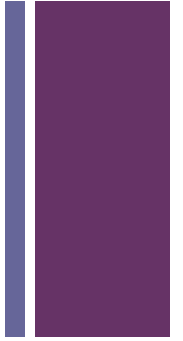


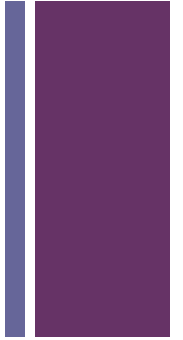


A Social Skills Group Teaching Model for Students with Autism

Benjamin Bruneau, Jill McGrath Maher, Rachel Miller Abraham, Michele Brock, and Cheryl J. Davis (Crossroads School for Children) and Thomas Zane (Institute for Behavioral Studies, Endicott College)

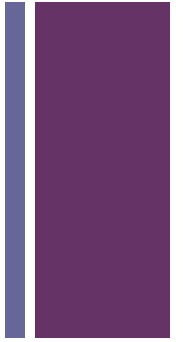


“A **social skill** is any skill facilitating interaction and communication with others. Social rules and relations are created, communicated, and changed in non-verbal ways. The process of **learning** such skills is called socialization. The rationale for this type of an approach to treatment is that people meet a variety of social problems and can reduce the stress and punishment from the encounter as well as **increase their reinforcement** by having the correct skills.” (O’Donohue & Krasner, 1995)



- “Socially acceptable **learned** behaviors that enable a person to interact with others in ways that **elicit positive responses** and assist the person in **avoiding negative responses.**” (Elliott, Racine, & Busse, 1995)

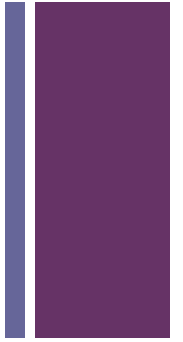
+ Introduction



Challenge of practitioners

- Lack of operational definitions
- Incomplete Scope & Sequences
- Many models require typical peers
- Deficient teaching procedures

+ Current Study



- Assessed effectiveness of a Social Skills Group Curriculum
- Three distinct group teaching levels
- ABA-trained classroom staff implementing groups
- Well-documented teaching strategies

+ Setting

- Crossroads School for Children
- Educational and vocational programming for children, ages 3-22



+ Setting

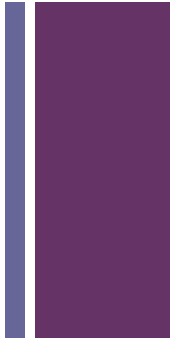


- Current study took place across 4 classrooms
- Groups were conducted in students' classrooms
- Groups ranged from 2-6 students

+ Participants

STUDENT	AGE	IQ	PROFILE
Geofrey	14	-	Below grade level academics. Non verbal, PECS and communication device for wants and needs only. Saliva wiping, SIB, flopping. Autism diagnosis.
Seth	9	67	Below grade level, verbal. Motor and vocal stereotypy, emerging social skills, independent in classroom routines. Autism.
Jack	13	81	Close to grade level, verbal. Motor stereotypy, eye gazing. Independent across school domain areas. Emerging social skills. Autism, Anxiety disorder.
Fran	15	-	At grade level, verbal. "Rigidity" behaviors. Independent across school domain areas. Working on social skills outside school (e.g., making new friends). PDD-NOS, ADHD.

+ Initial Assessment



- General Social Skills Assessment was used to identify skill deficits
 - 10 categories/120 specific skills
- After skills identified and group type selected, additional baseline data was collected
- Three levels of groups



SOCIAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT

Staff: _____

Date: _____

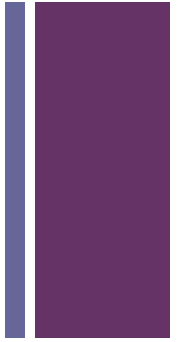
Observe student across a two-week period during a variety of situations. As opportunities present, score occurrence (+) or non-occurrence (-) for each behavior. Also note the activity and additional pertinent information (e.g., specifics). This assessment is used to identify target behaviors, not to obtain specific baseline data.

