

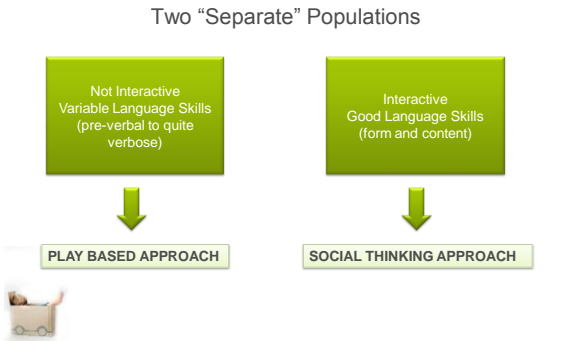
# What's Play Got To Do With It?

From Engagement to Social Thinking

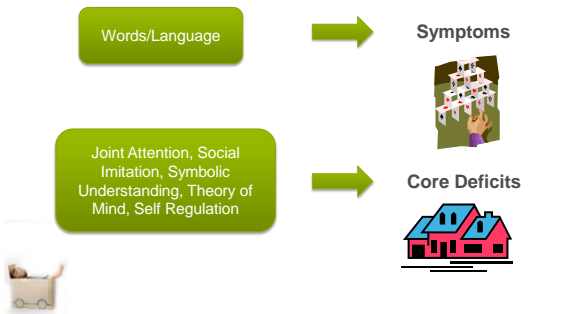
Connect 2 Communicate

Social Communication Specialists  
Speech Therapy Clinic, APC

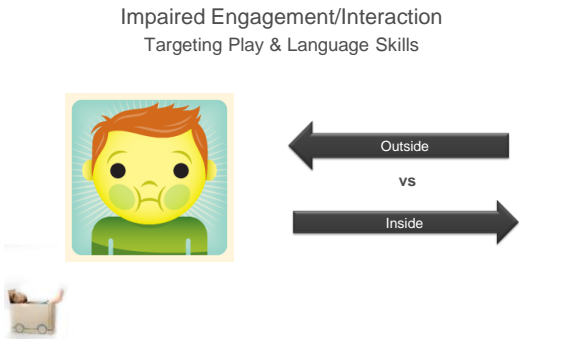
## It all began with . . . . .



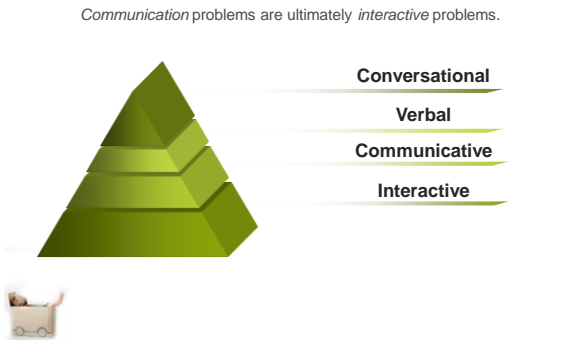
## What's My Goal For Intervention?



## Which Direction??



## MacDonald's Communication Continuum



## Communicating Partners Program

- Dr. James MacDonald
  - *Play To Talk*, 2007
  - Program is: responsive, behavioral, for partners, exercise
  - Integrated Developmental Program
  - Evidence-Based and Clinically Validated
-

# Communicating Partners Program

## Stages of Communication Development

- Interactive Turn-taking** - Child has back-and-forth style with others
- Nonverbal Communication** - Child exchanges purposeful and clear messages
- Social Language** - Child uses words socially, not just to get needs met
- Conversation** - Child has back-and-forth style with language
- Friendship & Civil Behavior** - Child has social sensitivity and emotional control



# Communicating Partners Program

## Communication Strategy

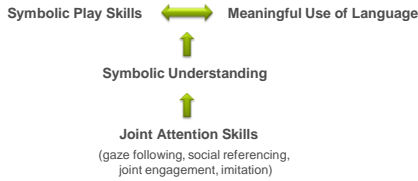
## What it Means

- Balance** - Do and say as much as the child, allow child time to participate.
- Match** - Talk and act in ways that are possible for the child.
- Respond** - 'Reply' to a child's movements, sounds and words.
- Share Control** - Each partner has an impact on the other; each has *some* control.
- Play and Affirm** - Let the child see that you enjoy and value him just as he is.



# Play Skills and Social Thinking Skills

"Children's ability to use language in a functional and flexible manner coincides with the emergence of predictable symbolic play routines." (Westby 1980)



# Research

## Assessment of Cognitive and Language Abilities Through Play

Westby, C.E. (1980) Assessment of cognitive and language abilities through play. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 11, 154-168.

