



Social Skills Training (SST)

Brief Introduction

Social skills training (SST) is a form of group or individual instruction designed to teach learners with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) ways to appropriately interact with peers, adults, and other individuals.

Description

Social skills training (SST) is a form of group or individual instruction designed to teach learners with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) ways to appropriately interact with peers, adults, and other individuals. Most social skill meetings include instruction on basic concepts, role-playing or practice, and feedback to help learners with ASD acquire and practice communication, play, or social skills to promote positive interactions with peers.

SST meets evidence-based criteria with 7 group design and 8 single-case design studies. According to the evidence-based studies, this intervention has been effective for toddlers (0–2 years) to young adults (19–22 years) with ASD. SST can be used effectively to address social, communication, behavior, play, and cognitive skills.

Brief adapted from

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

Fettig, A. (2013). *Social skills training (SST) fact sheet*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Matrix of SST by Outcome and Age (years)

Social			Communication			Behavior			Joint Attention			Play			Cognitive			School Readiness			Academic			Motor			Adaptive			Vocational			Mental Health					
0-5	6-14	15-22	0-5	6-14	15-22	0-5	6-14	15-22	0-5	6-14	15-22	0-5	6-14	15-22	0-5	6-14	15-22	0-5	6-14	15-22	0-5	6-14	15-22	0-5	6-14	15-22	0-5	6-14	15-22	0-5	6-14	15-22	0-5	6-14	15-22			

Research Summary: Social Skills Training (SST)

Ages	Skills/Intervention Goals	Settings	Outcome
0–22 years	Social, communication, interpersonal, behavior, play, cognitive skills	Home, school, community	EBP



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*The information found in the Research Summary table is updated yearly following a literature review of new research and this age range reflects information from this review.

Research

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Steps for Implementation

Step 1. Identifying the Social Situation for the Intervention

- A. Refer to the learner's IEP/IFSP to identify potential intervention targets.
- B. Discuss goals with team members, including family and learner.
- C. Select a social behavior that will result in positive social interactions, a safer environment, and/or additional social learning opportunities.

Step 2. Defining the Target Behavior or Skill

- A. Clearly define the target behavior or skill so that it is observable and measurable.

Step 3. Collecting Baseline Data

- A. Determine the type of data (e.g., permanent product, assessment) needed to assess the target skill.
- B. Collect data on at least three occasions over three to five days to determine the learner's skills prior to intervention.

Step 4. Implementing the Social Skills Training

- A. Determine the instructional techniques to be used in SST. Techniques could include (but are not limited to) modeling, role-playing, shaping, feedback, and reinforcement.

Step 5. Monitoring Learner Progress

- A. Collect data to measure the effectiveness of the social skills intervention on the target behavior or skill for a minimum of two weeks.
- B. Ask others who work or live with the learner to collect data on the target behavior across settings.

Step 6. Reviewing Data and Modifying the SST if Necessary

- A. Depending on intervention findings, continue or adapt the SST.
- B. When the SST procedures are altered (modification in narrative or frequency), change only one variable at a time.
- C. Collect and review data following each adaptation or change.



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Step 7. Addressing Generalization and Maintenance of Learned Behavior or Skill

- A. Promote generalization of the target skill by including multiple peers and/or adults in the SST process.

- B. Promote maintenance of the target skill by fading the use of the SST.

