

P.L.A.Y. (Play and Language for Autistic Youngsters) Project

by Richard Solomon

<http://www.playproject.org/>

Play Project DVD - \$76.90 from website

PLAY Principles

1. Relationship-based and affect (feeling) oriented (all about making it fun)
2. Designed to improve Functional Developmental Level by engaging the child
3. Flexible curriculum based on individual profile
4. Child centered but not passive (meet the child where he/she is and take him/her where they need to go).
5. Directed at child's inherent potential.

PLAY Skill Sequence Summary

1. List principles/strategies based on Comfort Zone (CZ), Sensory Motor Profile (SMP), and Functional Developmental Level (FDL).
2. Assess child's unique CZ activities, SMP and FDL. (*Comfort Zone activities are those activities that the child likes to do the most/what they typically are doing when they are not engaged with others. This is a clue of what to do to get them engaged with you. The Sensory Motor Profile includes looking at the child's individual sensory issues/challenges. Functional Developmental Levels are from Greenspan's work.*) Richard Solomon says that children fluctuate across several of Greenspan's levels a day but usually have one level where they function most typically and you should aim your interaction at the level that is typical for that child.
3. Define/list daily and weekly curriculum/activities.
4. Methods: Follow cues, lead and intent to increase circles.
5. Create menu of specific techniques to enhance methods.
6. Videotape/critically review interactions and progress.
7. Reassess and adjust curriculum, methods, and techniques.

Examples of Curricular PLAY Activities

For Greenspan's Functional Developmental Levels One and Two

- rolling up child in a rug
- tickling
- opening and closing a door and playing peek-a-boo from the other side
- water play
- create a feeling box – fill it with marbles, beans, brillo pads, etc.
- building blocks up and then knocking them down, saying “up, up, up” as you build and “down!” and you knock them down

For Greenspan's Functional Developmental Levels Three and Four

- all of the above plus:
- chase games “I’m gonna get you”
- rolling a ball back and forth
- simple pretend play, like feeding a doll or crashing cars/making a crash sound
- song games, like Wheels on the Bus, Old McDonald
- “getting in the way” games (“It’s stuck. Can you open it?”)

Common Floortime Problems

- doing too much and doing too little (not reading the child's cues/following your own agenda instead of the child's)
- prompting too much/not waiting for the child to open circles
- following the child's lead but not being engaging
- teaching instead of having fun interacting
- not rewarding/reinforcing interactions and language

Autism Interventions: A Comparison (from the PLAY Project website)

Play-based/Developmental	Behavioral
(The P.L.A.Y. Project, Floortime, Hanen)	(ABA, Discrete Trial)
Strategic and Flexible	Highly Prescribed
More Naturalistic	More Controlled
Child Initiated	Program Oriented
Follows Child's Lead	Program Goals Dominant
Developmental Analysis	Behavioral Analysis
One-On-One and/or In Groups	One-On-One, then Groups
Early Generalization Common	Later Generalization Typical
Flexible Intensity	Intensity Prescribed
Activities: Child Preference	Activities: Program Oriented
Play Interaction	Teaching Drills and Skills
Natural/Social Reinforcements	Strategic Reinforcements
Perseverations as Useful	Perseverations Extinguished
Documentation Varies	Documentation Intensive, Discrete Frequency Counts
More Individualized	More Prescribed
Peers Used Earlier	Peers Used Later
Affect Emphasized	Behavior Emphasized
Parents as Play Partners	Parents as Program Facilitators