

Effects of Peer Support Interventions on the Communication of Preschoolers with ASD: A Systematic Review

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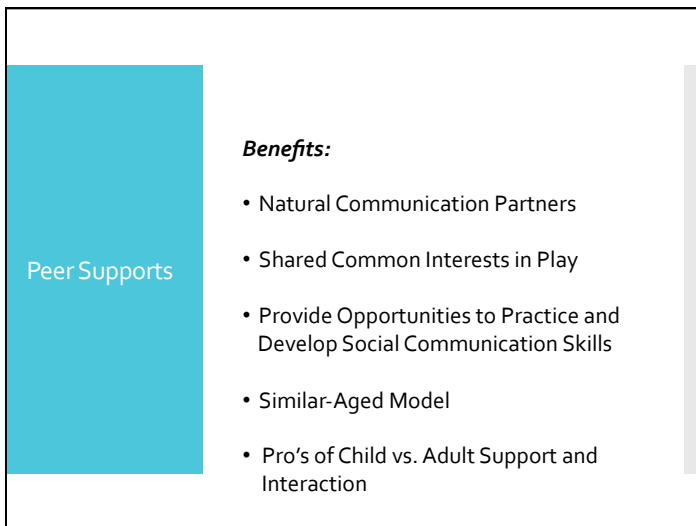


Preschool-Age Communication

**Communication Goals:**

- Initiation of interactions
- Provision of appropriate responses to peers
- Use of conflict resolution strategies
- Sustained engagement in social play or group activities

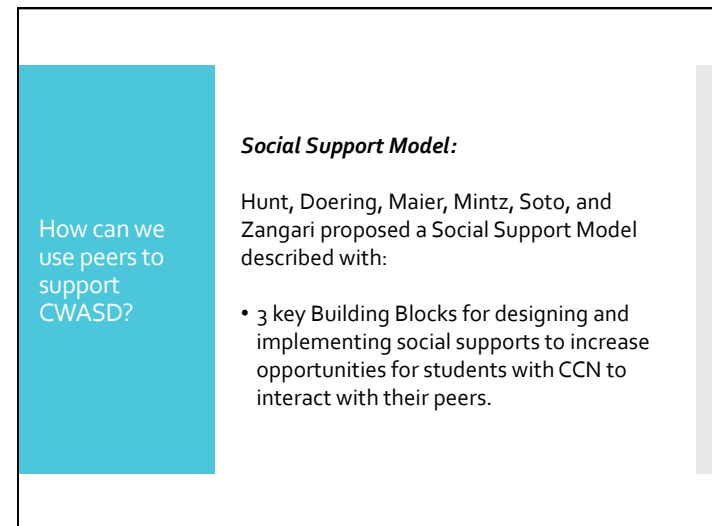
(Case-Smith, 2013; Guralnick, 2010)



Peer Supports

**Benefits:**

- Natural Communication Partners
- Shared Common Interests in Play
- Provide Opportunities to Practice and Develop Social Communication Skills
- Similar-Aged Model
- Pro's of Child vs. Adult Support and Interaction



How can we use peers to support CWASD?

**Social Support Model:**

Hunt, Doering, Maier, Mintz, Soto, and Zangari proposed a Social Support Model described with:

- 3 key Building Blocks for designing and implementing social supports to increase opportunities for students with CCN to interact with their peers.

What is the Social Support Model?

**Building Blocks:**

- Divided into 4 categories in which to compare individual peer support interventions:
- 1. Provide information to Peers
  - Friendship Training
- 2. Use and Arrange Interactive Materials
  - AAC
  - Material Selection Criteria
- 3. Arrange Interactive Activities
- 4. Facilitate Positive Social Interactions
  - Adult Support Behaviors

Hunt et al., 2009

Research Questions

- What are the overall effects of peer support interventions on the communication of young CWASD?
- What is the relationship between observed effects and variables relating to participant and intervention characteristics?
- What is the relationship between observed effects and variables relating to the social support model components identified by Hunt et al. (2009)?

Who were the CWASD?

- 48 children with ASD
- Mean age: 4.3 years.months
- 85 % male (41); 15% female (7)
- 88% did not demonstrate age-appropriate language skills
- Diverse communication abilities
- AAC reported to be used by 8 CWASD (17%)

What was the impact?

How did the impact differ across CWASD?

**CWASD IRD Results:**

- Mean IRD: .72 (SD=.23; Range=0-1.0)
- 4 & 5 year olds: Large
- 3 year olds: Moderate
- Girls: Very Large
- Boys: Moderate
- AAC reported to be used by CWASD: Moderate

Who were the peers?

**Peers:**

- At least 138 peer participants
- 11 studies reported gender data: 38% male; 63% female
- 72% reported peers with typical development
- 3 studies taught peers with DD
- 2 studies taught peers with ASD
- 5 studies reported both Peer and CWASD outcomes

What were the peers taught to do?

	IRD:	
• Initiate Interaction:	67%	Large
• Prompt Target Behavior:	72%	Large
• Engage in Proximity:	44%	Moderate
• Reinforce Behavior:	72%	Very Large

What is the impact of

(1) Providing information to peers?

- 8 studies reported use of friendship group or ability awareness information within intervention

**IRD:**

- Reported: Very Large
- Not Reported: Moderate

What is the impact of

(2) Identifying and Using Interactive Media?

- 8 CWASD were reported to use AAC prior to intervention
  - **IRD:** Moderate
- 12 CWASD were reported to use AAC within intervention measures
  - **IRD:** Very Large
- Material selection based on CWASD preferences: 39%
  - **IRD:** Large
- Material selection based on classroom routine: 22%
  - **IRD:** Moderate

What is the Impact of

(3) Arranging Interactive Activities?

- Art, Dramatic, Free play, Gross Motor, Manipulatives, Snack, Thematic Playset
- One main interactive activity: 67% studies
- More than one interactive activity: 33% studies

**IRD:**

- Manipulatives & Snack: Very Large
- Thematic playset: Large
- Art, Dramatic, Free play, Gross Motor: Moderate

What is the Impact of

(4) Facilitating Positive Social Interaction?

<b>Adult Support Behavior:</b>	<b>IRD:</b>
• Model: 83%	Moderate
• Prompt: 100%	Large
• Check: 39%	Moderate
• Fade: 50%	Moderate

What did we learn about Peer Support Interventions?

- Interventions to teach peers to support the communication of young CWASD can result in **positive changes in the social communication behaviors** of the CWASD.
  - Average IRD=.72 (large effect size)
- Hunt et al (2009) model of social supports provides a **useful framework** for peer interventions in the EC classroom

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