"In no evaluation has a child's meaningful use of language been above his/her cognitive play level."

"Unless the child possesses the cognitive prerequisites for the linguistic structures he is learning, he will not use them in actual interpersonal situations."

Associated with decontextualization is the ability to take another's perspective.



# Westby Symbolic Play Scale Summary

AGE	PROPS	THEMES	Summary of Symbolic Physical ORGANIZATION	ROLES	LANGUAGE USE IN PLAY	
by 18 months	uses one realistic object as a base	Symbolic everyday activities in which child or some participant (e.g., animal, shopping)	Alert, isolated, personal actions	metonymically present (e.g., child holds doll instead of face)	language used to get and maintain toys and doll, imitative utterances (e.g., "milk", "milk", "milk")	
by 22 months	uses two realistic objects as a base	Symbolic everyday activities that compare to (e.g., cooking, washing)	actions that related to or perform actions on two people (e.g., one person has food, plate, fork, mother, then doll)	child one or dolls and others (i.e., dolls doll or caregiver)	uses word combinations to comment on toys or action, uses word for objects, words, feelings ("milk", "milk", "milk", "milk")	
by 24 months	uses several realistic objects		multidirectional combinations of steps (e.g., put doll in tub, apply soap, take doll out and dry)		talks to doll directly, describes content of his doll actions (e.g., "Tobby shopping"), uses phrases and sentences for tag and pseudoconversations	
by 30 months		concerns that less frequently represented or stereotypically thematic representations (e.g., shopping, doctor)		emerging limited doll action (i.e., doll acts)	talks to doll and commenting on doll's actions (narrative or descriptive)	
by 3 years		observed, but are personally experienced activities (e.g., shopping, doctor, veterinarian, play, fireworks, occupational roles, non-realistic/imaginal activities)	integrated sequences of multidirectional events (e.g., prepare food, eat table, use fork, clear table, wash dishes)	child talks to doll in response to doll's action (e.g., "doll eat soup", "Oh, you're a cow!").	uses complete sentences with past tense and future tense, children play comment on what they have just completed or what they will do next (e.g., "Tobby's finished", "The giraffe will drink")	
by 3:02 years	imitative props, real objects, and play substitutes			attributes emotions and desires to dolls, responds to hearing what dolls (doll) can do in particular (doll) do (doll) can do (shopping)	uses dialogue for dolls and multidirectional activities (e.g., "No, no!", "yes, yes" in order to continue and negotiate)	
by 4 years	imaginary props (language and gestures help use the scenes)	Symbolic fantasy themes (e.g., Batman, Wonder Woman, Christmas, etc.), "vocabulary" themes, creature	planned play events with counter-factual responses (e.g., doll) decided to play "kitchen party" and other imaginary props and actions (roles)	child or doll has multiple roles (teacher, wife, doctor, firefighter, husband, father)	uses language to plan and narrate the story line, use of connecting words as, because, therefore	
by 5 years	language and gestures use carry the play without props	create novel fantasy characters and plots	multiple planned sequences (plans for self and other players)	child can handle two or more dolls in complementary roles (dolls are doctor and patient)	attributes thoughts and plans to dolls (more than one child part doll) (doll is teacher, wife, doctor)	child focuses on planning and narrating story line, uses sentences with temporal markers, when, where, which, before, last, next



# Westby Symbolic Play Scale Summary

## Decontextualization – What props are used in pretend play?

*life-like props -> one object represents another -> uses language*

## Roles or Self/Other Relations - What roles does the child take and give to toys and other people?

*Self as agent -> transforms self into role -> reciprocal role-taking with dolls -> more than one role per doll*

## Themes – What schemas/scripts does the child represent?

*familiar/everyday -> observed events -> highly imaginative*

## Organization – How coherent and logical are the schemas/scripts?

*short isolated -> evolving episode -> several sequences/scripts simultaneously*



## Research

### Play and Autism: Facilitating Symbolic Understanding

Preissler, M.A. (2006) In D.G. Singer, R.M. Golinkoff, & K. Hirsch-Pasek (Eds.), *Play = Learning: How play motivates and enhances children's cognitive and social Emotional growth*. New York: Oxford

"Play is an effective modality to teach children the precursors to symbolic thinking and the dynamics of social interaction."

As children engage in pretend play they become able to think about meanings independent of the objects they represent. Hence, symbolic play maintains a crucial role in the development of abstract thought."



## Research

### Make-Believe Play: Wellspring for Development of Self-Regulation

Berk, L.E., Mann, T.D., & Ogan, A.T. (2006) In D.G. Singer, R.M. Golinkoff, & K. Hirsch-Pasek (Eds.), *Play = Learning: How play motivates and enhances children's cognitive and social-emotional growth*. New York: Oxford

"... make-believe play, is, above all, rule-based play."

