FIRSTPATH
AUTISM

Lesson Guide

18. Conversation Training – Familiar Fill-ins

Overview

Teaches:	Beginning conversation (verbal interaction) skills. Teaches the very basic beginning concept of "when I say something, you respond"; "when you say something, I respond".
Before beginning:	The child should have had some repeated exposure to songs, phrases, books, etc., since the beginning of this lesson relies on their familiarity with those things. Also, as the lesson advances, some previous mastery of targets from the Feature-Function-Class lesson can be generalized across this lesson. The child should be able to annunciate language clearly enough for others to understand: it will make this lesson much easier to teach and progress easier to determine.
Why it's important:	Beginning conversation skills are needed to build more advanced conversation skills, and to teach some of the basic rules for interacting verbally with others. Skills built during this lesson will also help the child to participate in song time and Circle Time at school.
Materials needed:	General application of this lesson will not require physical materials. However, alternative methods or troubleshooting techniques may use books, videos, cue cards, etc.
Generalization activities:	Singing songs, story time/reading books, general conversations, Circle Time at school, peer play.

Steps

Prepare

1. Sit facing the child, in a quiet place free of distractions.
2. Have several rewards and highly preferred items ready and available.
3. Have data collection ready.
4. Make sure the child is ready to attend, ideally looking at teacher and not engaging in any other activities.

Teach

1. Say the first few words in a familiar phrase and then pause, leaving the phrase incomplete (i.e., leave off the last word or two).
2. Wait 3-5 seconds for child to respond. A correct response is saying the missing word(s).
3. Provide feedback on how the child responded:

   Correct response: enthusiastic praise and/or give the child his chosen reinforcer; also, continuing along with the song or story may provide a more natural reinforcer in this lesson—if that works, do that and then provide the other reward at the end of the song/story

   Incorrect or No response: corrective feedback, model or prompt of correct response

4. Record data.
5. Begin again at step 1.

Examples include:

Correct response	Incorrect response	No response
Teacher: "The wheels on the…." Child: "Bus!"	Teacher: "The wheels on the…." Child: "Car?"	Teacher: "The wheels on the…." Child: (no response)

Teacher: "…go round and round! Round and round! Round and round! Yay--great job saying 'bus'!" (and delivers reinforcer)	Teacher: "Oops. A car does have wheels, but we are singing the bus song. The wheels on the bus go round and round. Let's try again." (starts at beginning; does not deliver reinforcer at this time)	Teacher: "Hey, I want you to sing with me! The wheels on the bus go round and round. Let's start again." (starts at beginning; does not deliver reinforcer at this time)

TYPICAL ORDER OF LEARNING TARGETS

NOTE: Targets in this lesson will vary greatly based on what each child has been regularly exposed to, and is therefore familiar with. Choose songs or instructions or parts of a book that the child knows well and likes. The targets below are provided for example only

1. (while singing) "The itsy bitsy___(spider)____"
2. (while singing) "The wheels on the _____(bus)____"
3. (while singing) "If you're happy and you know it____(clap your hands)____"

(In addition to songs, familiar instructions, characters, and spoken phrases may also be used; examples below)

1. "Time to eat! Wash your __(hands)_____."

2. "We're going outside! Put on your ____(shoes)____."

3. "Look! It's Thomas the ____(Train)_____."

4. "You have Winnie the ___(Pooh)_____."

5. "I see Dora the ____(Explorer)___!"

6. "A duck says____(quack quack)."

7. "I need you to sit criss-cross __(applesauce)__."