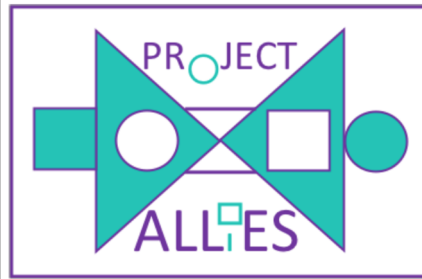


INTEGRATED PLAY GROUPS

Alexa Smith & Shelby Rice
SPED 794

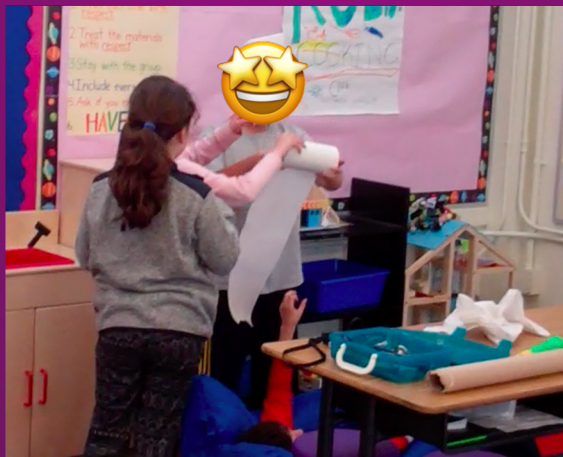
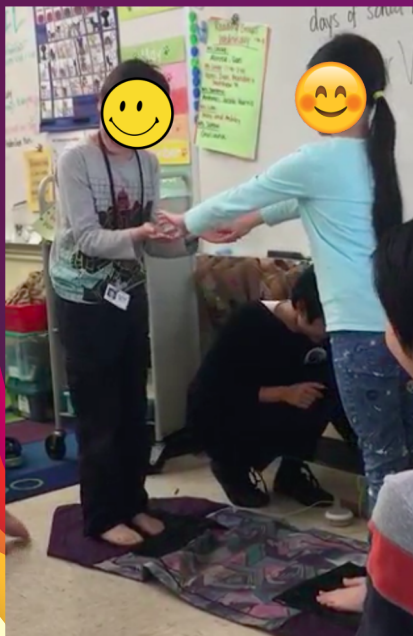
Socialization & Imagination: Autism





RATIONALE AND AIMS

- Participated in the Integrated Play Groups Social Communication Clinic as part of the Project ALLIES Program
 - Spring 2019 semester
- Aim: to share our experience as facilitators of the IPGs
- Include:
 - Description of students
 - Methods and procedure of IPGs
 - Student findings
 - Takeaways from using IPG model



PARTICIPANTS - FACILITATORS

- 3 Special Education (SPED) and 4 Speech and Language Hearing Sciences (SLHS) graduate student facilitators
- Facilitated under the guidance of clinical instructor IPG coordinator, and, developer of the IPG model



Ms. Gabi

Ms. Shelby



Ms. Elsa

Ms. Alexa

Some facilitators from Spring 2019 IPGs

PARTICIPANTS-PLAYERS

- 5 elementary students from R. L. Stevenson School
- 2 novice players (2x male)
 - On the Autism Spectrum
- 3 expert players (1x male, 2x female)
 - Typically developing students
- Novice players ages 9 and 10
 - Both in the same 3rd-5th grade Special Day Class (SDC) for students



SETTING

- R. L. Stevenson Elementary School located in San Francisco, CA
- Groups met in a third to fifth grade SDC room
 - Arranged by a teacher who previously completed IPG training
- Groups met in the classroom for about 50 minutes after school hours
 - Opening circle, play time, & closing circle



METHODS: PROCEDURE

- **Step 1:** Deciding if IPG model is appropriate for participants
 - Done by referring students based on needs
- **Step 2:** Team planning
 - Professionals & parent collaboration (Consent)
 - Divide students into groups based on strengths & areas of need (Factor in some players may work better with others)
- **Step 3:** Clinic instructor assign SPED & SLHS to participants in each play group



METHODS: PROCEDURE CONT.

- **Step 4:** Facilitators collaborate with groups to assign roles
 - Group lead, assistant, data collectors, videographer (rotate weekly)
 - **Group Lead-** Facilitate play/receive feedback from clinic instructors
 - **Assistant & Data Collectors-** Hang back from activity, step in only under direction of lead (Prevents activity from being overwhelmed with adult presence)

METHODS: PROCEDURES CONT.

- **Play Groups:** Autism demystification, rules, group name, & poster
 - **Student Arrival-** Given name tags & gather in a circle for opening ritual
 - **Opening Ritual-** Facilitator begins play group by going over rules, opening a conversation & discussion of what they would like to play
 - **Play Time-** Students are told to play, facilitators only intervene if play becomes stagnant or players need direction
 - **Closing Ritual-** Leader gathers players, go around circle sharing what they enjoyed & would like to play next time, finish with team cheer

METHODS: EVALUATION

- SPED and SLHS facilitators collaborated to create individual IPG goals for each novice player
- Goals focused on development in social play and communication
- SPED collected data through IPG field notes
 - Qualitatively recorded milestones met, effective strategies, & detailed play activities or themes
- SLHS used other means of data collection
- Total duration of IPG Program: 10 weeks



PARTICIPANT FINDINGS

Novice Participant 1: Alex (pseudonym)

- Made improvements in his ability to socially communicate and play with same-aged peers
- Demonstrated improvement in all of his play and socialization goal areas throughout the IPGs
- Continuous pretend play provided chances to improve the way Alex communicates with others
 - Find ways to engage in topics that were initiated by another child
 - Practice his dramatic play skills by taking roles
- Continued chances to participate in play activities with typically developing peers can improve his social communication and play skills and ultimately form more meaningful friendships