"These complementary ingredients of make-believe play [decontextualization and its rule-based nature] suggest that it is a supreme contributor to the development of self-regulation."

Children with weak play skills who receive adult encouragement to engage in make-believe show gains in socio-dramatic play, imaginativeness of play content, impulse control, coherence of storytelling and the capacity to empathize with others.

"... the quality of adult-child social engagement both within and outside make-believe play has much to do with the potential of such play to blossom into a cognitively and socially constructive force that leads development forward."

"Rich opportunities for make-believe... are among the best ways to ensure that young children acquire the self-regulatory skills essential for succeeding in school, academically and socially."



## Research

### Conversation, Pretense and Theory of Mind

Harris, P.L., (2005) In Astington, J.W., & Baird, J.A. (Eds.), *Why Language Matters For Theory of Mind*. New York: Oxford

Two activities facilitate children's understanding of mind, conversation and pretend play.

Studies indicate that discourse emphasizing different points of view with regard to the same event or object, is sufficient to lead to an improvement in children's performance on standard Theory of Mind tasks.

Role play (a child's ability to set aside their own identity and act out the part of another person) correlates with improved performance on standard TOM tasks. Amount of pretend play, diversity of themes, impersonation of a machine and solitary pretend play did not correlate with measures of performance on TOM tasks.

"... children learn in two relatively separate separate and distinct contexts: when engaged in conversation and when engaged in pretend play, especially role-play."



## So??

When we design our intervention to address core deficits, we are laying the foundation for good social thinking skills!



## Social Thinking Approach

expected/unexpected behaviors, good thought/odd thoughts, body and brain in/out of the group, thinking with my eyes, sharing an imagination, wondering, thinking about what other people are thinking about, being a "thinking of you" kid vs. being a "just me" kid, smart guess/wacky guess, figuring out people's plans, figuring out people's intentions . . . .



## Social Thinking and Play

We know play can help us to develop *social thinking skills* . . .

I wonder if we can use social thinking to help us develop play skills??



## Connect 2 Communicate

	SIPT	EPT	IIPT
Play	→		
Communicating Partners	→		
	Social Thinking →		



## Connect 2 Communicate



### Tools

- MacDonald's Adult/Child Relationship Map
- M. G. Winner's Perspective Taking Spectrum
- Wolfberg's Integrated Play Group Questionnaire
- Westby's Play Scale



## Connect 2 Communicate Profile Summary

Connect 2 Communicate Profile Summary

Communicative Specialists  
New Therapy Center, LLC

Client Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### MacDonald's Communication Continuum

Interactive — Communicative — Verbal — Conversational

#### M. G. Winner's Perspective Taking Spectrum

Severely Impaired PT  
Emerging PT  
Impaired Interactive PT

#### Wolfberg's Play Profile

Social Dimension	Social Play Style
Isolate	Active-Odd
Orientation-Onlooker	Passive
Parallel Proximity	Alloof
Common Focus	Other

#### Carol Westby's Play Scale

Presymbolic	Manipulation/Sensory	Functional		
Symbolic Level	Decontextualization	Thematic Content	Organization	Rules (ToM)
I: 17-19 mos				
II: 19-22 mos				
III: 2 years				
IV: 2 1/2 years				
V: 3 years				
VI: 3 - 3 1/2 years				
VII: 3 1/2 - 4 years				
VIII: 5 years				



## Typical Session Structure

### TABLE TIME



## Typical Session Structure

### PLAY TIME



Unstructured Play Utilizing CP Strategies



## Therapy Session Handout

#### Group Date \_\_\_\_\_

In today's group we created/had the opportunity to emphasize the following social thinking concepts:

- Expected/Unexpected Behaviors
- You can change my feelings
- Big Problem - Little Problem
- Whole body listening
- Thinking with our eyes
- Thinking about what others are thinking
- Body or brain is in/out of the group
- Figuring out other people's plans
- Smart guess - wacky guess
- Flexible brain/flexible thinking
- Sharing an imagination
- World wonders/social wonders



Notes/Remember this week . . . . .

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Play skills emphasized:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## References

- Astington, J.W., & Baird, J.A. (2005). *Why language matters for theory of mind*. New York: Oxford University Press.
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- Wolffberg, P.J. (2003). *Peer play and the autism spectrum: The art of guiding children's socialization and imagination*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing.



## Resources



Thank You

[www.socialcommunicationspecialists.com](http://www.socialcommunicationspecialists.com)

