


**JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP**  
 SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY GROUP

Date & Time:	4/12/22 6:30 to 8:00 pm
Location:	Virtual Zoom Meet "Let's Talk Social Skills"
Attendance:	D. Perez, T. Acosta, M. Katz, K. Heiner, B. Bristow, M. Bristow

Topic	Discussion Summary	Actions	Responsible Party	Due Date
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Housekeeping	Tracy Acosta went over the rules of the group and introductions			
<p>Guest Presenter Bari Bristow and Morgan Bristow from Bristow Center</p> <p>The presentation was on Social Skills and Why are they important.</p>	<p>Why are social skills important? Important for Gen. Ed &amp; Spec. Ed Reading people's emotions and nonverbal info Problem-solving, managing frustration, shyness, anxiety, ADHD, etc. Social Skills affect the ability to follow a group plan, initiate conversations, maintain on topic conversations, problem solve, self-regulate when frustrated, and make friends. Social Skills do not always come naturally or as easily to all kids, but they can be taught!</p> <p>Three Focus Areas Internal Awareness (more self-control of inner thoughts, emotions and actions in social settings) External Awareness (considering the people around you) Social Integration (application of skill sets and strategies - tools, problem-solving strategies with guidance) Bristow Center specific information about their programs. Further information can be found here. <a href="https://www.bristowcenter.com/">https://www.bristowcenter.com/</a></p>	Share info	All	

	<p>Group Structure  4:1 Ratio (4 students : 1 mentor)  Sessions start with an introduction to a skill/concept (Not only will the skill be taught, the mentor will give a description of the skill and answer WHY it is being taught.)  This is followed by a mentor-led activity (specific to the skill that was introduced. Model the use and practice with peers that are developmentally at the same levels in a safe environment.)  Integrated Activity  Group Debrief / Dismissal</p> <p>Social Consultations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Last about an hour</li> <li>● Start with a Parent Consultation where parent concerns are recorded.</li> <li>● Then a consultation with the child to assess the child's levels.</li> </ul> <p>COST: \$225  Consultations and Sessions are out of pocket. Not acknowledged as a medical program and won't be until possibly the legislature changes.</p> <p>Sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 6 Classes = \$500</li> <li>● 12 Classes = \$925</li> <li>● After having the initial consultation, class duration will be decided upon. Typically, most children will go 1x/week; sometimes the younger kids ("Brain Builders") working on more foundational skills may be recommended to go 2x/week.</li> </ul> <p>Self-Regulation Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stop, Think, Process: stop before responding, think about what was said/what was happening, process before proceeding forward.</li> </ul> <p>Levels of the Programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Brain Builder: more foundational social skills</li> <li>● Brain Charger</li> <li>● Brain Solver</li> <li>● Brain Operator: highest level</li> <li>● Social Skills are fluid. Kids may move up and down at any time. Even if they are on a Brain Solver level, something may come up that needs addressing that is a more foundational, or</li> <li>● Brain Builder, Skills will be addressed as the needs arise.</li> </ul>			
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	<p>Questions and Answer session</p> <p>The terms anxiety / worries were brought up. Why is the term worries being used?</p> <p>Kids understand worries more than anxiety and can relate to the fact that everyone has worries. Not a medical facility and cannot diagnose. The focus and emphasis is placed on how kids present.</p> <p>Children are grouped at the Bristow Center by similar personalities and social levels. How can you do this in a classroom or a mainstream environment with Gen. Ed and Spec. Ed students?</p> <p>Practicing the skills that are being taught at the center.</p> <p>Empowering children who don't have social skills innately built in.</p> <p>In a post-Covid world especially, how can we wean off electronics and get back to society? Use electronic time to your advantage. Make it contingent upon things that need to happen. Limit electronics after a certain time, and give a start and end time.</p> <p>How do you teach specific self-regulation skills when children don't show frustration or weakness during sessions? (behavioral contrast between home and school / group sessions)</p> <p>Practicing scenarios repetitively.</p> <p>If we don't see it in school, but parents see it at home, that be listed as a parent concern and something that will continue to be worked on.</p> <p>Will you go into the schools at all to help parents at IEP meetings in pointing out things that you've noticed at the centers and struggles parents have at home?</p> <p>At this point in time, not doing any consulting with the schools. Potentially down the road. However, still willing to be a support to parents to give them helpful information to bring to the district if asked / if needed.</p> <p>What is social integration? Can you go into more detail?</p> <p>Understanding nonverbal cues and activities that require integrating internal and external awareness.</p> <p>How do you teach idioms like "he's on fire!" or "break a leg!" to a child who takes everything in literal, black and white terms?</p> <p>These are skills that are touched on in later levels as they are older skills, and you need to work on more foundational skills before you would get to that point.</p>			
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Next Meeting	May 12, 2022 Social Skills and reflection time in person meeting at BOE building			

Submitted by: Michele Katz