PARTICIPANT FINDINGS

Novice Participant 2: Zac (pseudonym)

- Made improvements in all of his play and social communication goals
 - Expanding his repertoire of play themes and symbolic pretend play
 - Maximize social communication in play with peers
 - Initiate reciprocal interaction, initiate play themes, and offer comments to collaborate with peers
- IPG created a platform for Zac to become comfortable initiating conversations and play themes with peers
 - Increased his ability to take on new play themes and roles while collaborating with peers towards a common goal

Additional social communication support or IPG with typically developing peers can continue Zac's growing social communication and play skills with peers

END OF PLAY GROUPS YEARBOOK

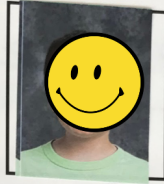
FRIENDSHIP



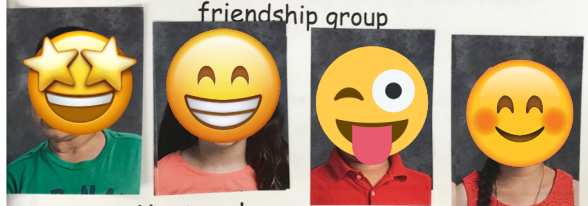
GROUP

My Name: _____

This is me



These are my friends I made in friendship group



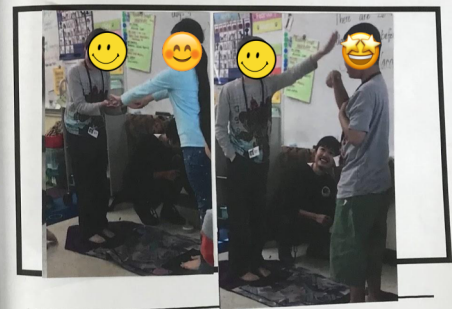
My teachers were



Ms. Gabi Ms. Elsa Ms. Alexa Ms. Shelby

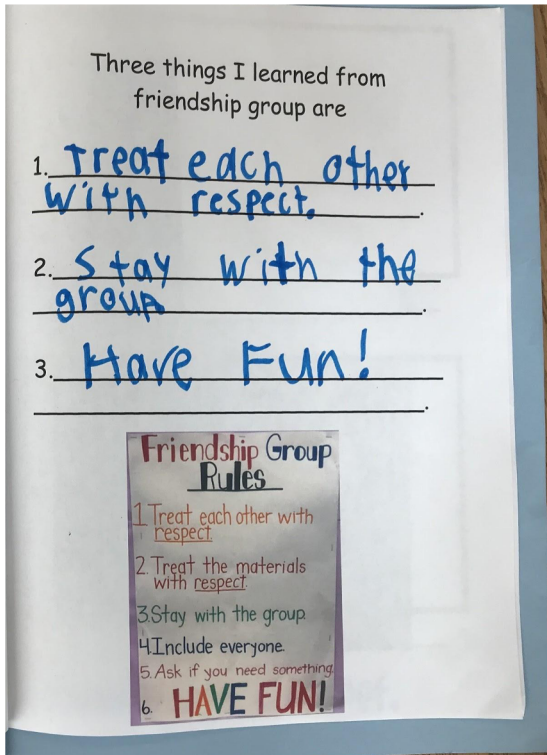


I was in the tent.

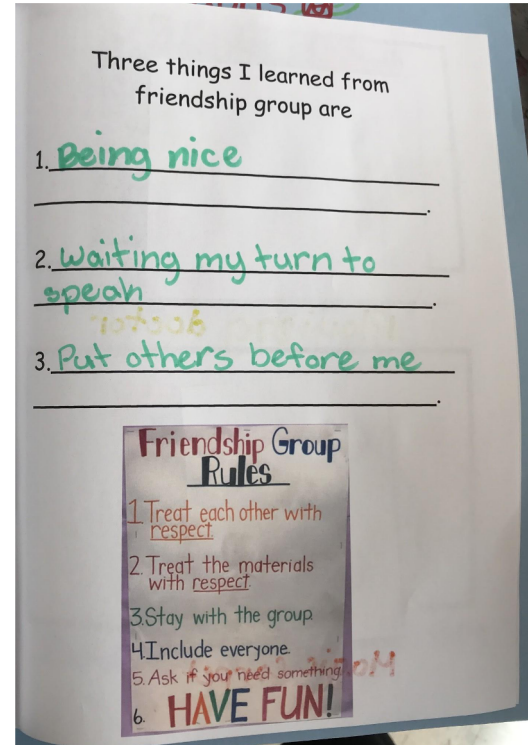


Magic car pet.

END OF PLAY GROUPS YEARBOOK



Novice player yearbook reflection



Expert player yearbook reflection

OUR TAKEAWAYS

- IPG Program benefits social communication and play skills of both the participants on the Autism Spectrum and typical developing students
 - Students on the Autism Spectrum learn new ways to play and interact with their peers (through peer modeling and facilitator guidance)
 - Typical developing students learn how to play with and include others, given opportunities for imaginative play
- Participants learn a variety of ways to play
- Facilitators learn to teach students *how* to play
- Facilitators learn to collaborate with a team to determine strategies for students



REFERENCES

Buron, K. & Wolfberg, P. (2014). *Learners on the Autism Spectrum: Preparing highly qualified educators*. Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

Wolfberg, P. J. (2009). *Play and imagination in children with autism* (2nd edition). Teachers College Press.