

5 Simple Strategies To Improve Social Skills

with

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Social Interaction Is Hard

NO WONDER!

HEAVY AND STUCK THOUGHTS

- ◆ “Everyone hates me.”
- ◆ “I’ll never have any friends.”
- ◆ “I’m only cool online.”



HEAVY AND STUCK THOUGHTS

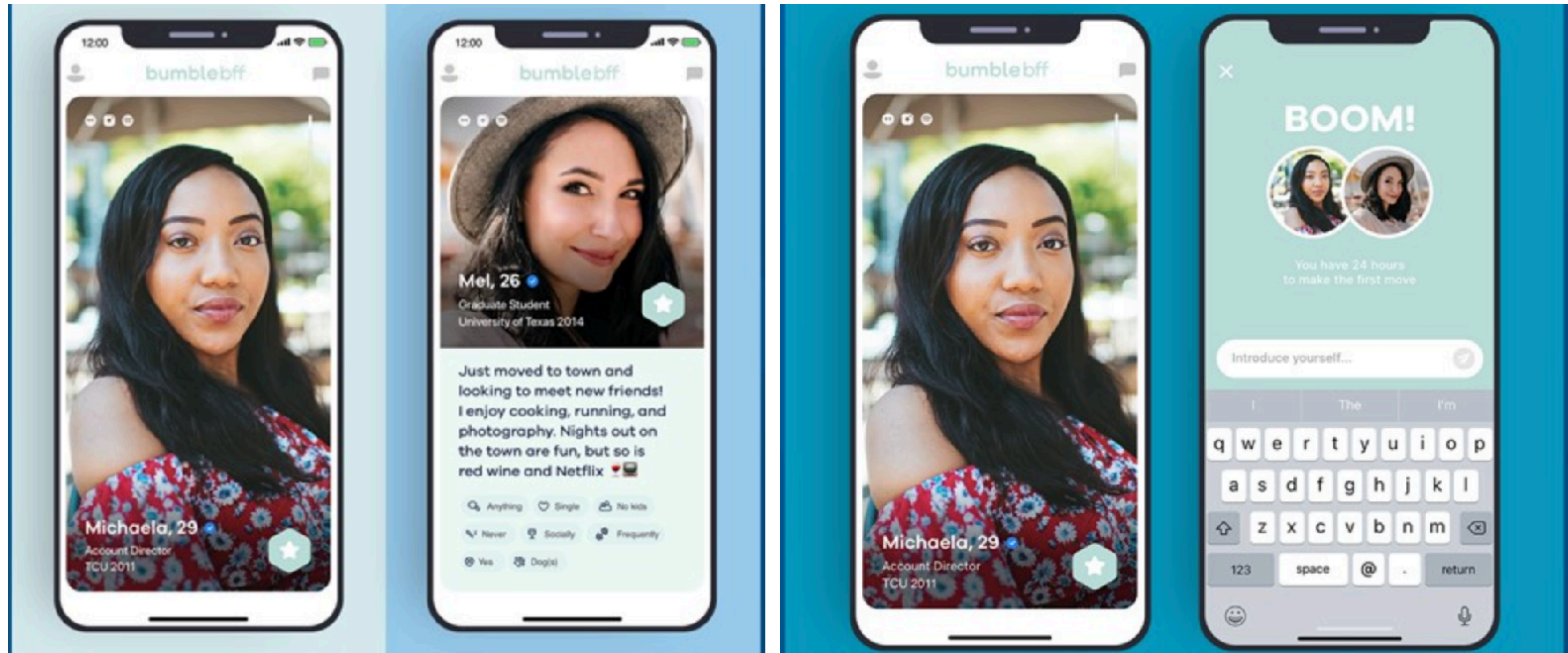
- ◆ “It’s my responsibility to make sure people follow the rules.”
- ◆ “People are hard.”
- ◆ “I don’t do anything right.”
- ◆ “I’m scared that I’ll say the wrong thing.”