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>+/-</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>+/-</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>+/-</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>% CORRECT</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
<u>Play</u>								
Toys with definite beginning and end (e.g., puzzles)								
Imitates play actions								
Play Construction (e.g., potato head, legos)								
Play sequences								
▪ With verbalizations								
Play schemes								
Dramatic Play/role play								
Narrates own play								
Narrates others play								



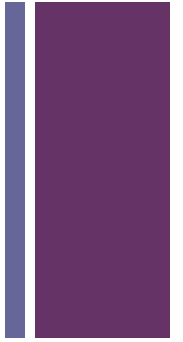


Level One



- **Target skills for instruction include:**
 - Parallel play skills
 - Peer Imitation and Peer Observation
- **Sessions initially several 3-5 minute segments**
- **Readiness, gross motor imitations and/or actions with play objects, and independent play routines**

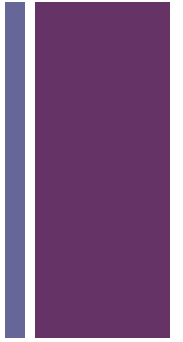
+ Level Two



- **Target skills for instruction include:**
 - Early social pragmatic skills (e.g., eye contact, giving compliments)

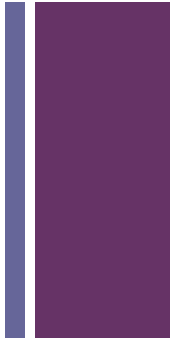
- **Ample opportunities for repetition and highly structured role play; 3 parts**
 - Review of group rules/purpose
 - Role Play and Critique
 - Activity

+ Level Three



- Targets higher level conversational skills
- Includes less review of definitions, fewer contrived opportunities for practice
- Less structured/ more “natural” role play
- 3-parts
 - Review of group rules/purpose
 - Conversation/Role Play
 - Activities

