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## Play is FUNdamental: Play and Reading are Connected - Really!

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- [Amy] Once again welcome to part four in our "Play is FUNdamental" four-part series. The title of today's event is "Play is FUNdamental: "Play and Reading are Connected-Really!" And our presenter today as she has been for all of the other three parts is Dr. Lisa Audet from Kent State University. Welcome, Lisa, I'm gonna turn over the floor to you.

- [Lisa] Good afternoon, everybody. I am glad to be here and presenting part four of this series. As you all know, I am on faculty at Kent State. My area is child development, child language development and autism and low-incident disorders and assistive technology. And I operate from a developmental social pragmatic approach in most of my work and I've been delighted to share that with you over the last couple of sessions. We've covered a lot of ground here in these four hours, three hours, but will soon be four hours, looking at developmental aspects that influence a child's ability to engage in play. Looking at the relationship between play and language development. Looking at the relationship between play and social functioning.

What we talked about last time was habits of the mind and strategies that we as SOPs can implement that support the development of executive function in individuals who have language impairments, who have autism, who are developmentally delayed. And that brings us today to the relationship between play and literacy, play and reading. So I hope that you will enjoy this and begin to make some connections. Maybe you have already made these connections and what I will talk about will further support that or maybe you'll make new connections. Please put your questions in the Q&A box and I will answer them at the end of today's presentation. So as you know I don't have anything to disclose here. I am being paid for what, for the work that I am doing for speechpath.com. And I have used pseudonyms for my clients or for cases. What I hope that you will gain today is kind of a refresher on the different stages of story

grammar. That knowledge will be applied to stages of language and cognitive play. Looking at play from a story grammar conceptualization. And then we'll talk about strategies for integrating play and story development into our intervention. So I'll start again as I have with an introduction and a case. We'll then review the stages of story grammar, talk about how they correlate it to play and then as I mentioned, the different strategies. So here's a little story. So, Jackson, adorable nine year old was diagnosed with ASD-1. He's in general education because he's so bright. He's in a fourth grade class. Jackson loves his train collection. He has different models of trains, he has books about trains, he has posters of trains and adults just really marvel about how much Jackson knows about trains.

And in his conversation he kinda sounds like a museum curator. But one thing happens if an adult or another appear, interrupts his monologue, he will say, I'm not done yet. We're not talking about that. Or he'll just ignore and go back to talking about his trains. So people have begun to avoid Jackson, but some peers are wise to him and they set him up to start talking about trains in situations where they know in the classroom he'll have to stop and that he will become upset when the teacher places a limit on his ability to talk about trains and that this will cause a crisis.

So we have those situations happening. I know that all of you have experienced something like this where the real savvy kid can really subtly set up a child who's on the autism spectrum, who's quite high functioning but who has these preferred activities and all of this knowledge and the child becomes quite upset. The other things we know about Jackson is that his reading for science and social studies is exceptional. So it's two grade levels above where he is academically, but when we look at his general reading comprehension ability, it's at a second grade level. So we have this huge gap between his reading comprehension during story time for stories, and in English and literature, and his content which is quite high, his content knowledge and comprehension of content information is quite high. So the teachers just chalk this up

to the fact that the discrepancies, because it's what he's interested in and that he's just not interested in stories. But there might be something beneath that, right? And what we're gonna talk about today is when we analyze the differences between different types of story grammars, we can reveal or get a understanding of how someone's play development really influence the development of a story grammar schema that would allow them to comprehend stories other than just content knowledge. So when we look at Jackson's history, we see that he was a Lego man. He liked to make models. The thing was that no one ever came to play on his models. So he would make trains, but there were never any people interacting on his trains that he made with Legos. He would make a Ferris wheel with Legos, but no one ever came to ride the Ferris wheel. There were never any stories about the things that he created.

And he prefers solitary play, so he doesn't engage in a lot of discourse. Didn't when he was in preschool and kindergarten when other kids were engaged in cooperative play, he was not really doing that. So let's take a moment and review what many of you probably already know about story grammar. Story grammar is a developmental process. It represents that internal schema that we all possess for how a story's organized. And what we might not think about is that that schema relates play to literacy and discourse and I'll spend some time talking about that. We also know that listening comprehension to stories is typically two grade levels above reading comprehensions, so it's not atypical to see that kind of discrepancy between listening and reading, right?

