Promoting Positive Play Practices

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Senior Practitioner Seminar
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Whatever you're doing today, do it with all the confidence of a four-year-old in a Batman t-shirt.
What do I know about play?

• I love playing!
• I have played in all my teaching roles.
• My favourite job (besides this one!) was at Lapstone Preschool.
• My first PhD (incomplete) research was on teaching symbolic play to children who were non-verbal.
• My second PhD (completed) research was on implementing a whole school approach to communication. We (the entire school) played a lot.
9 Key features of good Positive Behaviour Support & common misunderstandings

Positive Behaviour Support is a values led, person centred approach which applies the scientific understanding of behaviour to increase quality of life and reduce behaviours that challenge.

**PBS is**

- Based on Science
  - Using the scientific principles of behaviour to bring about meaningful change.

- Values Led & Person Centered
  - See everyone as an equally valued member of society, avoiding use of aversive strategies. The person's needs & wishes at the centre.

- About Relationships and Communication
  - Trusting relationships are the first step in all PBS practice. People's thoughts & feelings are important in understanding how to support them.

- Function Based
  - ALL behaviour has a purpose & function. The functions are: to gain items/activities/sensory stimulation or to avoid people/situations/tasks/pain or discomfort.

- Data Led Decision Making
  - Using observable data is essential for deciding whether an agreed plan is making a positive difference or not.

- Adding New Skills & Opportunities
  - Replace behaviours that challenge with new skills, increasing independence and improving quality of life through new opportunities.

- Supervision, Coaching & Feedback
  - Ensuring that staff & carers have appropriate supervision, coaching and feedback means that they know how to implement PBS in practice, not just in theory.

- Teamwork
  - Including the person, staff & family plus practice leaders & those at consultant level is key to ensuring that what's agreed is appropriate, valid & will be implemented.

**PBS is not**

- Just Being Positive
  - Being positive and kind to people is nice but is not sufficient alone for meaningful behavioural change.

- Manipulating Behaviour
  - Using the science of behaviour alone can lead to a reward and punishment approach. That's why PBS has a strong ethical and value base.

- Solely Focussed on Behaviour
  - Observing behaviour is important in PBS. However, alone this leads to a cold approach which doesn't take into account the person's preferences, their history and their network.

- Guess Work
  - Guess work leads to trial and error approaches. These can often increase behavioural issues.

- Only Using Opinion about Change
  - Opinions are important, but alone they can lead to misleading conclusions when evaluating interventions.

- Removing Problem Behaviours
  - Focussing on reducing behaviours risks increasing other problem behaviours and the restrictions on the person's life.

- Taking a 'Train & Hope' Approach
  - Information based training is good for developing PBS knowledge. But on its own can mean a poor return on investment and little change due to a lack in practical skills.

- Expert Alone
  - One person writing up a PBS plan without real consultation with key people can lead to plans being impractical, inappropriate and most likely ignored.

- A Single Behaviour Strategy
  - Positive change cannot be made using one strategy. Repeated use of a strategy when the behaviour occurs will lead to the behaviour happening again & again.
Part One - Understanding Play
What is play?

There are seven properties that describe play, it is:

1) apparently purposeless
2) voluntary
3) inherently fun
4) free from time
5) unselfconscious
6) full of improvisational potential
7) An activity that makes you want to do it more.

Dr. Stuart Brown

“Play is not a break from learning. It is endless, delightful, deep, engaging, practical learning. It's the doorway into the child’s heart!”
-Vince Gowmon
Who do we (all) play with?

Friends
Family
Virtual friends
Acquaintances
Strangers
Virtual strangers
Children
Adults
Ourselves
Imaginary friends
Toys
But there’s always that one kid.....
How do we play?

YOU MEAN TO TELL ME

THE HOKEY POKEY ISN'T
WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT
How do we play? 1

How do we communicate in play?
How do we play? 2

What social skills do we need for play?

Social Skills

Accepting differences
Asking for help
Communicating clearly
Complimenting others
Disagreeing politely
Encouraging others
Following directions
Listening actively
Participating equally
Resolving conflicts
Sharing materials
Staying on task
Taking turns
Taking risks
Using quiet voices
Waiting patiently
**How do we play?**

**What executive function skills do we need to play?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>What it means</th>
<th>How it looks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impulse Control</td>
<td>Impulse control helps your child think before acting.</td>
<td>Kids with weak impulse control might blurt out inappropriate things. They're also more likely to engage in risky behavior.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional Control</td>
<td>Emotional control helps your child keep his feelings in check.</td>
<td>Kids with weak emotional control often overreact. They can have trouble dealing with criticism and regrouping when something goes wrong.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flexible Thinking</td>
<td>Flexible thinking allows your child to adjust to the unexpected.</td>
<td>Kids with &quot;rigid&quot; thinking don’t roll with the punches. They might get frustrated if asked to think about something from a different angle.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working Memory</td>
<td>Working memory helps your child keep key information in mind.</td>
<td>Kids with weak working memory have trouble remembering directions—even if they’ve taken notes or you’ve repeated them several times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Monitoring</td>
<td>Self-monitoring allows your child to evaluate how he’s doing.</td>
<td>Kids with weak self-monitoring skills may be surprised by a bad grade or negative feedback.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning and Prioritizing</td>
<td>Planning and prioritizing help your child on a goal and e plan to meet it.</td>
<td>Kids with weak planning and prioritizing skills may not know which parts of a project are most important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Initiation</td>
<td>Task initiation helps your child take action and get started.</td>
<td>Kids who have weak task initiation skills may freeze up because they have no idea where to begin.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Organization lets your child keep track of things physically and mentally.</td>
<td>Kids with weak organization skills can lose their train of thought—as well as their cell phone and homework.</td>
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[www.NCLEXQuiz.com](http://www.NCLEXQuiz.com)
Where do we play?

