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***Circuit** is a quarterly publication of South Dakota Parent Connection.*

***Circuit** is intended to be a reference publication packed with information and is provided electronically and in printed format.*

South Dakota Parent Connection also produces an electronic semi-monthly newsletter (weConnect) with current events and time-sensitive information.

Circuit

Offering information and assistance to parents and families caring for children with a disability or special need.



Often, a child will not learn social skills just from being given an opportunity to interact with peers alone.

Like any other skill (academic or athletic), they need to be taught

what to do and when to do it!

*Jannette Reg & Robert Putnam
The May Institute*

What Parents Should Know...About the Importance of Social Competence

Saying “please” and “thank you,” taking turns, recognizing – and apologizing – when one has physically or emotionally hurt another, and managing anger or frustration. These are examples of positive social behaviors that allow an individual to initiate and maintain positive social interactions with others, develop friendships and social support networks, and cope effectively



with social environments. Many children are able to learn and mimic social behaviors by observing their environment. Guidance from parents and other adults, as well as the natural consequences experienced when one has upset another, reinforce these expected social behaviors. But some children struggle with reading non-verbal cues, responding in socially acceptable ways, and successfully engaging in social interactions with others. While any child can struggle with mastering social skills, students with learning disabilities, attention disorders, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, autism spectrum disorders, emotional disorders and cognitive disorders are more likely to struggle than their peers without these conditions.

Why Social Competence Matters

The benefits to children and youth who are able to develop social

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The Importance of Social Competence

(continued from page 1)

competence (a set of skills that can be generalized to a multitude of social situations) are far-reaching and long-term:

- Increased inclusion (participation) in general education and community settings
- Increased acceptance by peers
- Development of positive self-concept
- Better coping and attention skills
- Increased academic achievement
- Successful transition into post-high school and work settings
- Successful employment, including better job opportunities
- Overall improved interactions with others

Social Interactions are Complex

Social skills require communication, problem-solving, decision-making, self-management, and peer relations abilities that allow one to imitate and maintain social skills with others. (Thomas McIntyre, 2003) And, as if this were not challenging enough, social conventions present anything but a straightforward “one size fits all” approach. Consider that each of the following interactions has a different “set” of expected social conventions (courtesies):

- Parent and Child, Siblings
- Teacher and Student
- Same Age Peers, Friends
- Employer and Employee, Employee and Customer
- Acquaintance, Stranger
- Social conventions of the dominant culture vs. culture of the child and family

Is it any wonder that children and youth struggle with developing social competence?!

Children Learn Social Skills Just Like Any Other Skill...Through Informal & Formal Teaching & Practice

Families can utilize a wide array of strategies (actions) to help their child develop and practice social skills – at home, in the community and at school. For some students, additional efforts will be required to support them in generalizing (applying) skills from one setting to another. For students receiving special education services, social skills development may be an appropriate goal in the IEP. Several strategies are listed below:

Teachable Moment/Incidental Teaching — uses naturally occurring and “arranged” teaching moments at home and away. Adults can model appropriate social behavior and serve as a coach, explaining what “clues” to look for and how to respond. For example, when one is ready to check out of the store, library, etc., first look to see if there is a line at the checkout. If there is a line, one should stand at the end of the line and wait their turn.

Playdates — playdates with one other child allows a child to prepare for and practice conversational skills (take turns talking, ask about another’s interests), and skills such as taking turns when playing a game, playing games both agree on — or alternating activities that each prefers. A child can also practice specific skills like inviting someone to play, welcoming a guest when they arrive, and thanking them for coming when they leave. Parents can coach their child in advance and stay within listening range if prompting/encouragement is needed.

Children’s Literature/Videos/Movies — many options exist for children and youth of all ages to learn social skills through the actions of others. Topics are wide ranging, from making friends, to dealing with bullies, to peer pressure and more.

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Games — playing a game generally requires taking turns, and both losers and winners can practice sportsmanship. Games that directly teach social skills are available.

Role Playing — creates opportunities for your child to role play situations that have occurred or are likely to occur. For instance, if someone asks them to participate in an activity, they can say “yes” and join the activity or say “no, but thanks for asking.”

Play Groups — may be structured or free time groups and offer children the opportunity to practice skills with small groups of peers. Parents can prepare their child for success by role playing common situations.

Social Skills Classes or Groups — directly teach children/youth social skills and provide practice with peers. Please contact SDPC or visit sdparent.org/Helpful Links/ Youth Activities and Camps for information or social skills classes in your area.