SET THEM UP FOR SUCCESS



LESSONS FROM BUMBLE BFF



BE A SOCIAL DETECTIVE

- ◆ Think about past social interactions
- ◆ Observe how he interacts with others
- ◆ Get input on social interactions from multiple sources.



Identify

How – Where – Who –

How Long

IDENTIFY HOW

- ◆ Is he more successful playing one-on-one or in a group?
- ◆ Does he prefer playing with boys, girls or both?
- ◆ Does she prefer playing with younger children, older children or same aged peers?
- ◆ Does she feel more comfortable playing with others if you or another adult is close by?

IDENTIFY WHERE

- ◆ Where is he more socially successful?
- ◆ Inside the home?
- ◆ Outside in the yard?
- ◆ At the local playground?
- ◆ At an inside trampoline park?
- ◆ -----



IDENTIFY WHO

- ◆ What are some characteristics of peers that would match well with him or her?
 - ◆ A child with similar interests
 - ◆ A child who is quiet and calm
 - ◆ A child who is talkative and energetic
 - ◆ A child who doesn't mind my child being in very close proximity
 - ◆ A child who is flexible and understanding
 - ◆ -----

IDENTIFY HOW LONG

- ◆ How long does the child typically play with others before needing a break or becoming upset?
- ◆ Take the average and set the timer for several minutes less to end the play or have a Social Check-in.
- ◆ Systematically increase the time.

SUCCESS SUMMARY SENTENCE

- ◆ Examples

- ◆ He is most successful when playing video games at a gaming lounge with younger boys who are patient and flexible and a trusted adult is present.
- ◆ She is most socially successful with Charlotte and Mackenzie during social skills lunch bunch group.

Social Check-Ins

SCHEDULE SOCIAL CHECK-INS

- ◆ Before playing with others (including online)
 - ◆ Review the social rules (written or pictures)
 - ◆ Praise for reviewing the rules
 - ◆ Remind the child that they can take a break anytime they need
 - ◆ Set the child's watch or set the visual timer to schedule the next check-in

SCHEDULE SOCIAL CHECK-INS

- ◆ During Check-ins
 - ◆ Tell me when you took turns?
 - ◆ Tell me when you let someone else make the rules?
 - ◆ Tell me something nice you said to him/her?
 - ◆ Problem solve together

SCHEDULE SOCIAL CHECK-INS

- ◆ During Check-ins
 - ◆ PRAISE PRAISE PRAISE!
 - ◆ Show their progress on their social reward chart
 - ◆ Remind the child that they can take a break anytime they need
 - ◆ Set the child's watch or set the visual timer to schedule the next check-in

Inside Head Talk

LATE INNER SPEECH

- ◆ Trouble directing own behavior
- ◆ Impulsivity
- ◆ Problem solving differences
- ◆ Delays in self-awareness
- ◆ Difficulty with social judgement



STEP ONE

- ◆ Parent training for improved responding
 - ◆ Be patient. They aren't trying to be mean.
 - ◆ Remember that we say a lot of mean things in our heads.
 - ◆ Understand that they haven't developed inner speech like typically wired children.

STEP TWO

- ◆ Teaching
 - ◆ Target a specific word
 - ◆ Determine when, where and who and how long- Say anything
 - ◆ Thank him for telling you what he was thinking at that time and place.
 - ◆ Praise him for thinking without doing or saying.



STEP THREE

- ◆ Reactive plan
 - ◆ Stay calm and tell him or her that it is OK to be mad.
 - ◆ Have them say “I can only say it ...” 2 times and have them tell you when they are done.
 - ◆ PRAISE and REWARD
 - ◆ Remind the child that he/she won't get in trouble if they say mean words in their head. EVERYONE DOES IT!

HELP VARY INTERESTS



HELP VARY INTERESTS

- ◆ Great things about special interests
 - ◆ They know more than most of their peers
 - ◆ They feel good about knowing so much about a topic or activity.
 - ◆ Talking about or playing their special interest may decrease anxiety
 - ◆ When they aren't sure how to start a conversation or what to talk about, they may feel more comfortable focusing on their special interests.

