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The Classroom and Communication Skills Program-Practical Strategies for Educating Young Children with Autism Spectrum and Other Developmental Disabilities in the Public School Setting

By Megan Ahlers, M.S., Colleen Hannigan Zillich, CCC-SLP



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Educators looking for effective ways to help young children who are non- or limited-verbal and not table-ready will find this the solution to their search. The CCSP considers a combination of factors for verbal language in the development of programs for individual children, including verbal language, cognition, auditory function, oral-motor skills, receptive language and expressive language. The model emphasizes the importance of creating a fluid transition between a child's natural environments, such as home and school, in order to increase the chances of generalizing skills. While not specific to a particular disability, the program is a very helpful resource for educators working with children on the spectrum who have language deficits.



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Editorial Review

Review

"Megan and Colleen have so much passion and dedication for children like Jeremy. They didn't give up on him. They kept learning and searching for new ways to reach children with autism. Jeremy's graduation from their program was bittersweet. Thank you, Megan and Colleen, for your perseverance." --Laura Stutz, Jeremy's mom

"The authors have designed one of the most functional programs to date. I wish this resource had been available when I first began my career. It is a must for any educator or SLP working with children who have significant disabilities." --Mary Lou Poole, CCC-SLP, Purdue University

"This practical and useful book pulls together all the necessary components for creating an effective classroom for children with autism and other developmental disabilities. It provides a user friendly, systematic approach on how to building basic foundational communication and classroom skills for students with significant needs in the domains of communication, social, academic, and behavioral skills. I especially love the way that the authors show readers how to capitalize on the interests of the children to help get them engaged and attending to classroom activities. " --Barbara Fogarty, M.S.Ed., autism consultant, Lawrence Township

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About the Author

Colleen H. Zillich is an early childhood speech-language pathologist specializing in providing inclusive speech therapy services to children who are nonverbal or have limited verbal skills. Colleen is the co-author of The Classroom and Communication Skills Program. She has presented at the local and national level and participates on a local autism resource team by providing consultation and support for students with autism. She has provided speech therapy services to children ages 9 months to 10 years of age. She enjoys working with young children and their families to foster their language development. Colleen received her bachelor's degree from the University of Iowa in speech and hearing sciences and psychology and her master's degree from Purdue University in speech language pathology with an emphasis on augmentative and alternative communication systems. Colleen and her husband live in Indianapolis. She enjoys traveling, playing with her two dogs, and spending time with family and friends. Megan Ahlers is currently a school administrator. Combining her years of experience as a teacher, program coordinator, and administrator, she spent over 27

years in the field of education and has taught children ranging in age from 3 to 22 years old. Her area of expertise is in early intervention and curricula programming as well as shaping behavior. With her co-author, Colleen H. Zillich, she developed The Classroom and Communication Skills Program, which integrates positive behavioral supports along with a total communication approach to better meet the needs of some young students, was developed. Megan has presented at the national, state, and local levels on autism, positive behavioral support, and other effective programming for students who are nonverbal, limited verbal, and/or have limited table readiness skills. Megan received her undergraduate degree in education and her master's degree in special education from Indiana University. She lives with her husband and their three children in Indiana. She enjoys reading, needlepoint and conversation with close friends.

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