



Resource Sheet

Communication Skills Learning Program for Autistic Children

Module section / D

Introduction

This program aims at describing methods of assessment and training in communication skills. The range of communication difficulties of autistic children is impressive. At one end, there are pupils who don't speak at all and don't use gestures to communicate. At the other end, pupils with high functionality and Asperger's syndrome speak fluently but have difficulty expressing notions.

Goals

Before the teacher teaches communication skills, it is important for him / her to identify the goals of teaching. He / she must gather information about the pupil's communication skills. The means to collect this information are as follows:

- Interview (he / she collects information from an interview with the child's parents or people who know him / her well)
- Observation (the teacher observes the child either during everyday spontaneous situations or in situations he / she has designed to show certain behaviours to the pupil)
- Direct test (eg communication tips, analysis of adult-pupil or peer-to-peer interaction).

The chosen objectives must be realistic and achievable and prepare for steps towards more general goals.

Evaluation

The information collected by the teacher should be recorded in a communication skills assessment protocol.

Example:

Communication skills assessment protocol

Pupil:

Observation date:

Interview date:

BASIC COMMUNICATION FUNCTIONS	Ability Yes / No	Form How	Environment Where / Whom with	Vocabulary What he / she said	Comments
Asking					
1. Asking for an object					
2. Asking for the same object for the second or third time					
3. Asking for a favorite activity					
4. Asking for an activity's repetition (once more)					
5. Expressing one's preference when given a choice					
6. Asking for help					
7. Asking for permission					
Drawing attention					
1. Drawing attention when someone is looking at him / her and is near him / her					
2. Drawing attention when someone is looking at him / her and is far from him / her					

3. Learning how to draw attention when someone is not looking at him / her and is near him / her						
4. Learning how to draw attention when someone is not looking at him / her and is far from him / her						

Bibliography

Jordan, R & Powell, S (1990) The special curriculum needs of autistic children
 Quill, K (2000) Teaching children with autism