PURPOSEFUL PLAY PROGRAM

Available at Princeton Speech-Language & Learning Center

Learning through play

For most of us, interacting with other people comes naturally. However, preschool children with conditions such as High Functioning Autism, Asperger's Syndrome and speech and language disorders often need help learning how to communicate and play with others.

PSLLC's cutting-edge Purposeful Play Program brings together preschoolers of similar ages and abilities for weekly group therapy sessions aimed at improving play and early communication skills. The groups give children a unique opportunity to learn and practice social interactions such as negotiating, playing cooperatively and reading emotional signals.

Who can benefit from participating in the groups?

The small groups are geared for preschool children beginning at 3 years old who have at least near average cognitive skills and some awareness of others around them. Children may have social cognitive deficits as a result of Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, ADD, NLD, PDD-NOS, sensory regulatory disorders, speech and language disorders or related diagnoses.

How the groups work

New groups are formed at the beginning of the school year for the regular (September to June) session and in June for the 8-week summer session. Each group includes two to four students and meets for an hour, once a week, under the supervision of a nationally certified speech-language pathologist. Each lesson incorporates a weekly theme and includes:

- **Circle Time** – Introduce theme and concepts (5 to 10 minutes)
- **Active Time** – Music, dance or game (5 to 15 minutes)
- **Purposeful Play Time** – Shared imaginative or problem-solving activities (20 to 30 minutes)
- **Structured Play Time** – Game related to day's theme (5 to 10 minutes)
- **Closing Circle and Parent Time** – Review theme and discuss specific social thinking skills to practice at home (5 minutes)
- **Goodbye Song With Parents**

New ways to play

Play is the avenue through which children learn to relate to others. The Purposeful Play Program teaches children to play in novel ways that increase language skills while emphasizing relationship development and connecting with adults and peers. In addition, participants build skills that lay the foundation for higher-level academic and conversational skills such as:

- Attention
- Engagement
- Communication
- Shared problem solving
- Creativity, spontaneity and logic
- Higher levels of thinking

While the program explores a wide range of topics, some central lessons include:

- **Whole Body Listening** – Students are taught the idea that the whole body (eyes, ears, mouth, hands, feet, bottom and brain) needs to be focused on the group in order to listen and to show you are listening.
- **Keeping Your Body and Brain in the Group** – Understanding that our bodies need to look interested and connected to the group and our brain needs to keep thinking about what the group is thinking about in order to participate.

If you would like to learn more about how our Purposeful Play Program can help your child, please call us today, 609-924-7080.

Princeton Speech-Language & Learning Center

Listen. Learn. Speak. Interact.

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