Peer Tutoring/Mentoring — positive peer role models can often teach and encourage children/youth to develop skills in non-threatening, fun, engaging, and effective ways.

Social Skills Autopsies — allow for a child to improve their ability to assess a situation, choose an appropriate response, and evaluate the effectiveness of the response. Following an event (at home, at school, or in the community) an adult can discuss with a child what happened, what the child did in response, what happened when he did it, whether the outcome (effect) was positive, negative or neutral, and what the child will do the next time.

<http://www.ldonline.org/article/14910/> by Rick LaVoie.

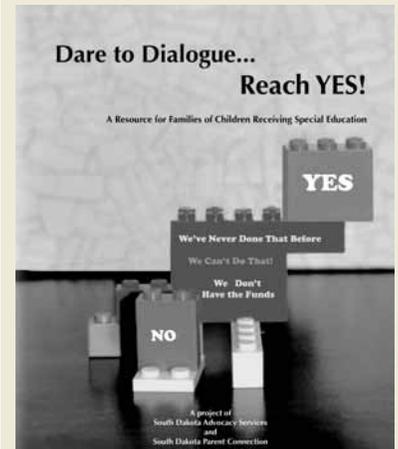
Social Skills Scripts — address 15 of the most common areas of social difficulty of children. <http://www.ecac-parentcenter.org/> (**Social 20Skills/ Social 20Skills 20Scripts.doc**)

Social Stories — provide a mental rehearsal for a child to prepare for and better cope with new or challenging situations. Many free resources are available on Carol Gray’s website at www.child-behavior-guide.com/social-stories.html

Strategies/techniques to teach social skills are often very appropriate across disabilities. Strategies for children with autism spectrum disorders, for example, can be used for students with ADHD or learning disabilities, and vice versa. School or community libraries will have books to lend, as well as the Consumer Library at University of South Dakota School of Medicine Wegner Library. Visit www.sdparent.org, **Our Resources, Virtual Library** tab for information. A wide variety of free online resources, including videos, are available. A few resources are listed below:

- **About.com**, <http://specialed.about.com/od/characterbuilding/a/Teaching-Social-Skills.htm>
- **ADDitudeMag.com**, www.additudemag.com *Parenting, Friendship and Social Skills*
- **Adoption.com** <http://special-needs.adoption.com/children/the-importance-of-developing-social-skills.html>
- **Dr. Mac’s Behavior Management Site**, www.behavioradvisor.com
- **LD Online**, <http://www.ldonline.org/indepth/behavior>

Another Resource Available for Parents



Families of sons or daughters with special needs must navigate a variety of systems — education, health care, disability related service providers and more. Each system has its own set of rules, guidelines, and eligibility requirements. And, each system has human beings who interpret the rules, guidelines and eligibility requirements. Families may be told “No, that is not possible,” when in fact it may be possible.

South Dakota Parent Connection (SDPC) and South Dakota Advocacy Services have collaborated on *Dare to Dialogue...Reach Yes!* to help families understand child and parent rights provided by special education, advocate for their children and respond to “no” in factual and positive ways.

Dare to Dialogue...Reach Yes! is available as a printed booklet available from SDPC by calling 1-800-640-4553 or email sdpc@sdparent.org, or for download at www.sdparent.org (**Resources, Dare to Dialogue...Reach Yes!**).

What is Thinking Social?

By Brittany Schmidt,
Autism Behavioral Consulting Inc., Sioux Falls,
www.abc-autism.com

Thinking social refers to our ability to understand the thoughts, feelings, ideas, and perceptions of those around us. We then have to decide about how our behavior is perceived by others. Most people do this without thinking or even realizing they are doing it. Other people have to work at this skill.

So, how can we encourage Social Thinking skills development when the skills do not come naturally? The answer lies in understanding the core concepts of:

I observe others and have thoughts ...they are doing the same thing.

The behaviors we have around others need to be more “expected” than “unexpected.” Learning skills of observation and self-monitoring will assist the person with Social Thinking difficulties to make choices about their own behaviors. The process of teaching self-reflection and behavioral change isn’t simple or quick. The process is ongoing for most people, because the rules and environments change as they age. For example, what they may experience in elementary school will be different than the social challenges at a job. The core Social Thinking vocabulary and skill sets do transcend development, however the social challenges also change and can be more complicated. Always remember to “Think Social!”