HELP VARY INTERESTS

- ◆ Cons about special interests
 - ◆ When a child is solely focuses on a special interest, it can be difficult to enjoy other activities and topics
 - ◆ Special interests may limit social activities such as joining others in play or conversations unrelated to the special interest
 - ◆ It may be difficult to identify other peers who share the same special interest

STEP ONE

- ◆ Interview and observe the child. Gather a list of “likes”. If needed, make helpful suggestions on slight variations.
- ◆ Help the child order the list from most to least liked - preference assessment
- ◆ Make sure you have the Time Timer Plus
- ◆ Make an index card for each of the 4-5 top rated varied “likes” on the list

STEP TWO

- ◆ Set up designated playtimes approximately 2-3 times a day
- ◆ Give a choice between 2 related activity cards. Show a schedule. First _____. Then, ____ (special interest).
- ◆ Set the Time Timer Plus for _?_ minutes so they can SEE that playing another activity won't take "FOREVER".
- ◆ When play time is over, the child can get right back to his/her special interest.
- ◆ Praise and provide a reward if needed.

STEP THREE

- ◆ Gradually increase the time you/parent and the child are playing the related interest
- ◆ Gradually introduce other related interests and topics
- ◆ Gradually introduce unrelated activities and topics that peers are playing and talking about.

*Increase Class
Participation*

RESPONSE CARDS

- ◆ Written or pictures
 - ◆ “A variety of correct answers- Ex. “Yes” or “No”
 - ◆ Various compliments
 - ◆ Academic answers
 - ◆ How to ask someone to play
 - ◆ Examples of kindness
 - ◆ Examples of preferred activities





Examples

SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING AT RECESS

- ◆ Ethan
- ◆ 6 year old boy
- ◆ Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD and anxiety
- ◆ Avoidance of social interaction
- ◆ Regular education classroom

TEACHING SKILLS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

- ◆ Used the Visual Exchange to -
 - ◆ Identify topics
 - ◆ Model responses
 - ◆ Reduce delayed responses
 - ◆ Teach appropriate question asking



TEACHING SKILLS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

- ◆ Taught to notice the preferences of others
- ◆ Taught appropriate compliments
- ◆ Identified topics of conversation
- ◆ Student selection
 - ◆ “Really like”
 - ◆ “Medium like”
 - ◆ “Don’t like at all!”



SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING AT RECESS

◆ Phase One

1. Student selection (Really like group only)
2. First 6-7 minutes of recess
3. Participated in short fun activities (1-minute each)
4. Small prize from the prize bag
5. He participated 100% of the time

SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING AT RECESS

◆ Activity examples

1. Follow the leader with bubbles
2. Keep the beach ball in the air
3. Name an activity or food -
Raise your hand if you like it



SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING AT RECESS

◆ Activity examples

1. Take turns answering fun questions
2. Compliment the person next to you
3. Stretch activity
4. Guess the drawing
5. Simon says



SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING AT RECESS

◆ Phase Two

1. Student selection (Really like group with one medium like)
2. First 6-7 minutes of recess
3. Participated in short fun activities (1-minute each)
4. Small prize from the prize bag
5. Tell each person something you like about them.
6. He participated 100% of the time

SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING AT RECESS

◆ Phase Three

1. Student selection (2 Really like group with 2 medium like)
2. First 6-7 minutes of recess
3. Participated in short fun activities (1-minute each)
4. Small prize from the prize bag
5. Tell each person something you like about them.
6. He chose only to be out of the group for 20 seconds

P.S. OH SNAP!

