



# Staying Ahead of The ASD Game: Communication Transitions

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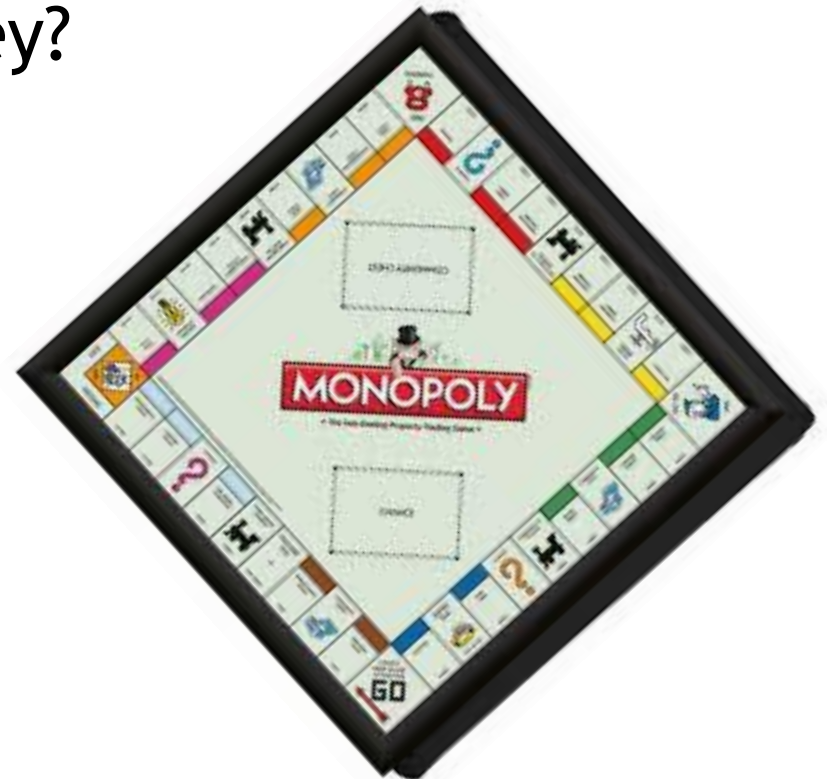
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# What's The Game?

- Who are the players?
- How do we start this game and who do we turn to?
- Where are the landing points / transitions?
- How do we win the journey?



# Before starting the game, know the new DSM-5 Classifications for ASD

Severity Level for ASD	Social Communication	Restricted interests & repetitive behaviors
<p><b>Level 3</b></p> <p>'Requiring very substantial support'                      Limited initiations, minimal response to others, likely under 20 words, unusual approach to meet needs.</p>	<p>Severe deficits in verbal and nonverbal social communication skills cause severe impairments in functioning; very limited initiation of social interactions and minimal response to social overtures from others.</p>	<p>Preoccupations, fixated rituals and/or repetitive behaviors markedly interfere with functioning in all spheres. Marked distress when rituals or routines are interrupted; very difficult to redirect from fixated interest or returns to it quickly.</p>
<p><b>Level 2</b></p> <p>'Requiring substantial support'                      Limited initiations and unusual responses, uses simple sentences, narrow interests, odd nonverbally.</p>	<p>Marked deficits in verbal and nonverbal social communication skills; social impairments apparent even with supports in place; limited initiation of social interactions and reduced or abnormal response to social overtures from others.</p>	<p>RRBs and/or preoccupations or fixated interests appear frequently enough to be obvious to the casual observer and interfere with functioning in a variety of contexts. Distress or frustration is apparent when RRB's are interrupted; difficult to redirect from fixated interest.</p>
<p><b>Level 1</b></p> <p>'Requiring support'                      Difficulty initiating, decreased interest in socialization, speaks in complete sentences but conversation often fails &amp; making friends is difficult.</p>	<p>Without supports in place, deficits in social communication cause noticeable impairments. Has difficulty initiating social interactions and demonstrates clear examples of atypical or unsuccessful responses to social overtures of others. May appear to have decreased interest in social interactions.</p>	<p>Rituals and repetitive behaviors (RRB's) cause significant interference with functioning in one or more contexts. Resists attempts by others to interrupt RRB's or to be redirected from fixated interest.</p>

# The Diagnosis of ASD in the DSM-5

(Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

- To receive a diagnosis of autism, all 3 deficits for social impairment must be present.
  1. Deficit in social-emotional reciprocity including in social contexts.
  2. Deficit in communication behaviors in social interactions such as poor integration of verbal and nonverbal communication including but not limited to abnormal eye contact and facial expressions, difficulty understanding, and use of gestures in social contexts.
  3. Deficit in relationships across social contexts such as difficulty adjusting behavior.
- Other areas include challenges in imaginative play and failure to make friends.

