communication
• Restricted patterns of behavior
• Sensory differences
• Cognitive differences
• Motor differences
• Emotional vulnerability
• Medical or biological differences
Characteristic: Social

- Difficulty with eye contact
- Difficulty understanding facial expressions and body language
- Problems understanding emotion
- Seem uninterested in interactions
Characteristic: Social

- Difficulty with eye contact
- Difficulty understanding facial expressions and body language
- Problems understanding emotion
- Seem uninterested in interactions
- Hard time taking turns
- Unaware of how they are perceived
- Don’t know hidden curriculum
- Difficulty with conversation: how to enter, topic choice, when to end
"Social interactions that come naturally to most people can be daunting for people with autism. As a child, I was like an animal that had no instincts to guide me; I just had to learn by trial and error. I was always observing, trying to work out the best way to behave, but I never fit in. I had to think about every social interaction…I was a scientist trying to figure out the ways of the natives."

_Thinking in Pictures_, Grandin, 2006
Characteristic: Restricted Patterns of Behavior, Interests, and Activities

- Routines and rituals
- Repetitive motor behaviors (physical, vocal)
- Need for sameness
- May not have interest in a variety of objects/toys/games/books
- Possible special interest areas
- Difficulty transitioning
Effect on Social Competence Development

“One day I went out into the road. In the back of my mind I sensed that a car was coming, but it didn’t mean danger to me. My obsession was too strong and I felt invincible. I had to see the speedometer! The man driving the car stopped, grabbed hold of me, and took me to the house. I couldn’t imagine what I had done—why was he so angry with me when all I wanted was to look inside his car? At this age I lacked an imagination…
Effect on Social Competence Development

…I simply could not picture things in my mind. It was many years before I could do so. I wasn’t afraid of moving cars because I couldn’t imagine that they could hit me—to me, a moving car was the same as a parked car, just an object without potential.”

There’s A Boy in Here, Barron & Barron, 2002
Characteristic: Communication

- Verbal/non-verbal
- Difficulty with expressive language
- Echolalia: immediate/delayed/scripts
- May babble, hum, make repetitive sounds
- Eye contact
- Expressive and receptive language levels may not match
Characteristic: Communication Continued

- May be very literal
- Trouble reading non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions, body language, or body space
- Difficulty understanding that other people may have a different perspective; interests
- May communicate with behaviors
Effect on Social Competence Development
Effect on Social Competence Development
Characteristic: Sensory Differences

- Responds in an unusual manner to sounds, pain, taste, light or color, temperature, smells
- Seeks or avoids activities that provide touch, pressure, or movement
- Makes noises such as humming or singing frequently
- Reacts with a fight or flight reaction due to anxiety
Effect on Social Competence Development
Effect on Social Competence Development
Characteristic: Cognitive Differences

- Classic: Usually delayed intellectual abilities
- HFA/Asperger: Usually typical to gifted abilities
- Strong rote memory; knows facts
- Special interests

- Poor organizational skills
- Literal understanding
- Difficulty with abstract
- Inability to generalize
- Attention problems
Effect on Social Competence Development
Effect on Social Competence Development
Characteristic:
Motor Differences

- Balance difficulties
- Poor fine motor skills; may write slowly or refuse to write
- Poor gross motor coordination; athletics can be difficult
- Awkward gait
- Unusual body postures, movements or facial expressions
- Trouble starting/finishing actions
Effect on Social Competence Development
Autism: Emotional Vulnerability

- Difficulty identifying and understanding feelings
- May become stressed in novel situations
- Doesn’t want to make mistakes
- Anxiety/depression
- Low self-esteem
- Rages/aggression/self-injury
Effect on Social Competence Development
Effect on Social Competence Development
Medical/Biological

- Examples may include: mood instability; eating/digestive issues; sleep challenges; attention difficulties; neurological disorders
- Learn what issues exist and what supports are needed
- Communicate between home, school, and medical personnel
- Research medical/biological issues
Effect on Social Competence Development
Effect on Social Competence Development
In Summary

• Understand the underlying characteristics of the individual and how they impact their social competence

• Work towards an overall framework for approaching social situations rather than just fragmented skills
Thanks for Learning with OCALI.

For further information on this topic, contact
Wendy Szakacs
OCALI Regional Coach
wendy_szakacs@ocali.org

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Next Webinar in the Series: Social Competence Assessment

Tuesday, May 10, 2011
References


References


• Shattuck, P. Ph.D., Assistant Professor at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis, MO, presented October 29, 2009 at Monarch Center for Autism on results of National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 (NLTS2).