RESULTS

- ◆ Teacher and parent reported improved social skills
- ◆ Teacher reported that he was regularly playing with other children at recess
- ◆ He had several “hang outs” with friends
- ◆ He reported that he was “feeling good about making friends”

SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING AT LUNCH

- ◆ Nathan
- ◆ 10 year old boy
- ◆ Autism Spectrum Disorder and anxiety
- ◆ Avoidance of social interaction
- ◆ Regular education classroom
- ◆ Overweight

TEACHING METHODS

- ◆ Social skills training in session
- ◆ Social skills training at school
- ◆ Increased physical activity

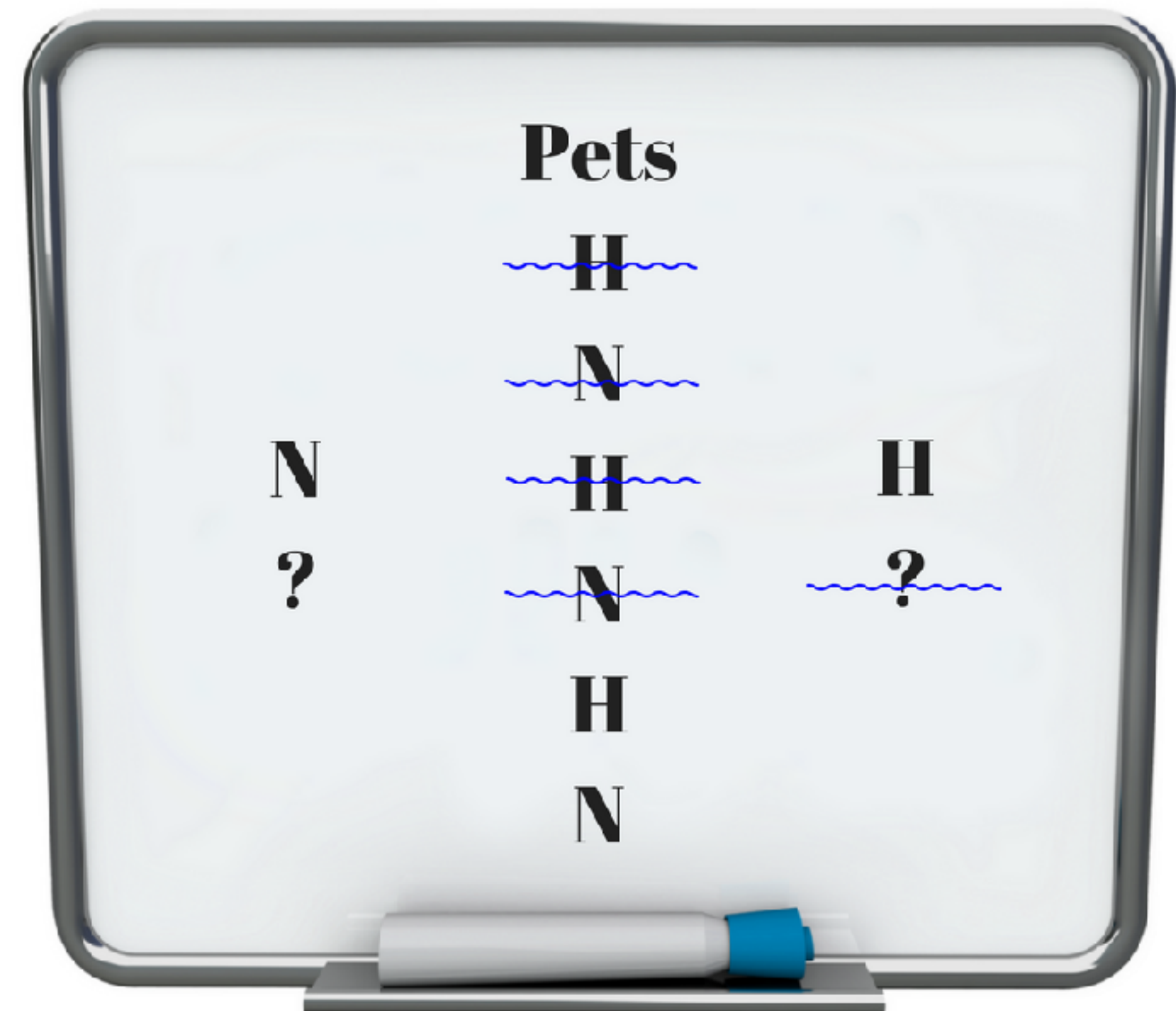


TEACHING SKILLS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

- ◆ Taught complimenting others
- ◆ Taught to notice the preferences of others
- ◆ Identified topics of conversation
- ◆ Identified self-interests

SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

- ◆ Used the Visual Exchange to -
 - ◆ Identify topics
 - ◆ Model responses
 - ◆ Reduce delayed responses
 - ◆ Teach appropriate question asking



SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING DURING LUNCH

◆ Phase One

1. Student selection (3 students plus Nathan)
2. Topics identified
3. Counselor asked quick close ended questions (cards)
4. Asked what they learned about each other
5. Special snack

SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING DURING LUNCH

◆ Phase Two

1. Student selection
2. Social skills game
3. Special snack



SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING DURING LUNCH

◆ Phase Three

1. Student selection (4 students plus Nathan)
2. Topics identified
3. Counselor asked open-ended question rounds (random)
4. Three exchanges per question with peers
5. Special snack

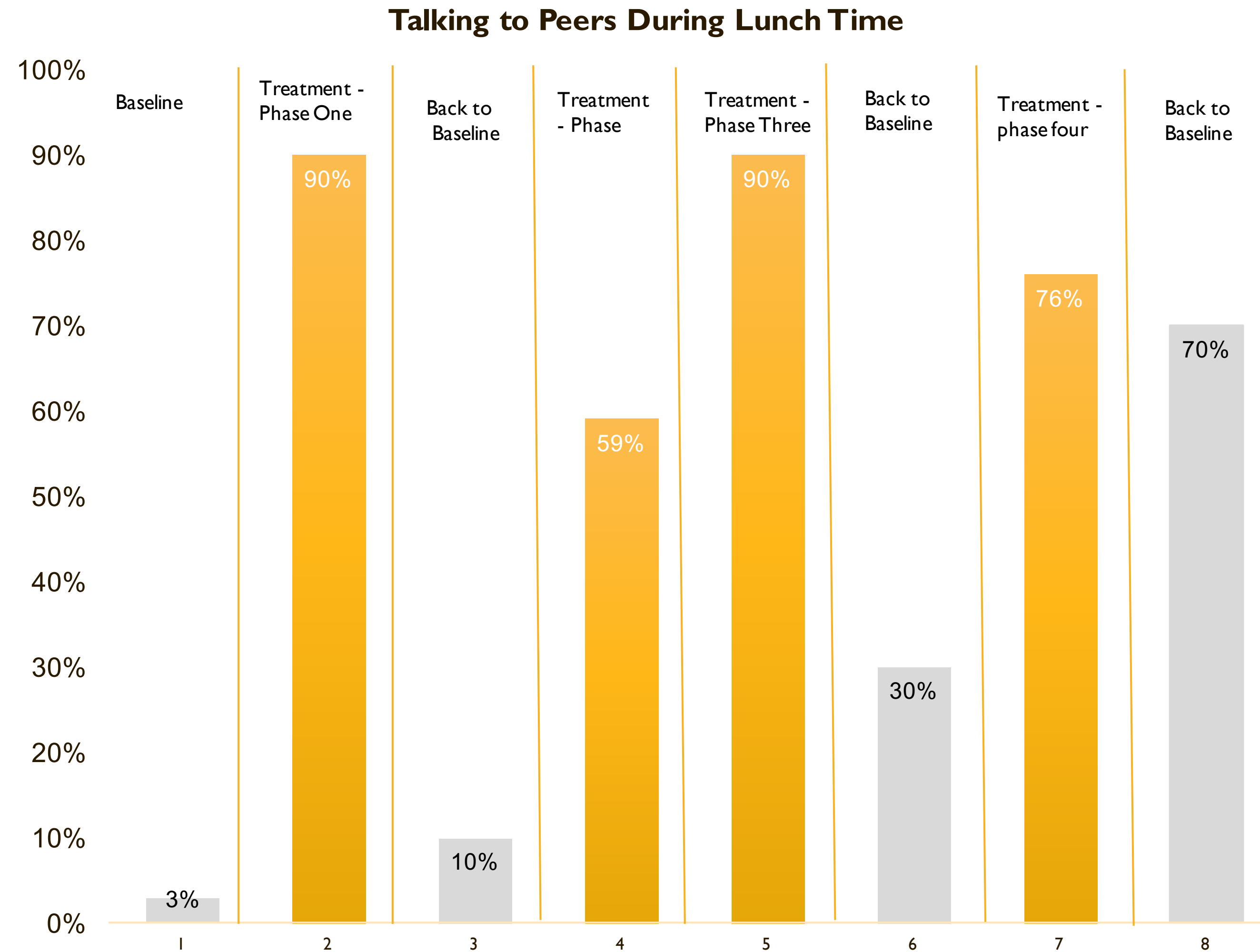
SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING DURING LUNCH