And that makes sense because the child is using more energy as they read and decode than when they're just listening and they can apply that internal schema for how stories are created and told, they're just applying that. But when they're reading, they have to do both simultaneously. The other thing that we know from the research and this is Katherine Snow's work, is that the more time children spend in pretend play in kindergarten, the better their reading comprehension in third grade. Now that is such

a statement, isn't that, to think about? The more time kids spend in play in kindergarten, the better their reading in third grade, why? Well, based on what we've learned over these last three hours together, pretend play is really important, right? And we know that lots of executive functions develop during play. We also know that kids begin to engage in pretend where the representation of the objects become smaller, they don't have to be real. They can allow one object to stand for another. But what are they doing when they create those cooperative play scripts? They're creating story grammar. Cooperative pretend play is the development of story grammar, right? I come in and I sign everybody a role. You're gonna be the mother. You're the father. You're the teacher. You're the doctor. So we have all the who and the what, okay, where the baby is sick and has to go to the doctor or the baby gets sick at school and has to go to the doctor. The child gets sick at school, has to go to the doctor. And then something's gonna happen.

There's gonna be a problem, a resolution and an outcome. And kids enact those stories. They're like little playwrights. Kids in cooperative pretend play are little playwrights and they are creating stories. As they create these stories, they bring that mental template to the reading task. So when the teacher says, we're gonna read a story, the child brings with them the sense of there's going to be a character, a setting, a plot, a problem, a resolution, an outcome.

There's going to be, the characters are gonna have reactions to things, because that's what they were doing in their own play. And as a result, it aids their comprehension about the story, right? They're putting information that they're listening to, they're compartmentalizing it into those, that story grammar schema. So that's one thing that we know. The other that we know is that story schema, story grammar is associated with discourse. So we think about it in terms of conversation. Who do you like to have conversations with? The people who are good storytellers, right? Someone calls you on the phone and they say you're not gonna believe what happened, all right? I,

character, was at Target, setting, when, okay, something, there was a problem. So I, they tried to solve the problem and then how it ended up. So when we engage in conversations with others, we're also applying that story grammar template. As we relate past events, as we plan for future events, right? So we're trying to plan a trip, but we don't know what to do because of COVID. So there's, we have the we, the people, the characters. The setting is a trip. The problem is COVID. Okay, you're having conversations about the future like this all the time and the way that you're organizing that conversation is grounded in story grammar. As we think about story grammar, we think about the different tasks that individuals encounter in story grammar, we think that we know that we can ask our clients to engage in listening comprehension so they might answer particular questions about the story.

Other times we might ask them to retell the story. We look at how many elements of the story they included, how they organized it. A third type would be a story construction where they have to make their own story, orally or written. And I would charge you that in this story construction task, this is what children are doing in their pretend play. They are creating stories. And they then retell those stories or they could verbalize what happened in their story orally and then later on in written form. Now some people, some interventionists use art as a way of story construction or a way of story retelling and representing what happened.

And certainly art and drawing are another way of engaging in symbol representation for an event. And then lastly there's discourse. And we can analyze our client's ability to utilize stories in discourse. So let me take a moment here and talk about that. How many, the little guy Jackson at the beginning of our story, the beginning of our hour here. Jackson's discourse did not contain story grammar. It was all the facts about trains. Jackson's play did not include story grammar. His comprehension, excuse me. His comprehension for written language was not for stories that had a character setting and a plot, but just all the facts. So we begin to see links here. Play is just about all the

facts creating something. Conversation about all the facts, about a preferred topic. Discourse, relaying all those facts about that preferred topic. So he's utilizing a particular schema in numerous contexts. We then, if we become aware of this in our clients, we can then use that awareness as part of our assessment, so we can look at the complexity of the stories that we're asking a child to comprehend. We can look at the complexity of the stories that a child creates in their play with regard to plot and theme. We can look at the stories that children tell in their discourse and analyze that and there's been plenty of research in that area and then we can analyze it of course for vocabulary, semantics, morphology and syntax. As we do this, we begin, we can sort it out into two broad categories. One is narratives and narratives are your basic novel, right? The character setting, relationship between the character's problems, emotional response, all that good stuff that makes up story grammar. We can also look at the stories children create in their play, they comprehend, and they tell from an expository text perspective.