+ Teaching Strategies

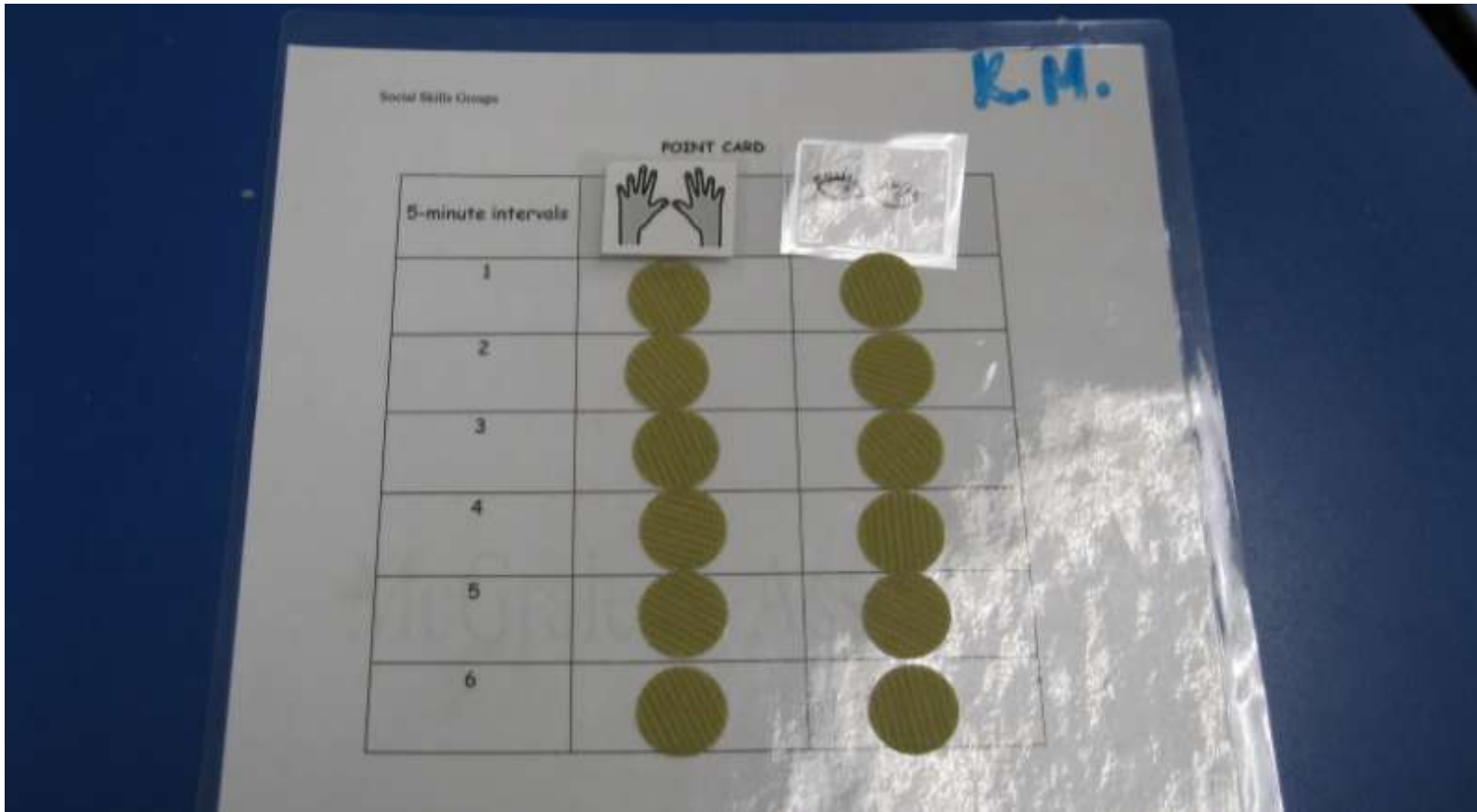


- All groups lead by one “group teacher”
- Levels 1 and 2; classroom staff provided prompts as prescribed from behind
- Level 3; prompts provided by the group teacher/leader using a variety of strategies (e.g., verbal prompts, self-monitoring, scripted prompts)
- Reinforcement for correct responses was a combination of social praise and preferred edibles

+ Supports



+ Supports



+ Supports

Group rules:

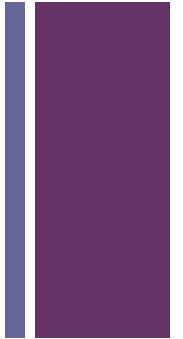
1. Follow directions.
2. Quiet voice.
3. Sit nicely.
4. Hands and feet to yourself.



Behavior	Definition	✓
Compliments	Telling the other person things they like about them or what they have done <ul style="list-style-type: none">• appearance• items they have• something they do well• something they did for you like you liked	
Active Listening: Behaviors when someone else is talking	Smiling	
	Nodding	
	Verbal Statements	
	Not talking to Another Person	
Choosing a Topic Appropriate to the Audience	Talks about age appropriate or person specific topics Comments or asks questions about common activities.	
Changing Topic Appropriately	When changing topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “that reminds me of...”• “that makes me think or...”• “that’s interesting...”	

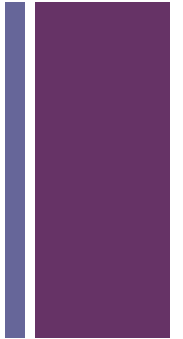


Experimental Design, Response Measurement, & Interobserver Agreement



- **Experimental Design**: Multiple Baseline across skills within participants (Baer, Wolf, & Riskey, 1968)
- **Response Measurement**: 120 item Social Skills Assessment and additional skill specific measures
- Data was collected using per opportunity and momentary time sample methods
- **IOA** was collected by an independent observer

+ Treatment Fidelity



Treatment Fidelity was assessed using two direct observation checklists

- Checklists included specific skills
 - preparation for groups
 - environmental arrangement
 - prompting & reinforcement procedures
 - integrity of behavior management procedures
 - adherence to lesson plan

+ Target Responses

Participant	Target Skills
Geofrey	Parallel play, joint attention, sharing
Seth	Active listening, sharing, giving compliments
Jack	Active listening, giving compliments
Fran	Active listening, giving compliments



