



Supporting Children's Social Skills

Presented by
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Welcome and Background



- Originally from New Jersey



- Master's Degree in Speech Language Pathology



- Career:
 - River School
 - MCPS public schools
 - Private schools
 - Private practice
 - Mom of 2 girls



- How I got interested in social skills

Components of Speech and Language

- **Articulation** - How are mouth produces sounds
- **Semantics** - Vocabulary and word knowledge
- **Syntax** - Grammar and sentence structure
- **Pragmatics** - Functional use of language in context

What is Pragmatics?

- Focuses on HOW we use language to communicate.
- Contains sociolinguistic rules based on your communicative partner and the context



SOCIAL THINKING™ - Michelle Garcia Winner, CCC-SLP

- It requires your child to understand that they have thoughts about others, and others have thoughts about them.
- It allows us to interpret situations with others and respond accordingly
- Resources on www.socialthinking.com

Components of Pragmatics and Social Thinking™

- Flexibility
- Perspective taking
- Executive Functioning
- Self Regulation/Problem solving
- Verbal organization



Flexibility

Adapting one's feeling, thought, and action based on the social situation and goal.



Impact at Home

- Difficulty accepting “No”
- Gets “stuck”/Rigid
- Easily thrown if the “schedule” changes
- Always right
- **Refusal to accept discomfort**

Impact at School

- Difficulty working in a group
- Wants to complete activities “their” way
- Perseveration
- Big reactions or refusal behaviors

How to Support Flexibility at Home

- Set expectation of flexibility within routines
- Validate through language - “It looks like you are getting stuck...I know it is hard to be flexible but ”
- Encourage strategies to move through discomfort
- Prepare for the unexpected
- Give a choice/reward
- Use Social Stories (defines expected and unexpected behaviors)
 - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1geIUOw_4Rnk32035T239_XownomKemZvCGaQI1Nn_eo/edit?usp=sharing

Professional resources



Unstuckontarget.com

Developed by teachers and specialists at
Ivymount and the Maddux School





Perspective Taking

Attending to and interpreting
others thoughts and feelings



Impact at Home

- Only talks about their interests
- Doesn't ask other family members questions
- Little sympathy/empathy
- Misses contextual cues

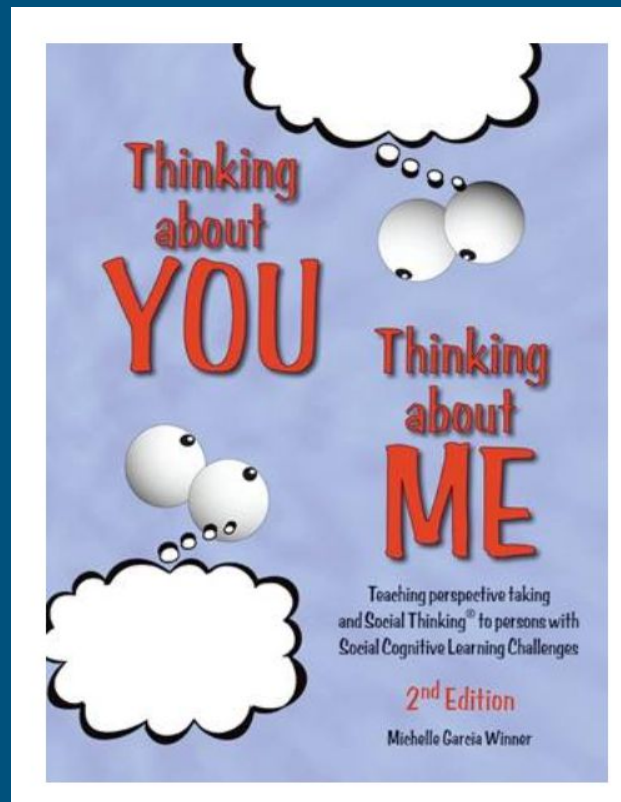
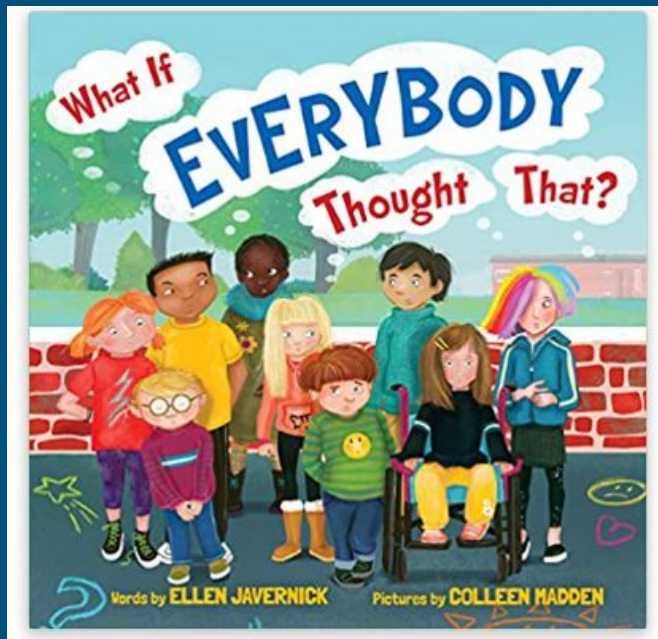
Impact at School

