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Play is FUNdamental: Integrating Social, Motor, and Language Aspects of Play

Lisa R. Audet, PhD, CCC-SLP

Moderated by:
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Play is FUNdamental: Integrating Social, Motor, and Language Aspects of Play

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Lisa Audet Bio

- Dr. Lisa Audet has been a practicing SLP for 35 years. She has been on faculty in Speech Pathology & Audiology at Kent State University since 2000. She specializes in early childhood language development and disorders, low incidence disorders, autism, augmentative communication, and assistive technology. Dr. Audet has published and presented at the national and international level.

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Learning Outcomes

After this course, participants will be able to:

- Describe the stages of motor, social, and language play.

- Describe how the stages of the different aspects of play interconnect.

- Describe how to develop interventions that balance the demands of various aspects of play.

Agenda

Introduction

Motor Stages of Play

Social Stages of Play

Intersection of Motor, Social and Language Stages of Play

Creating Developmentally Matched Play Experiences

Questions

Introduction

- Integrating Social, Language and Motor Components of Play….Application Beyond Play

- Paulo

- Paulo was a 17 year-old with a developmental disability.

- Paulo was non-verbal, did not comprehend decontextualized language and did not make eye contact or gesture to communicate.

- He was learning how to shred paper and did this task with a paraprofessional sitting next to him.

- A problem arose because Paulo could see the paper falling into the trash can and would attempt to grab it.

- The team wanted him to do the task independently vs. having the paraprofessional sit with him saying "hands back" and gesturing for him to move his hands.

- The team filmed Paulo throughout his day. During breaks he was given a dishpan with various objects. Paulo would mouth the objects and did not play with any of the objects functionally.

Paulo's Problem Solved

- Putting the pieces of this puzzle together
    - Paulo was non-verbal
    - Probably still functioning in the perlocutionary stage of communication
    - He did not have functional play but still mouthed objects in play
    - Given these behaviors Paulo was unfortunately functioning at a 3-6m level cognitively, socially, and linguistically
    - If so, he probably did not have object permanence and his reaching for hanging paper would be related to his developmental level

- Solution for the shredding task: get a new shredder that was attached to a trash container so he would not see the paper falling in.

- Paulo had the motor skills to complete this task. Knowledge of developmental stages we use to better understand play development were applied here.

What can we no longer say?

- My goal is that the child will demonstrate appropriate play?

- Appropriate play can mean many, many, many things:
    - Developmentally Matched Motor Play
    - Developmentally Matched Social Play
    - Developmentally Matched Pretend Play
    - Functional object use
    - The list could go on and on…..

What can we say?

- My goal is to assist the child in demonstrating single step pretend play

- My goal is to assist the child in developing collaborative play with typical peers

- My goal is to teach the child how to share and trade in play

- My goal is to assist the child to solve a motor problem independently

- My goal is to assist the child to engage in parallel play for 5 minutes

- My goal is to assist the child in development schemas for 5 new construction play activities

So let's begin…..

- In the beginning we break things up in order to
  - Observe, assess…
  - And put things back together again
- That is: most play activities involve
  - a motor
  - a social
  - a cognitive/language component
- We need to analyze each and determine which aspect is our therapeutic focus
- This will allow us to manipulate the demands of the other aspects so that our client can be successful
- AND we remember that human development is human development. It may be much slower to develop in some people, there may be gaps and holes in development
- BUT applying what we know about human development ALWAYS provides us with a safe starting place

Motor Stages of Development

- Humans move from one to the other developmentally

- However, humans continue to have preferences and integrate different types of motor play throughout their lives

- Motor aspects of play are important to social interaction, academic success, and job opportunities

Motor Play Type	Developmental Age	Examples
Sensory Motor Play	0-9 months	Mouthing, Swinging, Bouncing
Gross Motor	9-18 months	Climbing, Running, Jumping
Fine Motor	24-48 months	Fill n Dump, Puzzles, Blocks