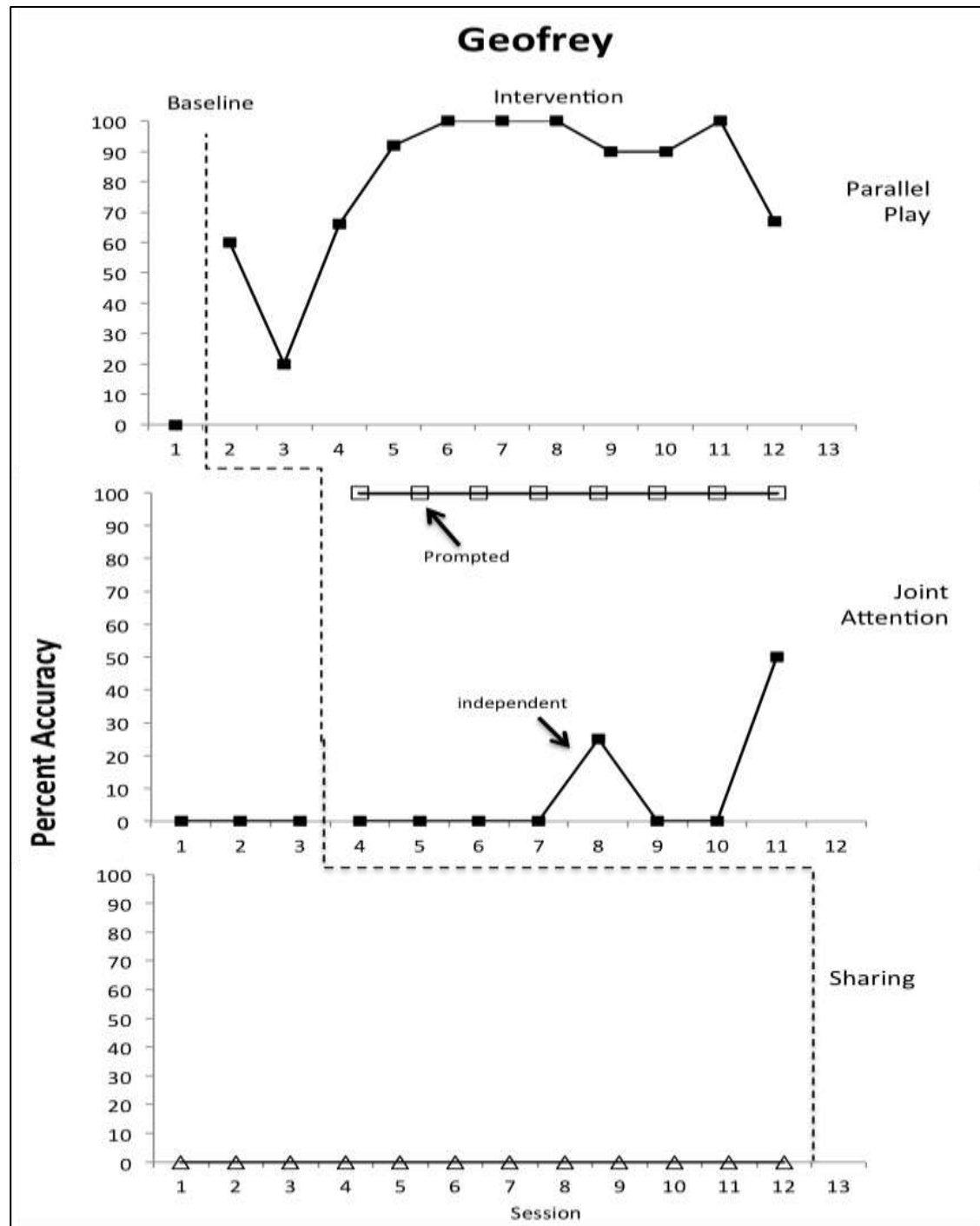
Sample Response Definitions



- **Imitates Peer:** Following a model action provided by a peer, engages in same action within 10 seconds.
- **Eye Contact:** Orients head and eyes towards the speakers face when either is talking
- **Orienting Towards the Speaker:** Shoulders are square towards the person interacting with/speaker, head facing straight ahead
- **Follows or Offers Suggestions For Activities:** Engages in an action that the other child suggested s/he perform. Suggests by saying “can you” or “could you”-type statement that the other child engages in a play/leisure behavior they are not currently doing.

