

**Real Life, Real Progress
for Children with
Autism Spectrum Disorders**

*Strategies for
Successful Generalization
in Natural Environments*

edited by

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The individuals described in this book are composites or real people whose situations are masked and are based on the authors’ experiences. In all instances, names and identifying details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

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APPENDIX 6.1.

TeachTown Generalization Activities

The following are just a few of the activities designed to supplement material that the child learns while using the TeachTown: Basics computer program (<http://www.teachtown.com>). The activities are deliberately written to be very simple so that someone with no training can implement them immediately. However, when implemented with a proven methodology, such as Pivotal Response Training (PRT; see Chapter 2), they can be a valuable part of a therapy program. They can be printed directly from the software and should be used to maximize generalization as the child moves through the curriculum. Other than generalization, the activities also have the advantage of producing collateral effects (i.e., changes that are not directly targeted by the activities but which are likely to improve by using them) such as improved play, imitation, motor, self-help, and social interaction. These activities, when implemented with no parent training, have also been shown to decrease inappropriate behaviors (e.g., tantrums, avoidance) and inappropriate language (i.e., saying things that are out of context or self-stimulatory).

The *primary benefits* specify the targets that the activities were designed to teach in the natural environment including receptive language, cognitive/academic, social skills, and adaptive life skills. The *secondary benefits* are skills that the activities also target and may include joint attention or other social interaction, play, imitation, motor, or self-help skills. The *materials required* lists what objects are needed to implement the activity. These materials are toys and objects that are typically found in the homes and schools of many children. There are some activities that may require special materials, but even these are materials that can easily be found in toy or educational learning stores. It is appropriate to replace materials as the facilitator sees fit either due to availability or due to increasing the child's motivation for the activity. The *instructions* tell the adult how to engage the child in the activity and how to teach the skills that are targeted. The *advanced instructions* instruct the adult how to move the activity on so that it is more advanced or more age-appropriate for older children.

ACTION FIGURES

Supplements TeachTown: Basics computer lessons: Actions

Primary benefits: Receptive vocabulary (verbs)

Secondary benefits: Expressive language, fine motor skill, object imitation, pretend play

Materials required: Action figures, dolls, or other toys that you can pretend to engage in movement

Instructions

Take a few dolls or action figures that the child enjoys and engage the child in play with the objects. On your turn, tell the child, "The doll is going swimming" and make the figure swim. On the child's turn, try to get the child to imitate your

action or, if the child is catching on, ask the child to do something different with his or her character (e.g., “The doll is RUNNING home!”). You may need to model the new action if the child does not get it right away. Once the child is able to imitate several actions, ask the child to demonstrate actions on his or her own (e.g., “The doll needs to jump”) and model when necessary to help the child understand.

APPENDIX 6.2.

Sample TeachTown Naturalistic Generalization Activity Data Sheet

To maximize generalization, have facilitators trade materials or work with the child in different settings when possible.

Identify at least two facilitators who will be working with the child on this activity:

- 1) Shannon Rhodes (mother)
- 2) Dan Taylor (classroom aide)
- 3) Chris Dawson (behavior therapist)

Identify at least two settings in which to practice this activity with the child:

- 1) Home (playground)
- 2) School (classroom)
- 3) School (therapy room)

Identify at least two different sets of materials you will use to work on this activity with the child:

- 1) Star Wars figures with dollhouse accessories
- 2) Dollhouse with accessories and dolls
- 3) Royalty puppet set (king, queen, jester, knight, dragon, etc.) and portable puppet theater

Identify at least three collateral skills you will work to increase while doing this activity (e.g., social initiations, positive affect, pretend play):

- 1) Spontaneous imitation of nontarget expressive vocabulary (e.g., people, adjectives, prepositions)
- 2) Spontaneous imitation of pretend play acts with figures
- 3) Spontaneous expressive pointing (ie., pointing to share experiences with adult)

Session date: March 6

Date activity started: Jan. 15

Date activity mastered: N/A

Date lesson started: March 2

Date prerequisite lesson mastered: Actions 1–Feb. 20 Date lesson mastered: N/A

Child: Simon Rhodes

Facilitator: ① 2 3

Environment: ① 2 3

Materials: ① 2 3

TeachTown (or other) activity: Action figures

TeachTown lesson: Actions 2

TeachTown learning domain: REC LANG COG/ACADEMIC LIFE SKILLS SOCIAL

(continued)

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