

## How Classmates Can Facilitate Positive Social Behaviours for Children with ASD

Ainsley Boudreau, PhD  
Registered Psychologist

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### Goals

- How do social skills fit in the PBS framework at school?
- What do we know about social skills interventions?
- Specific example of school based intervention: Peer-mediated PRT
- Ideas for practical implementation

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### House Keeping

- Videos
  - consent and confidentiality

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### How Do Social Skills Interventions Fit the PBS Framework?

- Social communication difficulties are a core feature of ASD dx and crucial for positive long term outcomes
- Tier 1 or Tier 2
- Strengthen skills deficit in social skills

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What do we know about effective social interventions for children with ASD at school?



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### Types of Social Interventions

- Social stories
- Peer-mediated strategies
- Video-modeling
- Cognitive Behavioural Treatment
- Pivotal Response Treatment
- Joint attention

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## NOT ALL THAT GLITTERS IS GOLD




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## Review Article Bellini et al. 2007

### A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Social Skills Interventions for Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders

SCOTT BELLINI, JESSICA K. PETERS, LAUREN BENNER, AND ANDREA HOPF

#### ABSTRACT

Social skills deficits are a central feature of autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The meta-analysis of 50 single-subject design studies examined the effectiveness of school-based social skills interventions for children and adolescents with ASD. Intervention, experimental, and generalization effects were measured by computing the percentage of non-overlapping data points. The results suggest that social skills interventions have been internally

the interests of others. Although social skills deficits are a central feature of ASD, few children receive adequate social skills programming (Hume, Bellini, & Pratt, 2005). This is a troubling reality, especially considering that the presence of social impairments may portend the development of more detrimental outcomes, such as poor academic achievement,

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## Review Article by Reichow et al. 2010

J Autism Dev Disord (2010) 40:149–166  
DOI 10.1007/s10803-009-0042-0

#### ORIGINAL PAPER

### Social Skills Interventions for Individuals with Autism: Evaluation for Evidence-Based Practices within a Best Evidence Synthesis Framework

Brian Reichow · Fred R. Volkmar

Published online: 5 August 2009  
© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2009

**Abstract** This paper presents a best evidence synthesis of interventions to increase social behavior for individuals with autism. Sixty-six studies published in peer-reviewed journals between 2001 and July 2008 with 513 participants were included. The results are presented by the age of the individual receiving intervention and by delivery agent of intervention. The findings suggest there is much empirical evidence supporting many different treatments for the

“In sum, interventions that train peers to deliver treatment has much support and should be considered a recommended practice for all individuals with autism.”

Social difficulties should differentiate children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) from those with other developmental disorders (Klin et al. 2007) and are more heavily weighted than other areas in current (DSM-IV and ICD-10) diagnostic approaches (American Psychiatric Association 1994; World Health Organization 1994). Difficulties in the social area typically remain an area of great vulnerability even for the most cognitively able individuals on the aut-

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## National Standards Project Phase II (2015)

- Established
  - PRT
  - Peer Training
  - Social Skills Package

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## What we know

- **Increased dosage**
  - Frequent and throughout the day
- **Natural environments**
  - Naturalistic environments improve generalization of skills (Schreibman & Koegel; 2005)
- **Individualized to skill deficit**
  - Consider the starting point of skills of the youth
- **Intervention fidelity is critical** (Reichow et al., 2012)
  - Need easy to implement and effective
- **Peer involvement**
  - Promotes both generalization and enhances intensity Steiner et al. (2011)

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## HOW CLASSMATES CAN DELIVER SOCIAL SKILLS INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH ASD AT SCHOOL

Specific example: Peer-Implemented Pivotal Response Treatment

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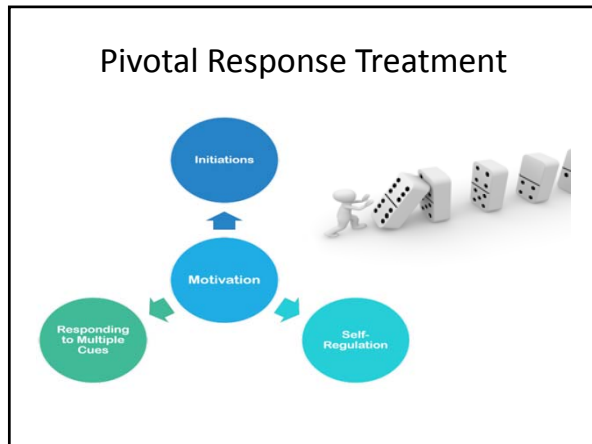
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### What is Peer-Mediated PRT?