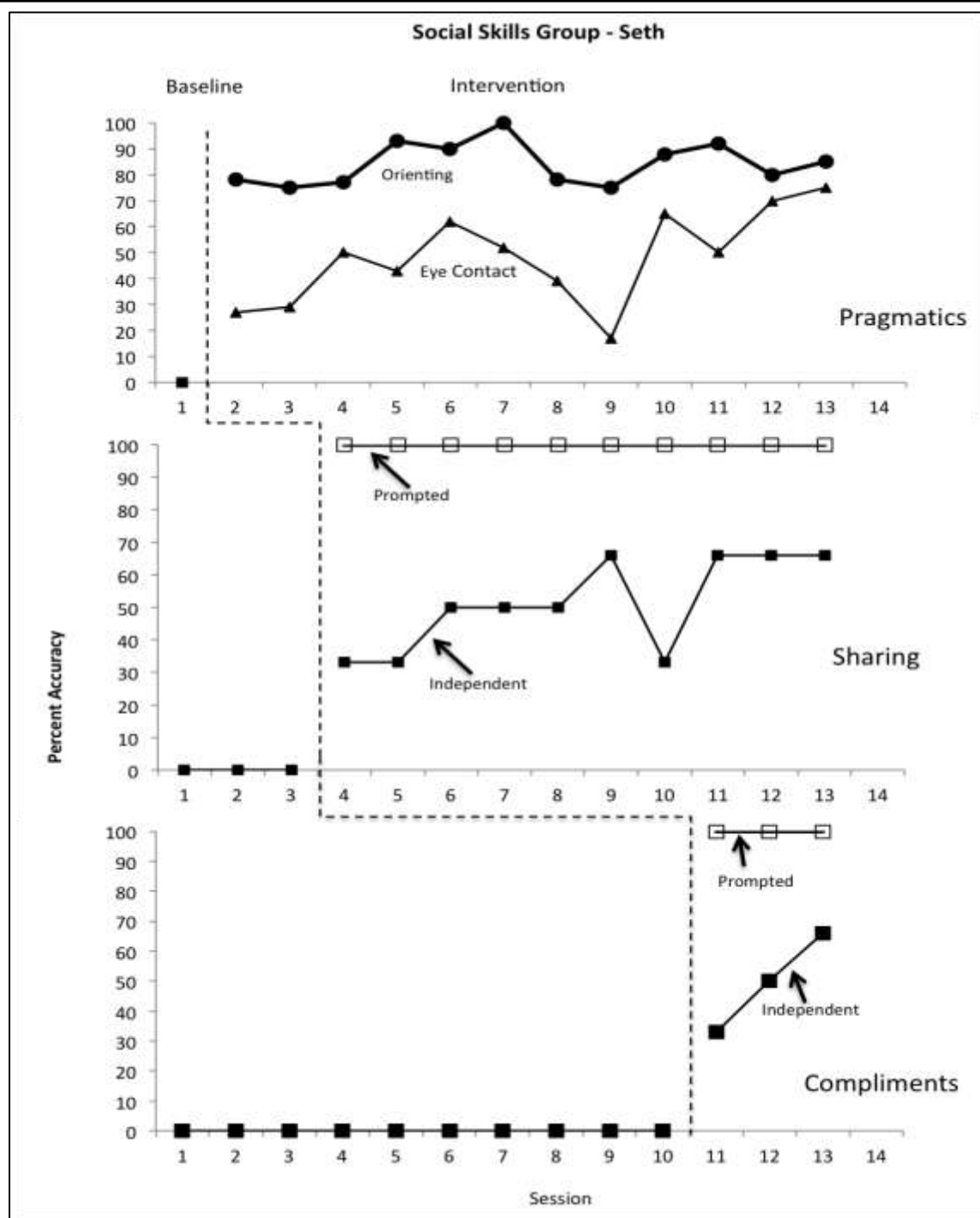
+ Results

Level One participant



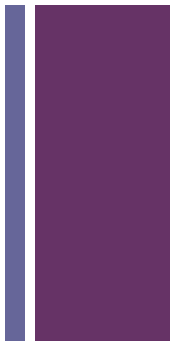
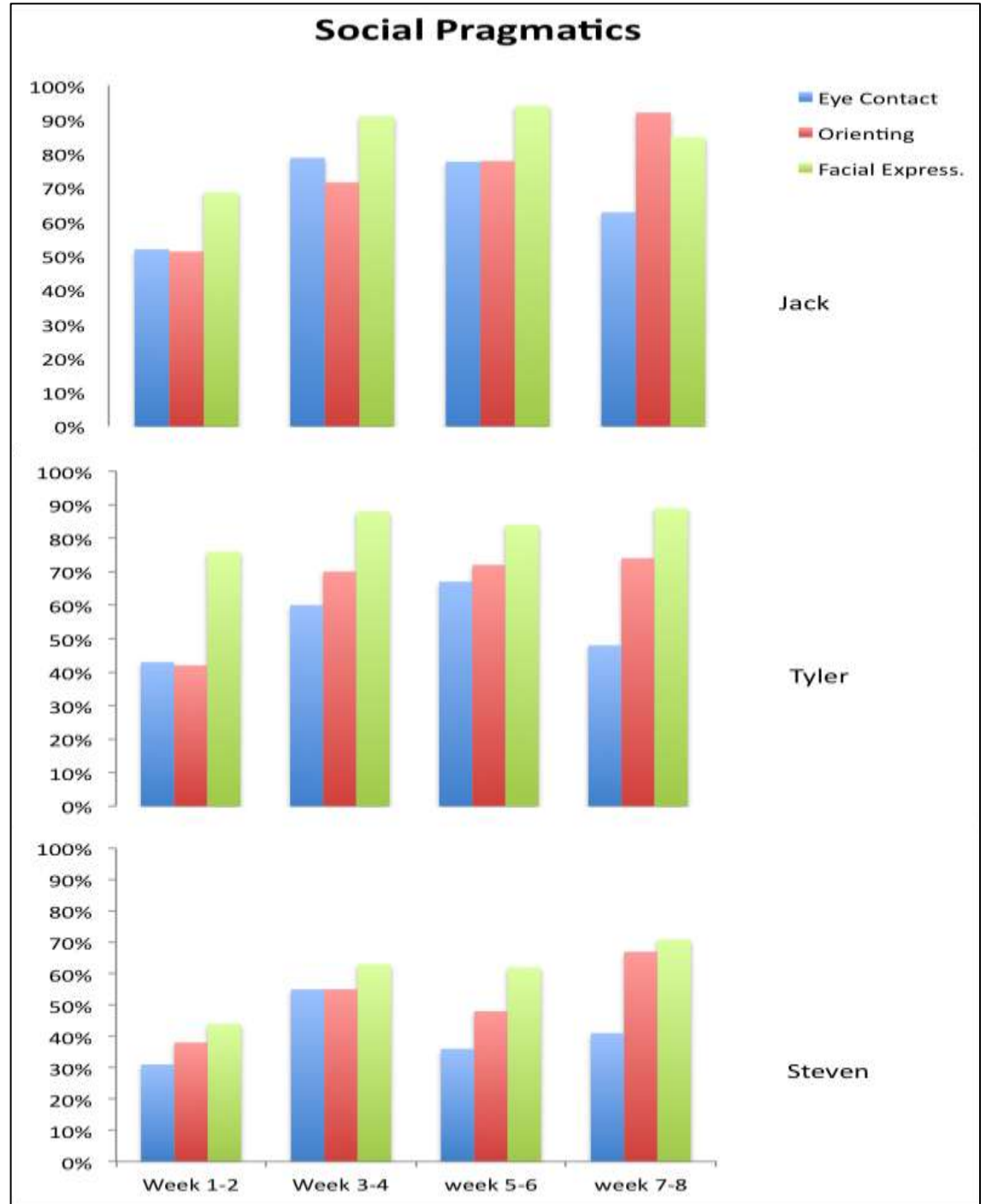
+ Results

Level Two
participant

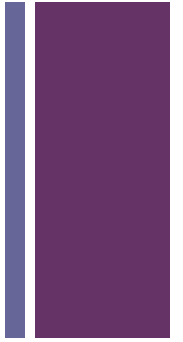


+ Results

Level Three participants



+ Remarks



Interventions showed clear increases in social skills across all three group levels.

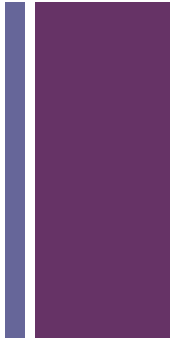
More rapid progress occurred

- One target skill taught at a time
- Physical guidance prompting strategies

Anecdotally

- Generalization across settings and across participants
- Ancillary behavior gains; group working skills, increased task attending and in-seat behavior, decreased challenging behavior

+ Recommendations



- Ongoing re-assessment of student group placement
- Dedicated observer for data collection
- Long-term outcome data
- Generalization strategies outside school setting



- “Thank you so much for meeting with us yesterday and showing us the video of the social skills group. It is wonderful to see the curriculum that I have advocated for for Ben during his lifetime finally be implemented! Ben has been a part of many expensive so-called "social skills groups" over the years, and has had numerous pragmatic goals and inclusion opportunities in public school, but never has there been a hierarchichal, well thought-out plan with explicit instruction and rigorous data collection. I thank you and all of Ben's Hampden Rd. team! He is very lucky to be surrounded by such dedicated staff.”