1) Where we feel safe?

2) Where we don’t feel safe?

If you want to know who your tribe is, speak your truth. Then see who sticks around. Those are the people who get a spot in your blanket fort.
When do we play?
But there’s always that one day...
Why do we play?

THAT IS AN EXCELLENT QUESTION!
Part Two: Teaching Positive Play—Using a PBS Framework
Every child during (technology) transitions...

Parenting is mostly just informing kids how many more minutes they have of something.

When you tell your kid their iPad time is over, and they be like...
What behaviours of concern occur during play?

octopus: [gun in each hand]
cat: you're one short buddy
Why do behaviours of concern occur during play?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>developmental stage</td>
<td>social skills</td>
<td>lack of structure or routine</td>
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<tr>
<td>confusion</td>
<td>empathy skills</td>
<td>change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boredom</td>
<td>play dynamics</td>
<td>inconsistent limits</td>
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<td>communication skills</td>
<td>social expectations</td>
<td>types of reinforcement</td>
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<tr>
<td>trauma experiences</td>
<td>complex interactions</td>
<td>too much choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tired/hungry/lonely</td>
<td>complex rules</td>
<td>not enough choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>role models</td>
<td>need to share</td>
<td>unrealistic expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensory overload</td>
<td>wants to be alone</td>
<td>too many unfamiliar toys</td>
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What restrictive practices may occur during play activities?

The five regulated restrictive practices are:

• Seclusion
• Chemical restraint
• Mechanical restraint
• Environmental restraint
• Physical restraint
What positive behaviour support strategies can we teach?

If you've told a child a thousand times and he still does not understand, then it is not the child who is the slow learner.
What positive behaviour support strategies can children learn?

The five learning outcomes are designed to capture the integrated and complex learning and development of all children across the birth to five age range. The outcomes are:

1. Children are effective communicators
2. Children are confident and involved learners
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are connected with and contribute to their world
5. Children have a strong sense of identity

*Early Years Learning Framework*
KEY STRATEGY ONE - Use visual supports - teach replacement behaviours

Where to start:

- Talk to ISP
- Talk to your visiting NDIS speech therapist
- Search for Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) online
- Trial and error - see what works - use photos and always use written words
1) Children are effective communicators

Children:
- engage in enjoyable interactions using verbal and non-verbal language
- convey and construct messages with purpose and confidence, building on home/family and community literacies
- respond verbally and non-verbally to what they see, hear, touch, feel and taste
Children interact verbally and nonverbally with others for a range of purposes.

Children show increasing knowledge, understanding and skill in conveying meaning in at least one language.
2) Children are confident and involved learners

Children:
• use play to investigate, imagine and explore ideas
• follow and extend their own interests with enthusiasm, energy and concentration
• initiate and contribute to play experiences emerging from their own ideas
Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity...

Children:
• express wonder and interest in their environments
• are curious and enthusiastic participants in their learning
• participate in a variety of rich and meaningful inquiry-based experiences
• persevere and experience the satisfaction of achievement
Children resource their own learning - connecting with people, place, technologies and various materials.

Children manipulate resources to investigate, take apart, assemble, invent and construct.
Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another.

Children make connections between experiences, concepts and processes.
Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation...

Children apply a wide variety of thinking strategies to engage with situations and solve problems, and adapt these strategies to new situations.
3) Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Children seek out and accept new challenges, make new discoveries, and celebrate their own efforts and achievements and those of others.
Children show enthusiasm for participating in physical play and negotiate play spaces to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others.
Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing.

Children share humour, happiness and satisfaction.
4) Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Black Mountain Peninsula Playground - Children begin to recognise that they have a right to belong to many communities
Children develop an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation.
5) Children have a strong sense of identity

Children explore aspects of identity through role play
Children feel safe, secure, and supported

Children use effective routines to help make predicted transitions smoothly
Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.

Children increasingly co-operate and work collaboratively with others.
Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.
Culture of positive play

Good luck and enjoy those fabulous play moments!
Thankyou

• Thankyou to Annie Thackway, my dear co-researcher.

• Thankyou to the students and staff of Cranleigh specialist school

• Thankyou to all the children (and some brave adults) who have allowed me to play alongside them and learn so much.

• Thanks to the OSP team for the opportunity to speak here today.
Thanks for coming today!

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