Social Stages of Play

- Aspects of social play are important to relationship development, mental health, reciprocity, perspective taking, and problem solving

- Humans develop each type of social play in childhood and apply these throughout life

Sarah Pflug   Burst

Social Stages of Play: Solitary Play

Stage	Age	Examples	Importance
Solitary Play	4-12 months Throughout the lifespan	Playing with toes, fingers, a rattle Running around Occupying oneself with an object, activity As adults: -Office work -Running or Exercising Alone -Practicing a skill (instrument) -Reading -Cooking, Knitting, Building	-Critical to acceptance into general education -Typically # of minutes correlates to developmental age -Allows one to function independently at home, school and later work -Provides an adaptive outlet for relaxation, stimulation and gratification

Social Stages of Play: Onlooker

- Individuals learn by watching others

- This is often neglected in our data driven work

- Consider the child who goes to the town pool every day during the summer:
  - He really wants to jump off the diving board like the "big kids."
  - He watches every day. He approaches the board and walks away. He climbs the stairs and then walks back.
  - Finally on the last day of summer he walks the stairs, onto the board and JUMPS.
  - He spent the summer developing a schema or mental representation that he could use to tackle his problem/desire. POWERFUL STUFF

Stage of Play Onlooker

Stage	Age	Examples	Importance
Onlooker Play	12-18m and throughout life	-Younger sibling watching older sibling eat with a fork; build something, do homework, engage in a sport -Children on playgrounds watching other kids play -As an adult: onlooker play occurs when people attend concerts, go to museums, attend sporting events; watching cooking shows or reality TV	-Schema development: Creating a mental representation of how the world works -Importance of modeling in our work -Importance of allowing children time to take information in before producing -Lifelong enjoyment of sensory motor/cognitive activities vicariously -Orientation or internship at work

Stages of Play: Parallel Play

- The ability to work side by side with each person doing his/her own thing

- This sets the stage for sharing and trading which comes next

- Important to being able to tolerate others in our space, to work on similar activities side by side

- Important to working within a classroom or office; independent living at home with family

Sarah Pflug   Burst

Stages of Play: Parallel Play

Stage	Age	Examples	Importance
Parallel	18-48m Lifelong	-Playing in a sand box, at a water table, in a gym -Construction play where each person has their own set of blocks -Coloring a picture side by side -Working in an office and knowing when and how to interrupt a co-worker…or NOT	Development of sustained attention despite distractions; Boundaries Impulse control Builds collaboration and important work skills

Stage of Play: Associative Play

- In this stage, children learn to share

- Development: 24-36 months ….but a lifetime to master

- Remember, children need to learn to TRADE before they learn to SHARE

- When one trades a toy, she is NOT left empty handed-which is intolerable for a young child

- Sharing means you may have to wait; you may lose control of the object (it won't come back to you); you will have to be resourceful in finding something else to do while you wait

- SO…..teach Trade before you teach Share….Life will be much easier for all involved

- Importance: Do we even need to talk about this…..Every day we must make decision about trading and sharing and negotiating

- Play is important to helping us live healthy satisfying lives!!

Stage of Play: Collaborative Play

- Collaborative play is group play: Think team sports & pretend play

- It emerges around 36 months

- By 60 months typically developing children enjoy and are skilled at collaborative play (think….bossy kindergarten girl assigning role)

- This play requires:

  - Expressive language

  - Receptive language

  - Pragmatic skills: negotiating, bargaining, protesting, convincing

  - Perspective taking: each person has to understand the purpose and agreed upon schema

  - Executive Functions: problem solving, focus, attention, inhibition

- We use collaborative play throughout our lives to complete group projects, play or sports teams, in orchestra, band, theatre; getting along and compromising in a family and at work