- Only talks about their interests
- Perceived as rude
- Breaks social rules (e.g. picking nose)
- DIFFICULTY WITH INFERENCE and WRITING TO AN AUDIENCE!!!!

How to Support Perspective Taking at Home

- Talk about it. (expected vs. unexpected behaviors)
- Build in social routines
- Preview expectations (“It is expected that...”)
- Focus on compliments and questions
- REINFORCE!!!! (“It made me feel so ___ when you...”)
- Make it fun - word bubbles in pictures, watch tv without sound


Resources





Executive Functioning

Cognitive processes that help
us plan, monitor, and
successfully execute goals



Impact at Home

- Works slowly
- Needs many reminders to stay on task
- Messy
- Trouble starting independently
- Loses belongings

Impact at School

- Forgets to complete assignments
- Difficulty transitioning
- Inability to remember names
- Difficulty following multistep directions
- Can't recall information about his/her day

How to Support Executive Functioning at Home

- Have ROUTINES and BE CONSISTENT
- Make visual schedules
- Remove distractors
- Use timers
- Teach your child to predict time needed to complete tasks
 - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1x4f_qkZTMEPbOT2NNF5tjECx3J8i49TxVyyAUDUv4OQ/edit?usp=sharing
- Set “check-in” times (check planner, check homework, and check backpack before bed)
- Set time to teach/practice organization
- Have chores/allowance

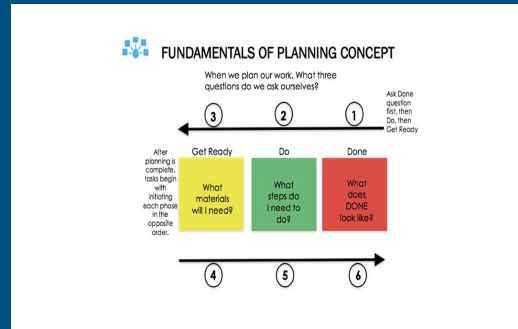
Resources



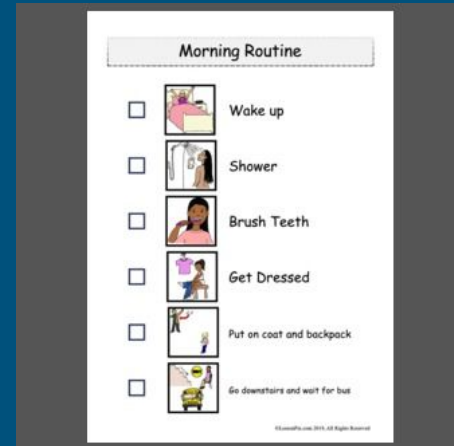
www.lessonpix.com



Time Timer



Ready, Do, Done!