So how are they organizing information? So you have kids, they organize, kids with autism. They have all their toys, all their Legos and they're organized just so. And people cannot come in and mess with that organization. Nothing really happens with their organization, it's kind of static. It's just the facts. Where other children who are developing pretend play skills and cooperative collaborative pretend play, there's all this beauty that's in the narratives of different characters and settings and emotional response to different problems. So we're gonna delve into this a little bit deeper. Now that we know, oh, okay, our kids with autism, our kids with developmental disabilities, they may demonstrate reading comprehension, literacy problems, those problems may also be manifested in their discourse. And if we dig deeper, we might even see that they were present in their play development. And we can then say, well, why would that happen? Well, one is children who have delays in play, typically will have delays in representational thought and symbolic thought, allowing a pen to be a spoon. Allowing a block to be a person. There's the higher level representational symbolic thought that

children have to bring with them to the story comprehension, the reading task if they gonna understand symbols, they're gonna understand that when they see D-O-G, we say dog but it represents that animal with the wagging tail that barks. We also know that they may have problems in sequential thought. Like how do we organize things? What comes first? What comes next? What comes last? And then problems with receptive and expressive language development. Children with delays in play, they might not have rich vocabulary. Children with delays in play might not have developed a distill point, so people aren't labeling their environment.

They're not developing a strong conceptual base in which you develop, you put comprehension on top of. So as a result, one of the issues that happens and many of you may work on this, you might have many kids with IEPs, where you're working on WH questions, the child will answer WH questions accurately based on a four-sentence story. Well, let's peel that back. What are our WH questions grounded in? Who was sad in the story? Oh, that's the character. Where were Johnny and Jimmy going? Okay, there's our setting. Why did Johnny get mad at Jimmy? Okay, there's our problem. Our WH questions are nothing more, do nothing more than relate back to the various aspects of story grammar.

And if the child doesn't understand how stories are put together, they're not gonna be able to recall that information. They don't have a schema. Some of you might use, there's a story chain and I think it's in one of my references, to help kids begin to learn about aspects of a story and to connect those aspects of a story to WH questions. Those kinds of bridges for kids are wonderful, 'cause otherwise it all feels like decompartmentalized information, like one piece doesn't connect to the other. But our job as speech language pathologists is to help make those connections. Children with delays may have auditory processing problems and memory problems, right? So they might not stay with play and toys for very long in order to fully complete a story. And then we have some individuals who possess gestalt learning style. I haven't talked

about a gestalt learning style yet in the series, so I'll touch upon it here. All of us, we've heard about semantic memory and episodic memory. And semantic memory is where we have deep meaning of vocabulary, of semantics, of concepts. So a good example would be birthday. We possess a deep knowledge of what birthday means. Birthday is a celebration of the date that somebody was born, it could be anybody. That celebration can take all kinds of, can look, be manifested in many different ways from eating a cookie to having a cupcake to having a party with 100 people, not today, but to having a bigger party, to receiving just a card. So it has all different kinds of manifestations. That would be semantic memory. Episodic memory occurs and is related to gestalt learning style when the idea is conceptualized in a more rigid form as an episode. Think about a sitcom, it's an episode and everything happens a certain way. So this is one of the reasons why I believe many children enjoy Disney videos and movies, because there's a real method to how those stories are put together and every time you watch them, it happens the same way. It's the same episode.

There's no variety in how it occurs. So somebody who has a very strong gestalt learning style will rely on episodic memory in order to make meaning of events. Someone with a strong episodic, yeah, episodic memory or gestalt learning style will reenact the same play scripts over and over again. There will be little variation because of their gestalt learning style. It's helpful for us to recognize, oh, that's a gestalt learning style versus, oh, that child is stimming or is restrictive or is ritualized or is scripting and using what I call dead-end words to describe an important process for that child which is their learning style. So we might see that in their play. I had one little boy. He loved to play carwash, but it was always the same way. Where he would be telling people to backer in and to go left, to go right, collect the money, turn on a button, it was the same way every time. So in our work, we would gradually talk about what part of it could be different and slowly begin to tweak the different parts of his story relating it back to different aspects of story grammar using that to inform our thinking. So someone with a gestalt learning style, their play might be very rigid. We

might also see that individuals with this style tend to be hyperlexic. So they'll be reading precociously. So you might have a four year old who's reading a third grade text. We might also see that individuals with a gestalt learning style are echolalic. So they learn from patterns. And that's just how they learn and we need to recognize that so that we can help them stretch that gestalt learning style and use it to our advantage. People with gestalt learning styles tend to like construction play. Like making something something and then they take it apart and they make it the same way again. And we say, oh, those are restrictive repetitive behaviors. Yeah, okay, let's get over that and say, this child is a gestalt learner. He's gonna learn in episodes. He's gonna learn in big chunks and begin to teach to that and begin to help stretch that learning style so it can become more flexible.