◆ Phase Four

1. Student selection
2. Example topics were identified
3. Students were instructed to ask questions and make comments
4. Special snack



TALKING TO PEERS DURING LUNCH TIME



RESULTS

- ◆ Participated summer camp for the first time
- ◆ Has had seven hangouts with friends.
- ◆ Has had a sleep-over
- ◆ Increased physical activity and lost weight

REBECCA

- ◆ 10 year old female
- ◆ Autism Spectrum Disorder
- ◆ ADHD Combined Presentation
- ◆ Social skills deficits
 - ◆ "I don't know what to say."
 - ◆ Peer rejection
 - ◆ Peer obsession (excessive texting and excessive talking about the peer)

REBECCA

- ◆ Anxiety – “I get so nervous.” and “I just want to stay in the house.”
- ◆ Academic problems
- ◆ Flat affect
- ◆ Regular education classroom
- ◆ Restricted interests - Dogs and RVs

What my friends like

[redacted] - American girl dolls, drawing, nurses

[redacted] to eat, dance, gymnastics, watching tv

* Common

* practice talking with Mom about stuff you have in common

* practice what to ask and how to recognize openings

* Mel 1, 1/2

INITIATING A CONVERSATION

*Make room for the risk

- What do you like to do?
- Pay attention

*Listen and collect words for your word bank

- Notice openings
- Make eye contact & SMILE!

Remember people like to talk about themselves

Ask questions and make comments based on the word bank



MAD LIBS®

A VISIT TO THE DENTIST

A one-act play to be performed by two _____ in this room.
PLURAL NOUN

PATIENT: Thank you so very much for seeing me, Doctor

_____, on such _____ notice.
PERSON IN ROOM (LAST NAME) ADJECTIVE

DENTIST: What is your problem, young _____?
NOUN

PATIENT: I have a pain in my upper _____, which
NOUN
is giving me a severe _____ ache.
PART OF THE BODY

DENTIST: Let me take a look. Open your _____ wide.
PART OF THE BODY

Good. Now I'm going to tap your _____ with my _____.
PLURAL NOUN NOUN

PATIENT: Shouldn't you give me a/an _____ killer?
NOUN

DENTIST: It's not necessary yet. _____! I think I see
EXCLAMATION
a/an _____ in your upper _____.
NOUN NOUN

PATIENT: Are you going to pull my _____ out?
NOUN

DENTIST: No. I'm going to _____ your tooth and put in
VERB
a temporary _____.
NOUN

PATIENT: When do I come back for the _____ filling?
ADJECTIVE

DENTIST: A day after I cash your _____.
NOUN

TREATMENT

- ◆ Referred to a Developmental Pediatrician
 - ◆ Medication for ADHD and anxiety
- ◆ Recommended IQ and Achievement testing.
 - ◆ Identified learning disability
 - ◆ Academic accommodations

TREATMENT

- ◆ Visual exchanges
- ◆ Texting rules
- ◆ Designated talk times about dogs and trailers
- ◆ Designated talk times about preferred peers using the Time Timer Plus
- ◆ Increased variety of interests

RESULTS

- ◆ Initiated interactions with her peers during group activities.
- ◆ She has asked groups of girls to play at recess.
- ◆ She has had a few peers approach her to play mad libs and draw.
- ◆ She has had several play-dates and one sleep over.



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