# Sensory Overload & Fatigue Contribute

- Debilitating symptoms
- Sensory oversensitivity - loud noises, clapping, or fluorescent lights, scents, clothing, etc.
- May be nearly impossible to participate in normal activities
- When tired, sensory sensitivity worsens



Schaaf R.C. *et al. Autism* 15, 373-389 (2011)

Photo - <https://sfari.org>

## Primary Domains of ASD

1. language structure

2. social interaction and communication

Specific Language Impairment

Language Skills

SCD

Social Skills

Autism

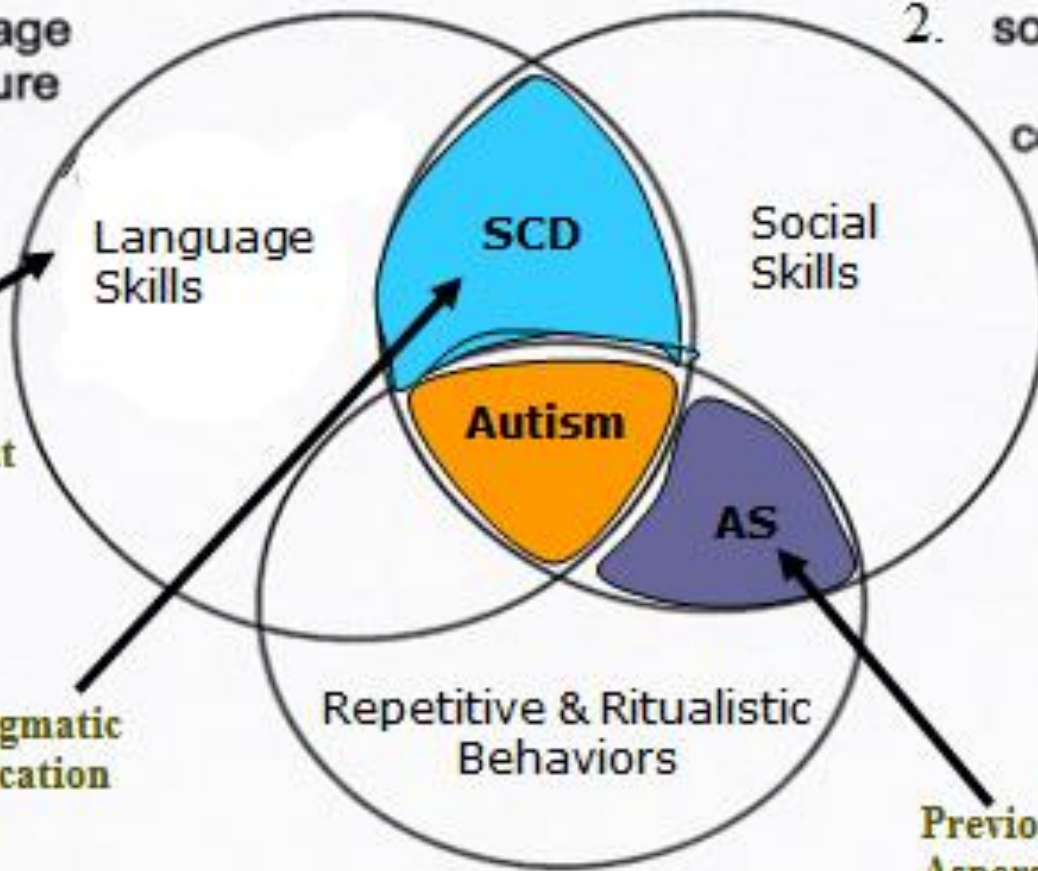
AS

Social Pragmatic Communication Disorder

Repetitive & Ritualistic Behaviors

Previously – Asperger Syndrome

3. stereotyped behavior and restricted interests



# The Early Signs of Autism and Communication

Watch the differences of children with and without ASD characteristics-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtvP5A50HpU#t=52>

**1 in 68 (CDC, 2014)**

**Boys = 1 in 42**

**Girls = 1 in 189**



# Communication (Nonverbal & Verbal)



**Speech:**  
Speech sounds  
(articulation),  
Voice, Fluency

**Language:**  
Receptive  
(understanding),  
Expressive  
(expressing)



# At what phase is the child functioning?

1. Preverbal (6-12 mos.)
2. First Words (12-18 mos.)
3. Word Combinations (18-30 mos.)
4. Sentences (30-48 mos.)
5. Complex Language (48+ mos.)