Getting back to the example of birthday, a child with a gestalt learning style at two years of age may have his own birthday and at his birthday, it's, I don't know, it's Peppa Pig. I guess that's popular now. Or in my day with my girls it was Blue's Clues. So I'm gonna go with what I know. So the birthday party is all Blue's Clues style, Blue's Clues balloons, Blue's Clues wrapping paper, Blue's Clues cake, everything is Blue's Clues. This kid is eating it up at two years of age.

It is all about him and everything is his favorite Blue's Clues. Three months later mom says we're going to a birthday party. That child's knowledge of birthday is episodic, so what he calls up is the entire episode of birthday which includes his birthday, right? It's an end of one, that's his birthday. He goes to cousin's house and she is a big princess person and so she gets a princess cake, princess balloons, princess everything and this kid is like, this isn't a birthday party. You told me we're at a birthday party. Birthday party is Blue's Clues. Birthday party is presents for me. And then it's not surprising that that kid then has a temper tantrum because he's told he can't open the presents, he can't do anything that is within his schema. So that helps us, just that word schema. The child's schema for birthday is this. But if we wanna give him a story grammar

schema, how are we going to have to modify what we're doing to stretch his gestalt? Hoping that that helps to explain things or at least get you thinking about it. The other piece with this construction play is that it aligns with expository text. And so children with autism, it's not uncommon to hear expository text in their discourse and nobody wants to talk to them, so they're not getting a whole lot of experience. And I don't necessarily think that we have known, we as SOPs have explored conversational skills of children with autism from a story grammar perspective and helped kids with autism to engage in discourse using story grammar principles. So my, Applebee's been around for a long time 1978, stages of story grammar.

This is nothing new. You've probably have all learned this in school in your graduate programs. I'm gonna go through it quickly so we can talk about apply Applebee Stages to play which is something that might not have happened while you were in graduate school. So we know the first is a heap, right? And that's a pre-narrative structure. Kids are just talking about whatever attracts their attention. So different, the little books, the first word books are examples of heap. A child who's at this stage. So we're thinking about books, I wanna talk about this, we're thinking about books and we're thinking about discourse and then we're gonna think about play.

So when we think about books, they're the little first-word books. When we think about a child's language who's at a heap stage of story development, they're naming actions and objects in their environment. What they're talking about is like a heap, children's book. So they're going around and they're saying doggy, chair, doggy ball. And they're just labeling things that they encounter, right? So these are like our 18 month olds and of course they love those first-word books and labeling pictures and looking at pictures and that kind of thing. The next is a sequence, where there's a central character, a central topic, but there's not really a relationship between these events. So my favorite, one of my favorite is "Good Night Moon," Margaret Wise Brown, where, okay, our character's the bunny. He's in a bedroom and there's a central event which is just

saying goodnight to things. But there's no relationship between the events. We think about children who tell stories that are in a sequence form. They introduce the location and the name and who's there but you don't really get a plot or anything like that, right? So a child might say, I go nana and I eat a banana and I didn't know that would rhyme. And a cracker and some ice cream and play with a ball and go take a nap and they just relate the events the events that are happening. They might not even be sequenced correctly. But they all revolve around being at nana's. The next is a primitive narrative where we have our character and our setting and a topic and there's a relationship between some elements, but it doesn't really have a problem resolution outcome.

And I like to think of the "Clifford" books where things are happening to the big red dog and the relationship between Clifford and Emily Elizabeth and lots of little problems, but not really a big plot or a theme. And then we think about children who are telling stories or engaging in discourse at a primitive narrative stage. So they might report on the event. There might not be much cohesion, but there is gonna be this problem, just like in the "Clifford" book there's always a problem, right? So the child, I hurt my arm. See my arm, showing their arm. I go hospital. Doctor take me to dark room. Okay, they're talking about getting an x-ray.