Photo by Janko Ferlic from Pexels

Cognitive Language Stages of Play

- Based on Westby Play Scale

- Sensory Motor Play: 0-9m

- Exploratory Play: 9-18m

- Tool Use: Object Permanence Emerges 9-18 m

- Cause Effect Play; 24 m

- Construction Play 36 m

- Pretend Play 24-60 m
    - Single Step
    - Two Step
    - Multi-step

Aspects of Cognitive Play: Links to Language

- Object Permanence: Words represent things not present

- Cause Effect Play: Words have an effect on the world

- Tool Use: Executive functioning….seeing a problem, making and executing a plan. Language as a tool to solve a problem

- Construction Play: Planning, focus, problem solving, eyes working with hands, representation

Pretend Play: Language Connection

- Pretend Play: VERY IMPORTANT
  - The number of objects a child uses in play is equal to his expressive MLU up to an MLU of 4

- So,
  - a child plays with 1 object, single word stage;
  - 2 objects 2-word stage, 3 objects 3-word stage

- Examples:
  - One object/Uses Single Words to represent nouns and verbs: rolls a truck back and forth, holds a baby doll, uses a busy box
  - Two Objects/Uses Semantic Relations to label action+object; object+action: Puts something in the truck; feeds the baby; uses a cookie cutter to push on playdough
  - Three Objects/Uses Simple Sentences: Has a toy person put the object in the truck, drive the truck to a location; Uses a spoon to stir pretend food and feed the baby.

Creating the Balance

- Task Analysis: What are the motor, social, cognitive, language demands of the activity?

- Assess: What skills does my client bring to the table in each area: motor, social, cognitive, language?

- Goal: What is the goal of the activity?

- Reduce the demands of aspects that are not the target

- Human beings only have so much energy to devote to a task. If they are overloaded in all areas, all areas will suffer, the individuals will get anxious, retreat, or get upset. Fatigue and resistance will set in.

- Rather, reduce the load in non-targeted areas to highlight and support the child in the targeted area.
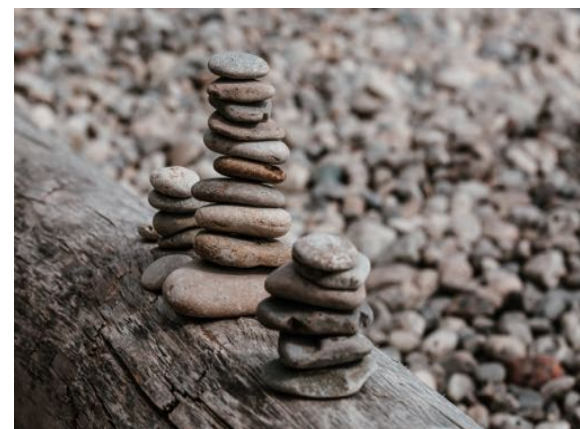
Matthew Henry   Burst

Balancing Act Examples

- Child with fine motor problems when addressing language goals: Select objects that are easy to manipulate in order to work on language targets

- Child with language problems when addressing social goals: Use cause-effect/sensory motor activities so the child has energy to socialize

- Child with limited play schemas: Provide multiple models before expecting output

- Child with social-pragmatic problems: Allow and support the child in solitary and observer play. And reduce the motor demands when expecting the child to be social (No construction play. Attend to type of group activity and modify)

The FUNdamentals of Play are Not Simple

- Many aspects to consider: Are you exhausted or exhilarated?

- Trust Human Development: Always the best place to start in our analysis and assessment.

- Modify non-essential aspects so the client has energy to focus on the goal

- Become an exceptional observer….watch what the child does and think about how it aligns to other aspects of functioning. They aren't kidding you….

- When a session is poor….It isn't that the client didn't like it, wasn't interested or was trying to control things. Rather, the client may have been overwhelmed, didn't have the skills, didn't have the energy to distribute across the task, or didn't have a schema for the task.

- We MUST GO BACK TO THE DRAWING board v. blaming our clients for their lack of attention, ability, interest or success.

- PLAY provides a framework to help us go back to the drawing board.

Thank You

- Let's Play!!
- Questions

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