

Module: Social Skills Groups

Overview of Social Skills Groups

Collet-Klingenberg, L. (2009). *Overview of social skills groups*. Madison, WI: The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, Waisman Center, University of Wisconsin.

Social skills groups are used to teach individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) ways to appropriately interact with typically developing peers. Social skills groups typically involve small groups of two to eight individuals with disabilities and a teacher or adult facilitator. Most social skill group meetings include instruction, role-playing or practice, and feedback to help learners with ASD acquire and practice skills to promote positive social interactions with peers.

Evidence

This practice meets evidence-based criteria with six studies (two group; four single-subject design) in the social domain across preschool, elementary, and secondary age ranges.

With what ages are social skills groups effective?

Within the evidence-base, studies included learners as young as 4 and as old as 12 years of age. Thus, social skills groups have the potential to be an effective practice with all learners. Research also exists that supports its use with adult learners.

What skills or intervention goals can be addressed with social skills groups?

In the evidence base, social skills group training targeted the following: perspective-taking, conversation skills, friendship skills, problem-solving, social competence, emotion recognition, theory of mind, and problem-solving. In addition, specific interaction skills such as initiation, responding, maintaining, greeting, giving/accepting compliments, turn taking, sharing, asking for help, offering help, and including others were also improved through the use of social skills groups.

In what settings can social skills groups be effectively used?

In the evidence base, training took place in a variety of school and clinic settings and included both inclusive and non-inclusive settings.

Evidence Base

The studies cited in this section provide the basis upon which this practice was determined to meet the NPDC on ASD's criteria as an evidence-based practice. This list is not exhaustive; other quality studies may exist that were not included.

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Preschool

Kroeger, K. A., Schultz, J. R., & Newsom, C. (2007). A comparison of two group-delivered social skills programs for young children with autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 37*(5), 808-817.

Elementary

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Solomon, M., Goodlin-Jones, B., & Anders, T. F. (2004). A social adjustment enhancement intervention for high functioning autism, Asperger's syndrome, and pervasive developmental disorder NOS. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 34*, 649-668.

Secondary

Solomon, M., Goodlin-Jones, B., & Anders, T. F. (2004). A social adjustment enhancement intervention for high functioning autism, Asperger's syndrome, and pervasive developmental disorder NOS. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 34*, 649-668.

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