- Application of PRT
- Child with ASD paired with:
  - Classmate to be trained as the interventionist
- PRT is taught in the context of play

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### Research on PM-PRT

Article

**Peer-Mediated Pivotal Response Treatment for Young Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Systematic Review**

Ainsley M. Bourdreau<sup>1</sup>, Penny Corkum<sup>1,2</sup>, Katelyn Meko<sup>2</sup>, and Isabel M. Smith<sup>1,2</sup>

Canadian Journal of School Psychology  
1–18  
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DOI: 10.1177/0829575515581156  
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## New Research on PM-PRT

BRIEF REPORT

**Brief Report:**  
**Improving Social Outcomes for Students with Autism at Recess Through Peer-Mediated Pivotal Response Training**

Matthew E. Brock<sup>1</sup> · Scott A. Dueker<sup>2</sup> · Mary A. Barczak<sup>2</sup>

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## Partnering with Schools and Families

Peer-Mediated Pivotal Response Treatment for Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder: Provider Perspectives on Acceptability, Feasibility, and Fit at School

Ainsley M. Boudreau, Penny Corkum, Isabel M. Smith

First Published May 29, 2018 | Research Article | <https://doi.org/10.1177/0829973518777417>

Article information

**Abstract**

Few effective school-based interventions that target social-communication skills are available for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The growing gap between interventions designed for use in research settings and the school environment is concerning for researchers and clinicians alike. Research methods




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## Surprising result...

- Children with ASD did not prefer to learn social skills from older children!

*"... when we have buddies with like older kids, I felt so uncomfortable."*

*"I would probably leave the older kids out because ... they may not feel comfortable talking to someone older than them unless the older kid is family. I just don't think that practicing with an older kid is a good idea."*

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### More about PM-PRT

- Empty classroom; standardized set of toys
- We look at whether the intervention helps children with ASD
  - Plays and talks more with their classmate

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### Peer Training

- Manual (Pierce & Schreibman; 1995)
  - 6 PM-PRT strategies (paying attention, choice, encourage conversation, taking turns, reinforce attempts, narrate play)
- PRT taught in the context of play
- Peers received training across ~3 weeks
- Focus on 2 pivotal areas:
  - Attention
  - Motivation




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### Training Format

- 1) The adult trainer explains the strategies
- 2) The play coach explains the strategies to the adult trainer
- 3) The strategies are modeled by adult trainer
- 4) The play coach role-plays the strategies with the adult trainer and given feedback
- 5) The play coach is paired with a student with ASD for PRT training and given feedback during the sessions

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## PM-PRT Strategies

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### Strategy 1

Paying Attention



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Give Choices



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## Giving Choices (and Paying Attention)

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## Strategy 3

### Ask Your Friend To Talk



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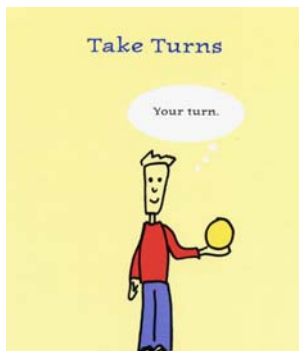
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## Strategy 4

### Take Turns



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### Strategy 5

"Good"  
"Nice Try"  
"Great Job"



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### Strategy 6

Tell What You  
Are Doing

I am drawing  
a cat.



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### Study Aims

- Can we train same-aged classmates in PRT?
- Does training classmates in PRT improve the social skills of children with ASD in the first year of school?



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## Participants

- Children with ASD (n=4)
  - parents and teachers
- Peer Coaches (n=4)
  - parents and teachers

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## Children with ASD: Characteristics at Baseline

Child	Age (yrs;mos)	Sex	VABS Communication SS	Estimated Cognitive Abilities (SS; test)
1	6;4	M	108	78; WPPSI-IV
2	6;0	M	95	106; WPPSI-IV
3	6;3	M	110	VCI: 67; VSI: 57; WPPSI-IV
4	6;9	M	54	58; DAS-2

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## Question 1: Can children in the first year of school implement PM-PRT at school?

- YES!
  - Baseline: 40%
  - Post-intervention: 68%
  - Follow-up: 73%

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Question 2: Do the social skills of children with ASD at school improve?

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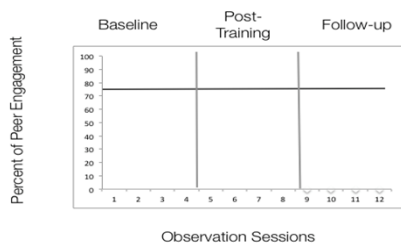
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How could we tell if the intervention worked?

- Take 10 minute video samples (probes)




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Social Skills:

Were children with ASD were **more engaged with their peers** after intervention?