So they relate parts of the event that all surrounds a pretty significant problem, hurting their arm. That's the primitive narrative. The next one is an unfocused chain and you might hear this more with children who have language delays. We have a character setting, a problem, a cause-effect sequence, so this happens, so that happened. They'll state the child's motivation. But then the plot is kind of murky and can shift easily. And this example actually comes from a second grader who went to school with my daughter and wrote a story. And these aren't his exact words, but it struck me as such an example of an unfocused chain. So he was talking about a trip he went on and in his writing was all invented spelling too. We went to Yosemite. We stayed in a hotel

in room 343. So that's not really relevant, right? We went outside for a hike. On the hike we saw a moose. Okay, so now we're beginning to see cause-effect. I was scared. Okay, so now we're beginning to get this plot about the moose on a hike, being sacred. And then all of sudden, Jacob, I am sorry I was at Yosemite for your birthday. I couldn't go to your party because I was away. So now we have this embedded event happening and then he goes back to, mom said stay away from the moose. We kept walking to the lake. So we see that murkiness of being able to sustain that theme, right? And we're gonna talk about how this gets played out in a child's play in a minute. Then we have a focused chain where there's a clear problem and there are multiple attempts to solve the problem.

So, and sometimes with a focused chain, the event, the ending might be totally unrelated. And the books I like that go along with this is "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie" or "a Moose a Muffin," this will happen and this will happen and this will happen and this will happen and then it all ends and everybody lives happily ever after. An oral expression when children use a focused chain in their discourse, they will actually relate the information with and then and then and then. So probably all think of little kids who do this. My sister wanted a Barbie for her birthday. My mom said she had to many Barbies. My sister was sad.

Okay, so now we have an emotional reaction. And then mom tries to solve the problem. Mom looked online for Barbies. She did not like to pay a lot of money, okay, some rationale there. Mom went to Walmart too, okay. Mom was tired but then she went to Target. Okay, another attempt to solve the problem. She told my sister she would go to a flea market to get Barbie and then it ends with I'm going to Dairy Queen for ice cream. Totally unrelated to Barbie. Okay, so you have a this happened and this happened and this happened with some sense of emotional response. But the last stage is true narrative and for typically developing children, this emerges between five and six years of age. And what also emerges at five or six years of age? Cooperative

pretend play, right? Kids are engaged in all kinds of cool pretend events. And in a true narrative, you have an integrated sequence. You have causality. There's a real purpose behind actions to achieve a goal. Characters develop a personality. They have feelings. And the stories have cohesion, so syntactically the kids are able to use words like before and after and when and while. All those good cohesive devices. And they also understand pronouns. So they can keep track of who's on first. They can track the word he throughout the story and know when it refers to the little boy versus the father. So here's an example of the children's book would be, I thought of "Junie B. Jones" as a wonderful example of a true narrative, right? Great problems in Junie B. Jones. In an oral expression, a child might say something, there was a skunk in the yard. My dog was going crazy. I wanted to go out, and wanted to go outside to get the skunk. My dad said, "Don't let that dog out. "The skunk will spray him and he will stink." Okay, now we can follow who he and him refer to.

Refers to the dog, not the skunk, right? He goes on, my little sister wanted to let the dog out because he was barking so much. All right, so now we have another problem here. My mom told my sister to come and play. My sister went upstairs. In a little bit, the skunk went away and dad took my dog out for a walk 'cause the dog had to pee. So you get this kind of ending of, that's related to the whole story, why did the dog wanna go out in the first place? So we see much richer development and cohesion within the story. So that's a lot of information related to true narrative, the difference between true narratives and expository text. How true narrative is related to story grammar, but expository text may be more related to episodic memory and a gestalt learning style. And how story grammar develops within the play is applied to the listening and storytelling task and what stories sound like in discourse of young children at different levels of story grammar. Now let's go back and look at what would a child's play look like aligned to the different stages of story grammar. And why are we gonna do this? Because as we understand this, we might be in a better position to select children's books that are aligned with that child's level of play or just slightly

above to scaffold. We may also be able to guide our social pragmatic therapy and discourse intervention so that it aligns to where the child is functioning and give the child some, a schema or strategies they can use to be more successful in discourse. So let's take a look. So the story grammars, the first one is heaps. And what might we see from a child who likes the books that are just labeling objects? Well, that child might be engaged in functional object use. They use an object for its purpose. They might be exploring objects and they might have a short attention to the activity, right? They're in a room and they're building with the blocks, they do that for a few minutes and they move over and they push the car. And mom will say her toddlers, they're tearing up the house. They're going into one thing to another. If you go into a preschool toddler classroom, that's what's happening.

