



Peer Support and Persons with ASD

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Research & Service




Objectives

- What can Peer Support look like with individuals with ASD?
- Why Peer Support works so well with individuals with ASD?
- What is the evidence based practice of Peer Mediated Instruction and Intervention?
- What are the steps to Peer Mediated Instruction and Intervention?
- How does the PAWSS Program work?





Peer Support Can Be ...

- Typically developing peers sharing the same space, the same focus, and having shared pleasure with individuals with ASD.
 Facilitating "ENGAGEMENT"
 (marital arts class, lunch group, play group)
- Typically developing peers assisting individuals with ASD to complete work, academic tasks, and group projects.
 Implementing STRATEGIES to meet a common goal
 (assisting with schedules, keeping fellow student on task, cueing a group participate when it is their turn)




Peer Support IS NOT...

- Peer support is NOT placing individuals with ASD with their peers in the same space at the same time and hoping some friendship will happen.
- Peer Support is NOT assuming that individuals with ASD will engage with their peers by participating in common activities such as: bowling, lunch, recess, and PE.
- Peer Support is NOT assuming that typically developing peers know how to “engage” a person with ASD.

Why is Peer Support successful?

- People are typically attracted to people of the same age and size (it’s a “human thing”).
- Individuals of similar ages demonstrate the skill sets that are the most natural for that particular age group.
- Ultimate the goal for individuals with ASD is to be successful in their interactions with their peers so when we practice this in context we don’t have to generalize it.
- Because it comes with structure.




It’s All About RELATING...

- KIDS relate to KIDS
 - Because they:
 - Talk the same talk
 - Have the same rules
 - Play the same play
 - Find similar things funny
- ADULTS relate to ADULTS
 - Because they:
 - Talk the same talk
 - Operate under the same norms
 - Find the same things entertaining
 - Have similar humor

“adults don’t know what it’s like to be a kid because they are not a kid anymore.”

“you will find the humor in this when you are older”




What is the research on Evidence Based Practices to improve skills for People with ASD telling us?

YES YES YES Peers can help People with ASD...


Let's Call it:

Peer Mediated Instruction and Intervention



What is Peer Mediated Instructions?


- Peer Mediated Instructions is systematically teaching typically developing peers how to engage and support children with ASD.
- Peer Mediated Instruction offers social opportunities to children with ASD with their peers in their natural environment.



National Professional Development Center on ASD


In 2010 Peer-Mediated Instruction and Intervention was researched by NPDC on ASD and the following Peer Mediation Modules were developed:


- PMII for Early Childhood
- PMII for Elementary, Middle, and High School



Steps of Peer Mediated Instruction and Intervention


- PMII Module
 - 1. Selecting Peers
 - 2. Training peers
 - 3. Supporting Peers
 - 4. Implementing in the classroom (natural environment)
 - 5. Extending Initiations across the Day






STEP 1 PPMI Model Selecting Peers

- PPMI Considerations when selecting peers:
 - Foundation of social skills, language, and get along with other peers
 - Interested in being a peer
 - Common interest




Step 2: PMII Model Training Peers

- Training Peers
 - Appreciating individual differences
 - Identifying preferred activities of individual with ASD
 - Identify strategies to support social interaction with the individual with ASD
- Middle and High School Students
 - Goals
 - Expectations
 - Information about ASD




Step 3: PMII Model Supporting Peers

- Supporting Peers
 - Set up a structured time for interaction
 - Use various strategies to get the individual with ASD to demonstrate the social skill.
 - Reinforce the behaviors you want to see.
 - Prompt the peers to use the strategies as needed.




Step 4: PMII Model Implementing in the Classroom and Natural Environment

- Supportive social environment
- Learning Opportunities (what activities)
- Monitoring social interactions
- Use of prompts and reinforcement




Step 5: PMII Model Extending Initiation across the Day

- This phase is to work on generalization with the goal of having interaction:
 - Occur more frequently
 - Occur in more situations
 - With a variety of people





**More information
about this Module:**

- <http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/content/peer-mediated-instruction-and-intervention>




The good NEWS is...