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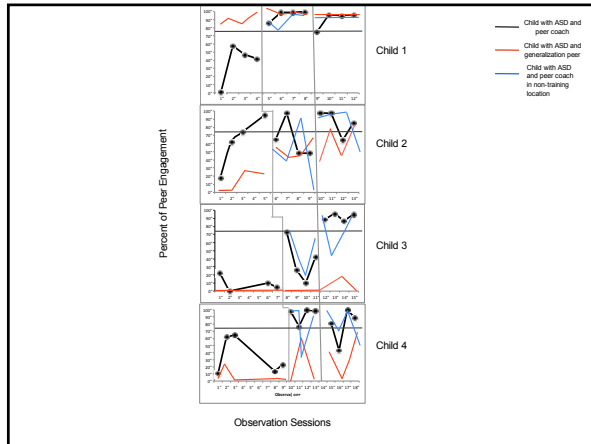
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### Social Skills:

Did the children with ASD **initiate more with their peers** after intervention?

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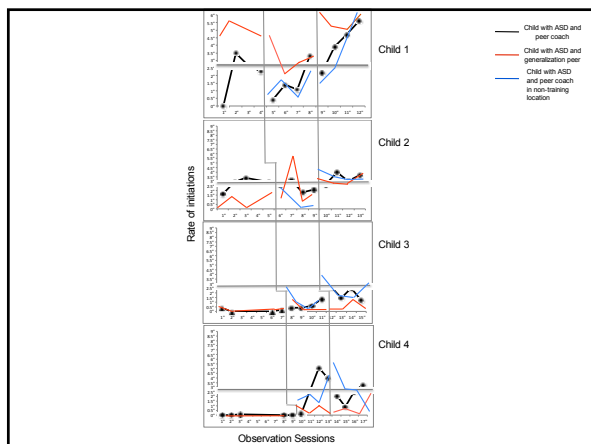
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Pre-Post Intervention Videos

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Baseline Child 3

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Post Intervention Child 3

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Follow-up Child 3

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Summary of Results

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**PRACTICAL TIPS**

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- Interactions between the play coach and child with ASD must be taught in most cases, as many children with ASD often ignore their peer
- Review social expectations (in positive way)
- Watch for patterns/consider target behaviour
- Model and directly teach positive social behaviours to play coach, child with ASD, or both
- Strategically arrange the environment
- Provide your child with positive play opportunities

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- Specific reinforcement procedure and schedules are required to implement the intervention and maintain the relationship
- Generalization and maintenance strategies must be programmed as part of the intervention
- Specific procedures should be programmed to fade and remove prompts
- Teaching strategies must be matched to the child's ability

(Taylor, 2001)

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Questions?

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## RESOURCES

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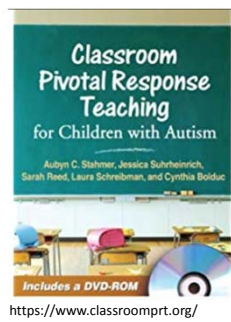
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## Tier 1 PBS




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## Recommended Readings



Cater, E. W., Cushing, L. S., & Kennedy, C. H. (2008). *Peer support strategies for improving all students' social lives and learning*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks.

Reid, D. H., & Parsons, M. B. (2002). *Facilitating play dates for children with autism and typically developing peers in natural settings: A training manual*. Morganton, NC: Habitative Management Consultants.



LEAP Preschool: An Inclusive Model of Early Autism Intervention  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v10B1H2dZA>

Teacher's Toolbox  
[http://www.ttoolbox.com/teacher\\_training.htm](http://www.ttoolbox.com/teacher_training.htm)

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## Recommended Readings



McKinnon, K. & Krempa J. L. (2002). *Social skills solutions: A hands-on manual for teaching social skills to children with autism*. New York: DRL Books, Inc.

McGinnis, E. (2011). *Skillstreaming in early childhood: A guide for teaching prosocial skills* (3rd ed.). Champaign, IL: Research Press Co.

McGinnis, E. (2011). *Skillstreaming the elementary school child: A guide for teaching prosocial skills* (3rd ed.). Champaign, IL: Research Press Co.

McGinnis, E. (2011). *Skillstreaming the adolescent: A guide for teaching prosocial skills* (3rd ed.). Champaign, IL: Research Press Co.

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## Additional Guidelines to Consider When Incorporating Peers into PRT

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## Teaching Strategies to Adopt to Promote Positive Social Skills

1. Begin by developing sharing exchanges between children.
2. Give opportunities to seek assistance from peers.
3. Increase meaningful verbal and nonverbal communication through establishing mutually reinforcing activities or toys which can form the focus of conversation exchanges.
4. Implement a buddy system.
5. Teach appropriate pragmatic social behaviors which may not necessarily be learned through observation alone.
6. Teach generalized phrases (i.e., "small talk") that can be used across common social scenarios to prevent the necessity for in-depth conversation.
7. Present new games and activities regularly to maintain motivation.
8. Expose the child with ASD to activities before they are presented to the peer or group (i.e., priming; Schreibman et al. 2000 ).

(Koegel & Koegel, 2006)

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