The kids are moving around quite a bit and they might be labeling what they're playing with, labeling the actions that it's engaging, but they're not really using the toys to create any kind of story. The child who's at a sequence stage is now more interested in cause-effect: A happens, then B. So we have cause-effect, we have construction play. Like I put blocks together to make a fence. I put blocks together to make a house. I do this first, then that. And they might have some single step play, right? I feed the baby with the bottle. But they'll have a lot of different single-step play. So they feed the baby with the bottle. They take the hammer and hammer in the nail. They put the man in the bus or in the truck and push it.

So we'll see those single-step play scripts, character, right? Maybe character and setting in lots of different events, but there isn't a lot of problem solving that's happening. In our primitive narrative as children get older, they'll have pretend solitary and pretend solitary and parallel play where there will be a character, a setting and a series of related events. So think about your kids who take a baby doll and they have a doctor's kit. And so on that baby doll, they try out the syringe, they try out the tongue depressor, they try out the bandaid, they try out the blood pressure cuff. But there's no

rationale for why they did the syringe, then the blood pressure cuff and then the tongue depressor or looked in the kid's ear, in the baby doll's ear, right? They don't really state what the problem is. They just say the baby had to go to the doctor. The doctor did this, that and the other thing to them, to the baby. The baby might not even cry. We, as we're playing with the child may give the baby an emotional state, right? Make the baby cry or make the baby laugh. In an unfocused chain, the child will have pretend cooperative play emerging and there'll be a theme, but the characters are gonna shift often. So you might see through typically developing three year olds who at one moment you have three three year olds playing together and at one moment child A is the store clerk and child B might be the security guard at the store and child C is a customer and then within seconds, child C becomes the security guard and child B becomes the clerk and child A becomes the customer. Their roles keep changing. I think about "Calvin and Hobbes" and some of their cartoons where Calvin and Hobbes are playing but their roles keep shifting.

That would be kids who are, would get into unfocused chain literature where there's a problem, people solve the problem, but, gosh, if I can't solve that problem, I'm just gonna let it go. Or I'm gonna take your problem instead. So there's a lot of moving around, a lot of movement in the themes. And, I guess, I enjoy watching kids at this stage of play, because the unspoken rules are really something to attend to. But there is an emotional state, right? So you'll hear the kids saying, no, I wanna be the cop or, no, you always get to be the cashier, as they're playing, right? So there is some emotion involved at this stage, stage of play. And pay attention. Are kids who are at this stage of play, are they attending to this kind of literature more? Do they enjoy those kinds of books more? And when they tell you about what they did last night, does it kinda mirror how they play? It's really fascinating to begin to make those connections. Okay, so the child who's at the story stage of a focused chain, this child, there might be random attempts to solve the problem. So somebody's up and caught in a fire and they're gonna put up a ladder. No, that didn't work. Oh, we have to shoot water really

high. And so they're trying number, a number of different solutions. And then you have the true narrative which is really like a story. The children are using a different number of pragmatic functions across each other. They're sharing internal thoughts. They're sharing emotional states. And that's really the complex play that kids then bring to the story task. So what do we need to do? Clinical strategies to support play and literacy. I really like a story grammar approach to intervention for children with developmental delays, children with autism. Children, they might have a semantic problem, but I'm gonna be looking at their play and I'm gonna be looking at literacy, right, as I work to build their vocabulary. So some things we can do is think about multiple levels of representation.

For young children, we might have photographs of a child engaged in play that we label and then we create that as a little book. So that book might actually look like a heap, right? It might be characterized as heap story grammar, but it aligns to where the child is in play. We might have photos of a child engaged in different activities throughout the day, so the child is putting frosting on cookies. The child is digging in the sand box and they might be working to solve a problem. We might highlight that in the story book that we create for the child. And then the child's own book represents a particular level of story grammar. We want it to be aligned.