Michelle Garcia Winner coined the term “Social Thinking” to refer to how she provides information and therapy to the people she supports within her clinics and groups. Books (and other resources) developed by Michelle Garcia Winner or Pamela Crooke available on the Social Thinking website (www.socialthinking.com) include:

- *You are a Social Detective! Explaining Social Thinking to Kids*
- *Diary of a Social Detective*
- *Socially Curious, Curiously Social*
- *Social Thinking at Work, Why Should I Care?*

Other titles, available from Autism Asperger Publishing Company (www.aapcpublishing.net) include:

- *The Hidden Curriculum for Understanding Unstated Rules in Social Situations for Adolescents and Young Adults*
- *The Hidden Curriculum of Getting and Keeping a Job: Navigating the Social Landscape of Employment*
- *Asperger Syndrome and Difficult Moments*

Upcoming YOUth Retreats Help Build a Life of Independence

SDPC is sponsoring a series of YOUth Retreats in South Dakota to help YOUth with special needs, ages 14-21, transition to independence. The retreats are offered at no cost to a YOUth and a parent.

YOUth will have the opportunity to make new friends and be introduced to **MyFILE**, a record keeping system designed for YOUth moving into adulthood. Each participating YOUth will receive a MyFILE (valued at \$40) and will learn how to make the most of the life-long learning tool for managing life experiences.

The retreat will focus on three of the 20 sections of the MyFILE so that YOUth, with support from their family, can take charge of their health care, be prepared to get a job and develop independence in maintaining their important records.

The upcoming YOUth Retreats will be **Saturday, May 3 in Chamberlain** and **Saturday, May 10 in Sioux Falls**. Group size is limited, so register today. Register on line at www.surveymonkey.com/s/J7T59BQ for Chamberlain or www.surveymonkey.com/s/JFNWBFR for Sioux Falls, or call 1-800-640-4553 or 605-361-3171 or email sdpc@sdparent.org.



Midcontinent Grant Enables SDPC to Launch Mobile Site

South Dakota Parent Connection's newly created mobile website is LIVE thanks to a grant from MidContinent Communications. Thank you to Midcontinent Communications for supporting families of children with special needs! Above, Nancy Weber-Sweere (left), Account Executive with Midcontinent Communications, presents a \$1,000 check to Elaine Roberts, SDPC Executive Director. You can access the site from any mobile device by typing sdparent.org or visit <http://m.sdparent.org> on your mobile device.

Plan Now for Summer Activities and Child Care

Are you ready for summer? If you are like most parents of children with special needs, summer arrangements for your children must be made well in advance. Whether your child is in preschool or a teenager, families of children with special needs must find supervised activities and additional caregivers for the months that school is not in session.

Eliminate the stress of looming deadlines by scheduling some uninterrupted, focused time to make future plans. Families often need to create a patchwork of activities, child care and respite care to get through the extended out-of-school time that summer brings. Visit www.sdparent.org, **Family Life/Virtual Library/Respite and Childcare** for *Tips to Help Families with Children with Special Needs Navigate the Summer Season*.

At www.sdparent.org (**Helpful Links, Advocacy and Support, Child and Respite Care**) parents will find more links to child care resources.



Links to **Youth Activities and Camps** are found at www.sdparent.org (**Helpful Links/Youth Activities and Camps**) or on SDPC's mobile site. Be sure to check the full website and mobile site often for updates.

If you do not have computer access, SDPC will send you a copy of the information from the website. Call 1-800-640-4553.

ADDitude Magazine has a number of articles on summer camps and activities, such as *How to Plan the Perfect Summer* and *Choosing the Best Program for your Child* and more. Visit <http://www.additudemag.com/topic/parenting-adhd-children/adhd-summer.html>.

Summer Activities Planning Tips

Joan Celebi* offers these tips when planning for summer activities for children with special needs. *Reprinted with permission.*

Therapy: What therapies will your child need to continue over the summer? Which ones can be put on hold? What are the therapists' summer schedules?

Summer school/classes/lessons: What forms need to be filled out? What accommodations can be made, if necessary?

Sitters: Will you need time with the sitter to go over summertime routines and how-to's? What are your expectations for the time your sitter will spend with your children this summer?

Day-care: Do you need to fill out any special permission forms? Will the care providers need any special warm-weather-related instructions?

Camps: Are there medical records you'll need to submit with the camp application? Will you need to meet with the camp director and/or staff to discuss your child's needs?