Open for link connecting play and language stages -

<http://wearetalking.com/Play%20and%20Language%20Development.pdf>

Progress varies by individual child and communication should be connected to activity-based themes for activities of daily living (ADLs).



Functional examples include communication for *dress*ing, *feeding*, *grooming*, *hygiene*, *toileting*, *getting food*, *playing*, *etc.*

Source - <http://therapyfunzone.net/blog/ot/dressing/>

# 1. The Preverbal Learner

## Profile

- Few verbal skills
- Behavior problems
- A “challenge to teach”



## Priorities

- Compliance training
- Learning to request (manding)
  - **Manding allows a child to get what he wants and get rid of what he does NOT want**

Watch video of a tantrum -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8psCYcwQTc&feature=youtu.be>

# Prelinguistic Skills Predict Vocabulary Growth in Children with ASD

Bopp, Mirenda, & Zumbo (2009) found the following to be the best predictors of language development in children with ASD

- Number of words said
- Verbal imitation ability
- Use of objects for pretend play
- Number of gestures to initiate joint attention (follow adult line of regard - point, show, give)
- Language skills at 4 years of age predicted language at 10-13 years old

Bopp, K.D., Mirenda, P., Zumbo, B.D. (2009). Behavior predictors of language development over 2 years in children with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 52, 1106-1120.

## 2. The First Words Learner

### Profile

- Simple forms
- Can be cooperative
- Variety of behavior problems
- May be echolalic



### Priorities

- Increase number or items/activities child wants
- Increase motor and vocal imitation
- Benefit from naming and receptive (understanding) language
- Build vocabulary words to further develop communication

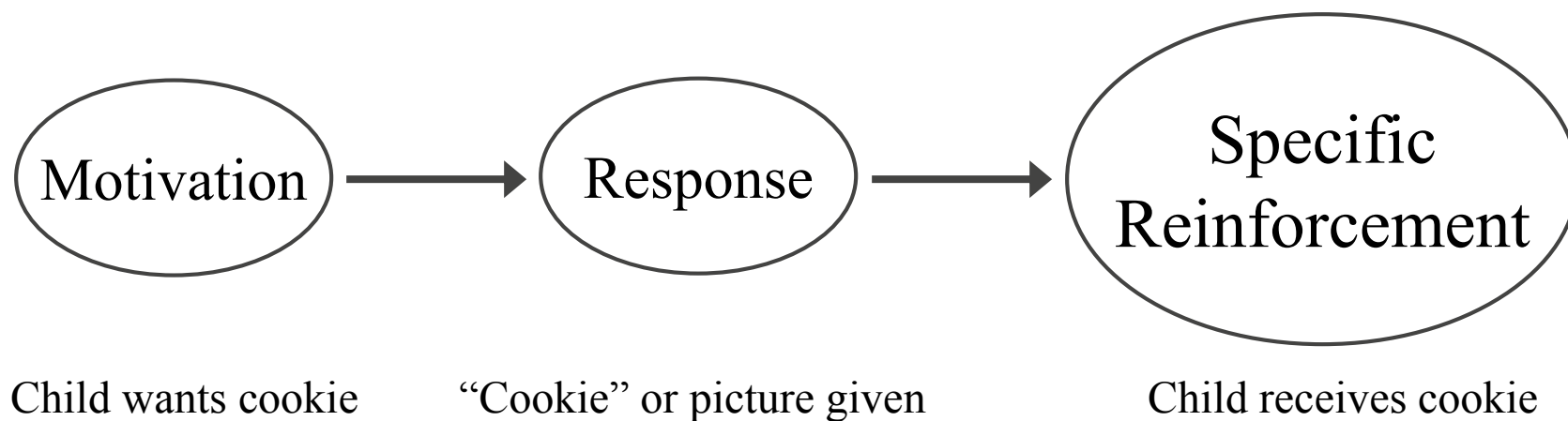
Watch as the parent and therapist interact with the child to increase understanding and use of words.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQW4TncfP7g>



# Beginning Words:

Child starts to make wants known by learning to mand.  
Communicative Temptations Help!