Their play and their story grammar and the book that we create for them to be aligned. Other strategies is after a child engages in an event, we ask them to retell what just happened to them and we have to provide them with strategies for doing this. So you may use one of those story ropes, story chains. So that highlights the who, what, when, where and why, because continuing to fail at answering WH questions isn't gonna get anybody anywhere, but understanding that those WH questions relate to a story and that story relates to an event that happened which is exactly what happens in play. So another way to build that relationship to get that story retelling to be solidified is to engage in reading a book and acting out a scene. So if my child is at an

unfocused chain stage, I would expect that they're going to reenact the book that was read to them as an unfocused chain. And then another is that I can then photograph or take the reenactment and as we're looking at it, label the different parts of story grammar with the child and for the child. Other strategies, looking at our discourse and providing the child with visuals, especially if it's an older child, with visuals that represent aspects of story grammar. So when they start to tell a story, they need to begin with the who, the character, the setting, the problem, the resolution and the outcome. That their story needs to focus on those particular elements when they're engaged in conversation. We can use conversations specific to photos from the things that they've created, from the books that you create for them. And create a storyboard using story grammar elements. Participants make decisions about who's going to be in the story and then they reenact it.

And we might focus on specific emotional responses. Let me give you a quick example of that. I used this particular strategy with a boy who was probably five years old and he would have a problem, he was very bright, but identifying problems and possible solutions was very difficult for him in play and in real life. And he would become very anxious when he read about it too if characters were having a problem. I remember once one little story was about little people in the bathtub and the people ended up going down, the little toys ended up going down the drain and that made him so incredibly anxious, his emotional response to that problem. So he created a story about aliens coming to earth to get gold. And he identified all the parts of story grammar and then we reenacted it using props that he had selected and throughout the story, I kept presenting problems. Like I didn't get enough gold. I had too much gold for the container. I didn't have the container that I wanted. But he knew ahead of time that as we were going to play with this, that there were gonna be problems and we were going to have to solve them. So we got it on video and then we were able to watch it. Watch the video and from the video, we were able to create a story. A written story. He narrated and I typed. So that's a little example of how that could work.

Obviously shared book reading. But shared book reading that aligns with where the child's play is. I might be speaking to the choir here, but too often we think we have to read the book as is, but if we were to think about where the child was in play and where the child is in discourse, and we took a book and we kind of converted it to nearer where they are or slightly above it, we might have sustained attention for that shared book reading activity. And as I mentioned before, targeting an executive function, particular executive function, we talked about last week, that we can emphasize during our reading or retelling or recreating of a problem. So it might be working memory. Like I'm gonna need to remember three things about this story that went wrong. So we tell our clients, there are gonna be three things that happened that we have to remember.

Three problems or our characters going to visit three places. We're gonna have to remember three places and we kinda prime them to attend to that particular aspect of story grammar. But again it's not above, it might be slightly above where they are in their play but not hugely above where it's unattainable for them right now. So some points to remember. Sequencing tasks don't necessarily support narrative development, but more expository text, like how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. That's expository text. What happens when making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and you don't have knife?

That turns it into a narrative. The second point to remember is that we wanna emphasize the emotional reaction of characters for narrative development particularly for kids who might be gestalt learners or have autism or other types of developmental delays. So if we're playing with a baby doll, that's why we make the baby doll cry, right? The baby doll gets a shot. There's an emotional reaction. The third point, I mentioned this, we wanna prime the students for what they need to attend to during the story reading activity, the listening task and that what we ask them to attend, look and listen for is closely in line to where they are in their play and their discourse. Which

comes to the next point, we want our play activities to be aligned with receptive and expressive and story grammar ability. And finally, if we understand where a child is in play and we hear it in their discourse, we can then select children's books that will match where they are and gently move them forward, scaffolding them forward. We will then be much more in control of our interventions, right? So here I provide a number of resources for you.

Certainly Applebee's and then an article from 2018. Laura Justice's work. Some of you might be familiar with her. So she really focuses on story comprehension as well as some auditory processing, but we can use that work and align it with what we do in play with children who have language impairments. And then I provide information from Barbara Culatta who focuses quite a bit on using play and children's natural curiosity to work on phonological processing. I provide you with some apps that you might use that allow you to take pictures and move to stories as well as PIXAR clips which our site, wonderful clips but typically don't have any words to them so children can put words to them. And then some apps for you to look into.