Vacation: If you're traveling for vacation this summer, which hotels are the most family friendly? Which activities and destinations have accommodations or special programs for children with special needs?

Respite Care: Do you need to take a break? There are a growing number of excellent respite care programs that you may want to investigate. Remember to "care for the caregiver"—replenish your own inner reserves with some time off to relax, recharge, and renew.

Downtime: Block out dates and times on the summer calendar NOW for downtime. I know, it seems paradoxical to have to schedule downtime! But downtime is essential to the well being of everyone in the family. Make it a priority by providing regular time to just "be."

*Joan Celebi is founder of SpecialNeedsParentCoach.com, and the author of "Overwhelmed No More! The Complete System for Balanced Living for Parents of Children with Special Needs." Read more tips from Joan at www.sdparent.org (**Family Life, Virtual Library, Respite and Child Care**). Joan's articles include "It's Not to Early to Get Ready for Summer!" and "How to Find, Train and Keep Great Sitters When You Have a Child with Special Needs."*

Upcoming Parent Education Sessions

The **Free Parent Education and Support** Series are held the second Thursday of the month through May at 7 p.m. (Central Time)/6 p.m. (Mountain Time). Sessions are available:

- **LIVE Online** Visit www.sdparent.org under the Family Life/Parent Education Series tab for details on how to join the online live session or call **1-800-640-4553**.
- In **Sioux Falls** (Wegner Health Center at 1400 W. 22nd Street, Room 126)
- In **Rapid City** (School of Mines and Technology Classroom Building, 501 E. Saint Joseph Street, Room 106).
- In **Salem** (McCook Central School, 200 E. Essex, Room 29 on 2nd Floor)

The sessions are appropriate for all parents and those working with or supporting children with special needs. Child care is not provided. Pre-registration is encouraged, but not required. Register at www.sdparent.org, where you will find materials which may be provided in advance of the presentation, and information on future as well as previously recorded sessions. You may also call **605-361-3171** or **1-800-640-4553**.

Upcoming Sessions

April 10 — Often Overlooked...Transition Planning for Health Care. For youth with special health needs, remaining as healthy as possible will support success in all areas of life. Parents and youth can prepare now for the changing roles that will help youth understand their health condition, and participate in and direct (to the greatest extent possible) their health care so they remain healthy and ready to learn/work whether they live at home or away. Presented by South Dakota Parent Connection.

May 8 — Job Placement and Training Strategies (Part II). Do you worry about what your son or daughter will do after graduating from high school? The employment service delivery system can be confusing to navigate. This session will focus on specific strategies and supports for achieving competitive employment in integrated community businesses; the roles of schools and adult services in transition planning and employment; and how parents can impact the employment process for their son or daughter. Presented by Wendy-Parent Johnson, Executive Director of University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine Center for Disabilities.

The Parent Education and Support series is sponsored by SDPC and the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine Center for Disabilities. For more information, contact SDPC at **1-800-640-4553** or sdpc@sdparent.org.

Registration Open for Dare to Dream Conference

Registration is now open for the 2014 Dare to Dream Conference in Aberdeen June 8-10. For information on stipends (financial assistance) and to download registration forms and other information visit www.sdparent.org (**Dare to Dream, Registration**). Contact SDPC at 1-800-640-4553 if you would like to have registration materials mailed to you. Registration deadline is May 1.

The biennial Dare to Dream Conference provides people with disabilities and others an opportunity to gain knowledge, enhance skills, develop friendships and have fun! Dare to Dream offers programming for people of all ages and all abilities, including inclusive childcare programs for children (birth to 12) and a teen program (13-19).

A unique feature at the Dare to Dream conference is the Art Gallery with work by South Dakota artists. Deadline to submit requests to exhibit art at the conference is April 1. More information is available at www.sdparent.org (**Dare to Dream, Call for Art**). For further information on the art show or to submit samples of original artwork, contact Arlene Poncelet at arlene.poncelet@state.sd.us or Faith Korkow by email faithe@sd-ccd.org or 605-945-2207.



Will Your Child Need ESY This Summer?

Extended School Year (ESY) is special education or related services provided to students with an IEP (individualized education plan) when school is not in session, such as summer or other breaks. ESY cannot be limited to particular categories of disability, types of service, or age/grade. ESY is designed to:

- maintain a student's skills if they are likely to experience significant regression in the absence of services and an excessive amount of time to re-learn the skills once back in school, or
- capitalize on a student's emerging skills, or
- address critical life skills addressed in a student's IEP.