- While we were waiting for the research to prove that “PEERS indeed can support PEERS” ..
- We created a Program called PAWSS...which is a program about “Kids Helping Kids”


**What we had learned
through experience:**

- People with ASD are people first and they happen to have ASD which comes second.
- People innately like being with and learning from other people.
- When people have information about why a person is acting differently they have more compassion around that person.




We needed a Program too...


- Help teach the peers at camp to interact with our campers with ASD?
- Help our Counselors In Training (those with ASD and those without) support and work together?
- Help us incorporate peers into pool sensory / social groups?
- Help us utilize peers/students that wanted to learn about ASD in adult community classes?



The "PAWSS" Creation:


- We created it because we needed it.
- We keep using it because it works.
- Now the research is calling it evidence based!





Pawss

"A Program About Kids Helping Kids"






Steps to our success...


1. Selecting the peers
2. Training the peers
3. Structuring the activity and environment
4. Reinforcing the peer
5. Encouraging generalization






1. Selecting the peers:


- Common interests
- Be willing to slow down, be patient, and attend to others
- Communicate with individuals at their peer level
- Desire to be a supportive peer
- Can siblings be positive peer support?






2. Training the Peers

- Formal vs. Informal
- Time varies between 15 minutes to 3 hours.
- How much is TOO much information
- Training should be done at the peer's developmental level
- Practice needs to be included in the training
- Training content is dependent on what we want them to do.
- Remember peers are kids too, reinforce them every step of the way.




3. Structuring the Activity and Environment

- Activities seem to be the most successful when:
 - Have a clear beginning and ending.
 - Have visual supports
 - The materials are organized and controlled
 - The activities include something that is motivating



4. Reinforcing Peers

- Once peers understand what to do, they need to be reinforced for doing it.
- Reinforces can include praise, tokens, stickers, but it must be reinforcing for them.
- Reinforcements can be as small or as big as they need to be



5. Encouraging Generalization

In a structured way:

- moving the peer support to another environment
- Moving the peer support to another peer
- Moving the peer support to use different materials to support the learning
- Moving the peer support to assist with another skill set.

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“...a child with Autism's love of other people will depend on other people doing what he loves.” (Play Project)



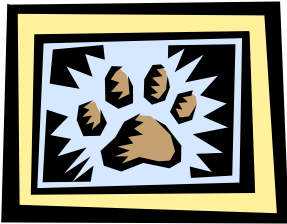
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Barriers to Peer Support...

- Time constraints for training
- Difficulty in the time commitment
- The difference of opinion in using labels
- The value that our society places on learning from people who are different might not be as high as the value of learning a skill
- Openness by educators to recognize sometimes kids can support people with autism more than we can
- Recognize when peer support is not working and figure out how to support success
- Perpetuating the myth that people with autism want to be alone

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PAWSS Training Program



This is not the complete program!

What can Kids like you do to help Kids with Autism and Aspergers?



Training for Kids



Campers and CIT's that come to Camp Rising Sun bring their:

"GIFTS"
And
"CHALLENGES"




What are these people's gifts and challenges?






What are your Gifts?

sports	soccer	reading
piano	karate	crowds
dancing	theater	drawing
friends	swimming	flexibility
playing	singing	horses
math	animal care	eating
waiting	cooking	being alone
running	patience	vacations



You all have different gifts...

**Kids with ASD
will also have
different gifts.**




People with Autism's gift may be:

- Knowing a lot of information about a certain topic.
- They may be very honest.
- They may be really good swimmers.
- They may be really smart in school.
- They may be really funny.
- Being able to build cool things.




What are your Challenges?


sports	soccer	reading
piano	karate	crowds
dancing	theater	drawing
friends	swimming	flexibility
playing	singing	horses
math	animal care	eating
waiting	cooking	being alone
running	patience	vacations



People with ASD are a bit different in:



1. Their social skills
2. Their communication
3. Their behavior




This could make life a little HARD..

Social is being with other people and making friends.