So at this point, I think you're prepared to go out and play with your clients and remember that play builds social commune, ah, play builds communication, play builds executive functioning and play builds literacy. I have time now to take questions. I see I have one from Sarah, "Do you have a list of recommended books that fit "into the Applebee Stages?" No, I don't have that book or have a list like that. You might look at the list of books that Laura Justice uses. And you might, your library might have a list of books that align according to age, typically developing age and then you can look at age associated with level of story grammar. So like 12-12 to 18 month olds, they like books that are heaps, right? So I would encourage you to touch base with your librarian. And then, Jessica, "Thank you for the information. "Excited to pass it on to teachers." Yeah, early intervention teachers could really use this information. Our kids really have to spend much more time in play. Okay, any other questions. All right then. I

have a little bit more time. So I'd like to have you share some examples. And I am gonna share some examples to apply this information in real life. So let's say you're working with a child who has, has minimal expressive language skills and, well, here's a real life example. A classroom of kids with minimal expressive language, minimal exploratory play skills, very short attention span. They're four year olds. They have autism. The teacher randomly selects a book off her bookshelf for these little guys, for circle time. The book is "Curious George." Okay, so "Curious George" is a true narrative. Very pretty complex story grammar. The children do not attend to that book. She's reading it verbatim. She has to ultimately put kids in Rifton chairs which is kind of illegal and it's a form of restraint. Put one child, well, she has a couple, in Rifton chairs.

So they stay put so they can tolerate her reading an inappropriate story to them. It's not an inappropriate story, the content is fine, but it doesn't match where they are developmentally. A better way for her to do this would've been to look at them and say, gee, they're all at kind of, they're not even at a pretend play stage, they're at a cause-effect stage. They're at an exploratory stage.

And to select a book that is a heap, it has maybe categories of fruits and vegetables, maybe a flip book, a touch book. And to have a bag, even a pillow case filled with objects that correlate with the book and let the children select an object and kinda find that object in the book and match it and then make that object do something, that would be a beautiful illustration of how we can understand where a child is developed mentally and create a very rich literacy environment using a book that correlates to their play and making meaning of it, right? Scaffolding, having that object. So maybe even if there were different foods. I have a bagful of pretend foods and then I can match it to the picture and then I can scaffold it up into single-step play and pretend I'm gonna eat the food. She would not have had to strap kids into Rifton chairs if her approach to literacy was play-based, language-based and discourse-based. Think of

the wonderful language that could happen during that time. Like, oh, eat banana. Same, banana same. You found the banana. You were looking, looking for banana. All that great language that has real meaning for the child. Okay, I have one more question, how would you write up goals for these skills? Yeah, so I would, probably if I was working on a play goal, I would write a goal that would say that the child would engage and I would specify the type of play. So it might be single-step pretend play and then I would identify the social type of play.

So they're gonna do it in solitary or cooperative, parallel, okay, so I'm gonna specify the three different aspects of play. If I were working on the literacy component, I would write a goal that would say the child will engage in a conversation relating information about character and setting. So I'm gonna integrate what I know about story grammar into conversation, if that makes any sense. And then you put in your 80% or whatever it might be. Okay, so thank you for good information. Yeah, and ideas for play. So what, getting back to writing the goals, and you're welcome. Thank you for saying that it was great information. And as you write your goals, use the different components that we've talked about. So if you're thinking about theory of mind, if you were here last week and you're looking at persistence, you can think about the goal that the child will come up with three alternatives to solve a problem. That would be a good objective, goal and objective. Okay, so at this point, I know that I'm out of time. I'm gonna turn it over to Amy. And I thank you all. I hope that this supports the work that you do. It's really the reason why I do this, so that you can be more successful and that your students will, it will enhance your students' communication ability, your clients' skills, thank you.

- [Amy] Lisa, thank you so much. That was a fabulous wrap up to a really wonderful series. I'd like to express our gratitude for you being willing to put this series on for us. I know that people have enjoyed it. As have I, so thanks very much. Thanks to our audience for being here today. I appreciate you spending an hour of your day with us.

And once again if you missed any of parts one, two or three previously, if you weren't able to attend those live events, we should have all those recordings up and available within just a few days. So we wanted to wait until the entire series was done before putting all of those up, so that is why you don't see them yet. But anyway, I will wrap up here. Thanks again to everybody and I hope you have a great day, buh-bye.