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UNDERSTANDING
MEANINGFUL
COMMUNICATION/
CONVERSATION SKILLS

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY, 2019

UNDERSTANDING MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION/CONVERSATION SKILLS

Vishal is a sweet and friendly 7-year-old child. He really tries hard to make connections with his friends, although;

- Almost always ends up saying the wrong thing at the wrong time
- He may laugh inappropriately
- He may start talking about something else which off the topic of discussion
- His stories don't always make sense
- He has a tendency to use repetitive language with restricted ideas

Because of which all his peers are annoyed of him or want to avoid talking to him.

Let's take a minute to think about what goes into talking or having a conversation? Talking or communicating with another person sounds like a simple job. It's just another regular thing we do! Right? Oh yes! It is that, and much more!

It's safe to say that language and conversation is key to communication. But they form just the tip of the iceberg. There is a lot more beneath the surface and a lot more that goes into having effective social communication. It is a much more complex skills, requiring a bunch of other skills to be in place so as to promote efficient social participation. For effective Social communication and conversation skills a child must have:

- Adequate sensory and emotional regulation: i.e. he/she must be in an optimum zone of attention and arousal to interact within the environment
- Knowledge and meaningful use of words and language for different reasons
- Basic social skills such as turn taking, waiting



“It's safe to say that language and conversation is key to communication. But they form just the tip of the iceberg. There is a lot more beneath the surface and a lot more that goes into having effective social communication.”

- Awareness of social norms like;
 1. Understanding how close you need to stand when talking to someone
 2. Introducing your topic before you start talking about it
 3. Staying on topic
 4. Using gestures and body language, like pointing or shrugging
 5. Using facial expressions and eye contact
- An understanding to change words, language, tone of voice as per the person he/she is talking to, or the situation/place you he/she is in
- Ability to decide what information to share, when and with whom
- Perspective taking: Thinking about what the opposite person is thinking, feeling or trying to communicate through gestures

Developmentally, most children learn these skills through their life experiences and interaction with peers while growing up. They may break some of these rules as they learn. **But it is these skills that aid them to engage in healthy social participation, promote emotional and behavioral regulation with peers and most importantly develop sustainable friendships.**

Incase, your child has challenges in the above skills he/she may have trouble talking with others or making friends. He/she may have difficulty in regulating self in various social settings. Eventually, impacting his/her social, emotional and holistic development. Hence, it is crucial that we help our children build on these essential skills. Children and adults with social communication disorder, Asperger's syndrome, Autism Spectrum disorder, Pervasive developmental disorder, Attention deficit disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or Sensory Processing Disorder are likely to have difficulties with these skills.

Vishal's challenges also lie in his Social communication skills -

- He is unable to use language meaningfully to talk to his friends, tell them about his favorite game, ask his teacher permission to drink water or narrate to his parents about what happened in school
- He has difficulty with changing his tone of voice; such that he shouts in the playgrounds but does the same even when talking in the classroom
- He does not understand the concept of using voice modulation depending on the place he is in
- Vishal also has challenges in following basic social skills and rules for storytelling
- He will always initiate a conversation with his friends using the same question i.e. "Where do you live?" His friends are all familiar to this habit and they laugh at him, in response to which

Vishal bursts out laughing too

- He does not realise that his friends find him silly
- He is confused as to why no one wants to play with him. He feels sad and this impacts his self-esteem and confidence

The Good news is that most of these children like Vishal can be taught the Social communication skills! These skills can be broken down, simplified and inculcated in our children too, and in eventuality generalized to various social situations.

“Developmentally, most children learn these skills, through their life experiences and interaction with peers, while growing up. ”



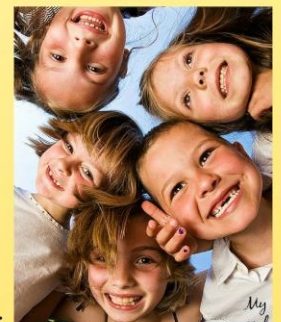
SOCIAL CONNECTIONS- FOUNDATIONS AND STRATEGIES

MARCH 31, 2019

9 AM TO 5 PM

CONTENTS TO BE COVERED-

- How Social Communication and Conversation impacts Social Skills.
- Building Blocks of communication and conversation skills.
- Identify the area of challenges.
- Identify an individualised goal for your child.
- Learn practical and effective strategies to encourage social interactions with adults and peers.



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CONTACT US TO KNOW ABOUT EARLY BIRD AND GROUP CHARGES

If you think that your child also faces similar issues like Vishal or has challenges with social participation and peer engagement then we would love to have you join us on the 31st of March, Sunday, for a day long workshop on Social communication and conversation skills. Our in house speakers Rachana Karande and Anshumala Shukla, along with our guest speaker Merzia Maskati (Speech therapist) are all set to share their knowledge and experience to help walk you all through the foundational skills and building blocks of social communication. They will teach you ways to identify the problem areas in the social communication skills of your child. Together with you set specific goals for your child. And will enable you'll with practical ideas and strategies to achieve the goals you have set for your child.

For more information feel free to contact us and get in touch with our speakers at Reach! Looking forward to seeing you there!

For any question or concerns regarding the newsletter please write to us on: reachtherapycenterforchildren@gmail.com

- Simoni Parikh
Occupational therapist
Reach Therapy Center for Children

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