Communication is sending and receiving a message with words or your body.

Behavior is knowing how to act in different situations.




Quotes from Kids with Autism and Aspergers

"I flap my hands, I call it zooming I'm not sure why I just do!"


"Don't keep talking, I am trying to find my words"

"I like to talk about Mario, I think it is the most interesting thing ever, I think others should think so too."




Having a difference with your social skills can make it a little hard to:

- Make a friend
- Know how close to stand to someone
- Know how to take turns
- (etc.)



Having a difference with your communication can make it a little hard to:


- Talk: some kids only make noises, some use pictures, some use machines, some kids talk
- Understand what other kids are trying to say
- (etc.)



Having a difference with your behavior can make it a little hard to:

- Act like other kids in certain situations
- (etc.)

PAWSS: What you can do...




P = Position

Sometimes you need to stand close to a kid with Autism or Aspergers so they know you want to talk or play.

Taylor 2009

PAWSS: What you can do...



A = Ask

Sometimes it's easier if you ask them to join in the play or start the conversation. Keep asking because they might say NO the first time.

Taylor 2009

PAWSS: What you can do...



W = Wait

Sometimes you need to wait for the person with Autism or Aspergers to find their words, or think of a response or make a decision. Waiting is important.

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PAWSS: What you can do...



S= Short

Sometimes a short game or a short conversation is the best.

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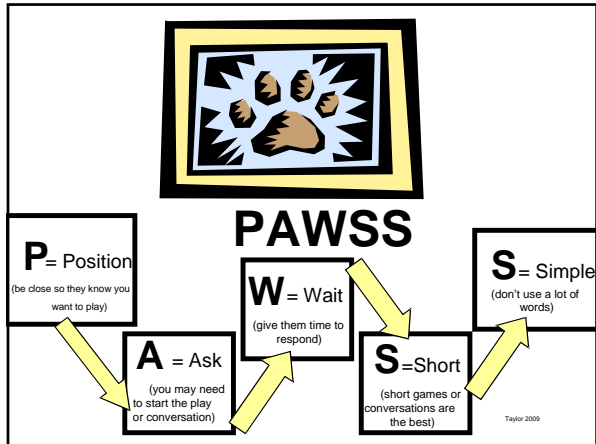
PAWSS: What you can do...



S= Simple

It's best to keep your language simple, that means don't use a lot of words.


Taylor 2009





Role Play Scenarios

- CIT's = read the scenario
- Team Leaders = play the camper with Autism or Aspergers
- Campers = use PAWSS to support your friend.



When you use PAWSS you can:




Have FUN!!!!

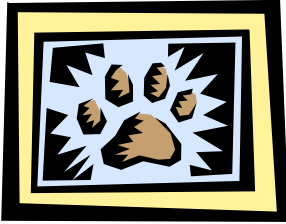
Make New Friends!!!

Do New Things!!!


And make a difference in this world!!!



PAWSS Training Program




This is not the complete program!




Ways to Adapt PAWSS

- Talk to the adults who will be there to reinforce the peers
- Give young people one set of directions to do
- Start with 1 or 2 peers and then expand
- Use pieces of the program



Real Questions From Real Kids

- 1) Are you born with Autism?
- 2) Why does Autism affect some people and not others?
- 3) At what age do you usually get Autism?
- 4) If we share our food will I get Autism too?
- 5) Why are there different levels of Autism? Like some can't talk very well.




Real Questions From Real Kids

- 6) What causes ASD?
- 7) How does it (Autism) affect you in different ways?
- 8) Can children with Autism understand things through music/color/play therapy?
- 9) Is it possible for Autism to be conquered?
- 10) What part of your brain did not connect up?



Everybody can Make a Difference...





Additional Resources

- Peer Mediated Instruction and Intervention
<http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/content/peer-mediated-instruction-and-intervention>
- Autism Internet Modules
http://www.autisminetmodules.org/user_mod.php
- Peer Buddy Program
<http://www.ablongman.com/hughes1e/getstarted.htm>