**Open for link of Communicative Temptations -**

**<http://www.nona-cdc.com/Communicative%20Temptations.pdf>**

I want



big wheel



golf



trampoline



bubble blower



sand and water table



sidewalk chalk



# Visual Supports Help Communication

**First / Then**



Put Toys Away

Bubble

**Brushing Teeth**

1. Wet toothbrush
2. Squeeze toothpaste on brush
3. Brush teeth
4. Spit in sink
5. Rinse toothbrush



**I am going...**



Grocery Store


Gas Station

Mc Donald's



**Morning Schedule**

Circle Time → Snack → Reading



# 3. The Word Combination Learner

## Profile

- Some advanced communication skills
- Acquiring at fast pace

## Priorities

- Expand requests (manding repertoire)
- Name (tacting) wider variety of objects/pictures
- Increase receptive skills



# Developing Two-Word Utterances

RULE	EXAMPLE
Action + Locative	Look here
Recurrent + Object	More butter
Attributive + Entity	Paper cup
Action + Object	Find ball
Possessor + Possession	My bottle
Attributive + Entity	Poor baby
Action + Object	Cook carrot
Demonstrative + Entity	That cupcake
Action + Dative	Feed dolls
Agent + Action	Car crash

# 4. Phrases & Sentences Learner

## Profile

- Good imitation skills
- Labels numerous items
- Improved receptive skills
- Poor understanding of lengthier descriptions
- Moderately limited interactions

## Priorities

- Sees characteristics of objects
- Responds more appropriately
- Expands descriptive labeling with greater comprehension
- Obtains needs by asking Wh-?s
- Facilitates social interactions with peers



# 5. Complex Language Learner

## Profile

- Sizeable vocabulary, but pragmatic language deficits
- May have inappropriate discourse
- Voice prosody and intonation deficits
- Nonverbal paralinguistic deficits



## Priorities

- Responding Interactively:
  - Wh-questions (who, what, where, when, why, how)
  - Turn-taking & topic maintenance
  - Engaging in conversation
- Complex Requesting:
  - Initiating questions about items & events
  - Cause-effect explanations

# Taking This Information Into the Real World with Mom and Kyaira



# Communication is Key

- Share enjoyment
- Make social connections
- Gain social opportunities (through play)



# Recommended Game Rules From Research

- Slow down and pay attention to the child
- Follow through with treatment suggested by teachers and therapists
- Use visual input to assist understanding of language

Adapted from:

Ryan, J.B., Hughes, E., Katsiyannis, A. McDaniel, M., & Sprinkle, C. (2014). Research-based educational practices for students with autism spectrum disorders. *Council for Exceptional Children, 47*, 94-102.



# Navigating Through Some Important Transitions for Children With ASD

- Extended family input
- Getting the diagnosis
- Early intervention (EI)
  
- Special education in the schools
- Extended school year program (ESY)
- Extended social programs



[http://www.spininc.org/site/PageNavigator/PACE/pace\\_home.html](http://www.spininc.org/site/PageNavigator/PACE/pace_home.html)

- Finding a middle school and a high school
- After graduation options

ChildLink through PHMC (Public Health Management Corp.)

<http://www.phmc.org/site/programs/services-to-special-populations/children-with-special-needs>

**Watch child communicating with more complex language -**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmKfKvomFM4&feature=youtu.be>

The goal is to increase successful interaction!



# Communication skills often dictate options at various transition points

What we need as our children move toward the future ...

- Acceptable level of interaction with others
  - Boundaries and personal space (arm's length)
- Understanding expectations at school & in public
  - Appropriate grooming and hygiene
- Interactive communication skills
  - Distance when talking, appropriate hugging
  - Eye contact and gestures when talking
  - Rules in school and at work

Source - <http://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/transition-tool-kit/employment-and-other-options>

# What other skills are needed to help individuals with ASD transition?

Skills to consider for the young adult with ASD who plans to enter the workplace (by Dr. Paul Wehman in Autism and the Transition to Adulthood)

- Using social amenities
- Using appropriate greetings
- Terminating (ending) conversations
- Sharing workspace
- Waiting in line and taking turns
- Accepting correction when constructively criticized
- Responding assertively
- Asking for help and revealing a problem

Source - <http://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/transition-tool-kit/employment-and-other-options>

# Also Remember to Review the Hidden Curriculum...

The hidden curriculum refers to actions and behaviors people tend to know without being formally taught.

These skills might include:

- How to walk in the hallways (keep to the right)
- What to do during breaks from work or tasks
- What topics to discuss and not discuss with different people
- How to get to and from ordinary local places
- How to dress and groom oneself properly
- How to maintain a schedule and be on time
- How to get help from others when needed
- How to self-advocate

# Take Home Message for Winning the Game

- Have a long-term plan in place - the time is NOW
- Keep planning and goal-setting with the end in sight
- Seek a good support system
- Continue to educate yourself and others about autism
- Work on improving communication that is geared toward specific, functional tasks
- Don't give up!



Questions ?