How does a student qualify for ESY services? The IEP team determines if ESY is needed, there is no one tool to qualify a student. ESY services to prevent regression of academic, communication, physical, self-help, or behavioral skills can be based on measurable data to indicate a pattern of regression, or a more subjective "likelihood" of regression of skills. The IEP team may consider ESY services to support "emerging skills" for a student on the brink of learning, acquiring or at a critical stage of developing a new skill. Finally, the IEP team may determine ESY services are needed to support "critical life skills" included in the student's IEP goals.

Is there a cost to the family? No. ESY is part of an individualized Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). An IEP team may decide that enrolling the student in an activity that has a cost is an appropriate way to provide ESY services; the school should cover those and related costs.

Does the plan for ESY have to include all of the IEP's goals and services? No. The IEP team decides on the goal(s) appropriate for the student at that time.

If my child received services last summer, will he or she get the same thing next summer? Not necessarily. This is determined by the IEP team, either in the annual meeting (any time of year) or through an addendum, and is based on the student's current needs and priority goals.

Do ESY services have to be in the Least Restrictive Environment, the same as during the school year? No. The courts and the US Department of Education have recognized that it may be very difficult to create the same inclusive environment when most general education students are not in school.

Does the family have to go along with the ESY program that the school recommends? No. Students are not required to attend ESY; parents may decide not to have their student participate. If a parent does not agree with the level of ESY services discussed during the IEP team meeting and offered the student, they can request reconsideration. A new IEP team meeting will be convened to consider the request along with reasons for the denial.

To learn more:

- *Primer on the Provision of Extended School Year Services for Parents and Educators.* At the back of the booklet is a handy 15-point summary and a two-page checklist. Available online at https://doe.sd.gov/oess/documents/SE_ExtScYr.pdf or contact SDPC at 1-800-640-4553 to request a hard copy.
- *What Parents Should Know ...About Special Education in South Dakota* (pages 124-125) and *Dare to Dialogue...Reach Yes!* (pages 9-10). Available from SDPC at sdpc@sdparent.org or call 1-800-640-4553.
- Visit www.sdparent.org / Resources (Virtual Library, ESY).



The next Sibshops will be held on **Saturday, April 26**, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., in conjunction with Partners in Policymaking at the Ramkota Hotel in Sioux Falls.

The Sibshops program is designed specifically for brothers and sisters, ages 6-12, of children with special needs or disabilities to enjoy friendship, activities and learning together.

Contact SDPC at sdpc@sdparent.org, 1-800-640-4553 or visit www.sdparent.org (Family Life, Siblings) to register online. Pre-registration is required.

Sibshops will also be offered on Sunday, June 8 in Aberdeen as part of the Dare to Dream Conference (see story on page 6). Registration for the June Sibshops is included in the Dare to Dream Registration packet, by contacting SDPC at 1-800-640-4553 or online at www.surveymonkey.com/s/XDBWKTP. You need not attend the Dare to Dream conference to attend the June 8 Sibshops.

Sibshops is a joint project of South Dakota Parent Connection, Here4YOUth and Children's Care Hospital and School with financial assistance from Avera McKennan Hospital.



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Registration Open; Scholarships Available

Registration is open for the 7th annual Lighting the Way Conference held at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, **June 12-13**. Register at www.augie.edu/autism. The conference focuses on autism spectrum disorders and is for parents, educators, social workers, counselors, therapists, adult service providers, business and community members and vocational rehabilitation counselors.

A parent reception will be held **Thursday, June 12** from 5 - 7 p.m. South Dakota Parent Connection is providing a limited number of scholarships for parents to attend the conference. To apply for a scholarship contact SDPC at sdpc@sdparent.org, or call 1-800-640-4553.

"Solutions for Success: Diagnosis through Adulthood" is the theme. Keynote speakers will be Judy Endow, an author and international speaker on a variety of autism-related topics, and Dr. Paul Wehman, a professor at Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Wehman is chairman of Rehabilitation Research with a joint appointment in the Departments of Special Education and Disability Policy and Rehabilitation Counseling. He has written, co-authored or edited more than 42 books and over 200 articles, mostly in the transition and employment areas.

Again this year, the iPad lab will provide a hands-on opportunity to learn about iPad tools and try apps designed for those with autism spectrum disorders. To learn more about the Lighting the Way Conference or to register, visit www.augie.edu/autism or call 605-274-4126.