Emotional Regulation

The ability to exert control
over one's emotional state



Impact at Home

- Severe tantrums
- Cognitive distortions
- Low tolerance of frustration
- Hyperfocuses on the negative
- Lacks interest in making friends

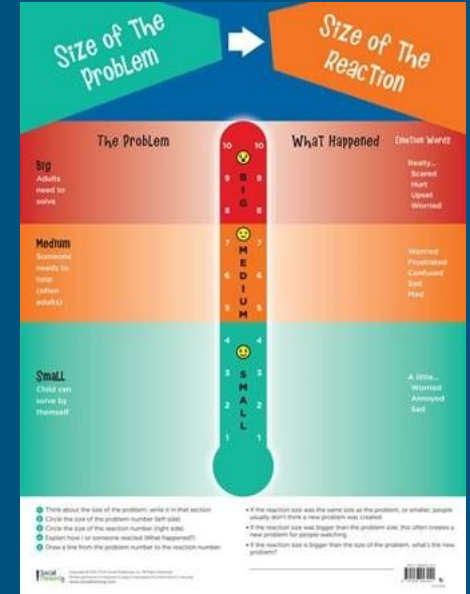
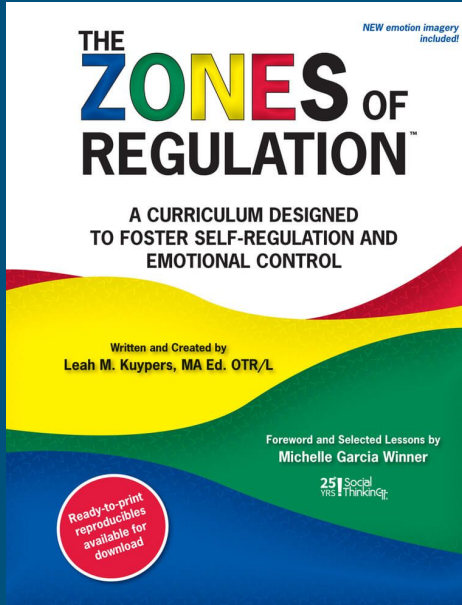
Impact at School

- Avoids or refuses difficult or new tasks
- Big reactions to small problems
- Difficulty problem solving
- Perseverates on negative feeling/"gets stuck."
- Other students may avoid him/her

How to Support Emotional Regulation at Home

- PREVIEW EXPECTATIONS (already talked about this)
- Make Problem Solving Concrete - Here is solution A, B, and C.
 - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lpabnPF09IN9PfAVp8d_mRqchGaPMZqfCLwsqLLqzoQ/edit?usp=sharing
- Practice meditation and deep breathing
- Identify Size of Problem vs. Size of Reaction
- Positive self-talk
- Use language that describes their reactions from a concrete perspective - Feeling and Level

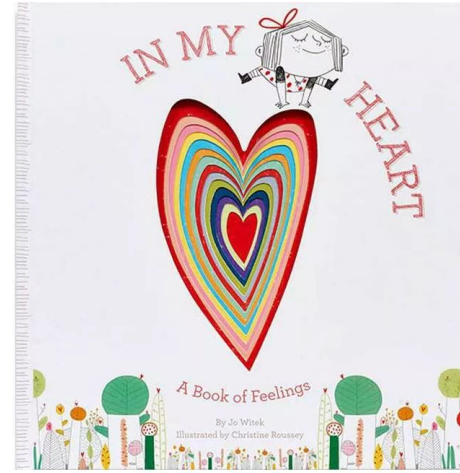
Resources



Feelings Target



Unstuck and on Target




In My Heart By Jo Witek



Verbal Organization

Ability to organize thoughts effectively
and communicate their ideas to others



Impact at Home

- Off topic comments
- Starts stories in the middle
- Difficulty verbally recalling events
- May focus on non-salient = unimportant details

Impact at School

- Difficulty with writing
- Difficulty verbally recalling past experiences
- Misses the BIG PICTURE (Main Idea/Theme) in text.
- Omits context resulting in communication breakdown

How to Support Verbal Organization at Home

- Give sentence starters... “Yesterday you went on a field trip to the White House. First you....”
- Request/use graphic organizers for writing
- Request BACKGROUND information (E.g. Who, What, Where, When, Why) prior to them starting a story
- Use the phrase, “Hmm, that’s off topic. I would love to hear about that after we finish talking about...”
- Read sequential stories and have them retell the beginning/middle/end (e.g. Hungry Caterpillar)
- Complete cooking activities and verbally tell you the steps using temporal/sequential word: First/then/next/last

Final Tips

- ALL OF THESE AREAS ARE CONNECTED!!!!
- Social skills take practice
- Social expectations CONSTANTLY change as your child develops
- Social skills are impacted by a variety of disabilities - ADHD, twice Exceptional, Autism spectrum, Specific Learning disabilities, etc.
- PATIENCE, PATIENCE, PATIENCE

Questions and Comments

