Autism: Attacking Social Interaction Problems

A Therapy Manual
Targeting Social Skills in Children 4–9
UNIT I

Activities for 4- to 6-Year-Olds
4

The ABCs of Life: Skills Needed for School Success
For younger children, this module is the first step in developing age-appropriate social skills necessary for school success. Kindergarten can be considered a year of refinement of age-appropriate social skills. Teacher expectations include the following: taking turns, playing cooperatively with other children, and following teacher-directed activities and requests. Active listening and the ability to attend are essential to the mastery of these expectations. The lessons in this chapter are: Active Listening, Following Directions, and Asking for Help.
A Guiding Light

Social skills training should not be perceived as school, after school, or a “class” within the school day. It is social. Keep it fun!

LESSON 1 OBJECTIVES

• Students will identify the parts of the body required for active listening.
• Students will verbalize appropriate responses to indicate listening.
• Students will demonstrate appropriate body language for listening.

LESSON 1A: ACTIVE LISTENING (4–6 YEARS)

Materials

• Puppets (Select two puppets, named by the student, to be used consistently with the lesson.)
• Paper plates
• Cutouts for eyes, mouth, nose, ears

Activity A: Opening Activity

Difficulty Listening

Puppet Maria: Hi, Johnny. What do you want for lunch?

Puppet Johnny: Doesn’t respond. Has Band-Aids or bandages covering ears

Johnny hums a familiar song.
Puppet Maria: Johnny, are you listening to me?

Puppet Johnny: Oh sorry. I couldn’t hear you. What did you say?

Puppet Maria: I asked what you want to eat?

Puppet Johnny: Fidgets and looks away. I like to play with trucks.

Puppet Maria: Johnny! You are not listening to me.

Puppet Maria: What do you want to eat?

Puppet Johnny: Oh, I’m sorry. I like to eat pizza.

Questions to stimulate discussion:

- Was Johnny doing good listening?
- What does Johnny have on his ears?
- Do we need our ears to listen?
- Let’s see if you were doing good listening. Who remembers what Maria asked Johnny?
- What was Johnny doing with his body when he told Maria he liked trucks?
- What part(s) of our bodies do we use to listen?

**Activity B: Arts and Crafts**

Provide each student with a paper plate and cutouts for eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Students are instructed to do good listening and to glue the facial parts on the plate when they hear a statement referencing the part.

- If I am doing good listening, I will look with my ____________ (eyes).
- If I am doing good listening, I will listen with my ____________ (ears).
- If I am doing good listening, I cannot talk while someone is ____________ (talking).
- I will quiet my ____________ (mouth).

Ask the students to identify the facial part that is missing and to glue it on as well.