

Making Social Skills Fun! 😊



**LIGHTS
CAMERA
ACTION**

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What Will We Learn?

- + Selecting and sequencing target skills
- + Components of Behavioral Skills Training
 - ❖ Explicit Instruction
 - ❖ Modeling
 - ❖ Learner Role Play/Rehearsal
 - ❖ Performance Feedback
 - ❖ BONUS: Contrived Practice Generalization Activities
- + Adapting and differentiating components for learners of different developmental levels and behavioral needs

Selecting and Sequencing Target Skills

- + Social, adaptive, and coping skills can all be targeted!
- + Emphasize EMOTIONS and their relationship to CHOICES
 - ❖ Happy, sad, angry/mad, calm
 - ❖ Strong vs. Weak
 - ❖ "It is okay to feel _____, but we need to make a strong choice"
- + Consider important prerequisite skills to inform WHAT and HOW you teach
 - ❖ Identifying emotions
 - ❖ Following one-step and multi-step directions
 - ❖ Expressive language and/or functional communication
 - ❖ Joint attention and following instructions in a group
 - ❖ Raising hand
 - ❖ Responding yes/no to answer questions about facts and preference



Planning for Instruction

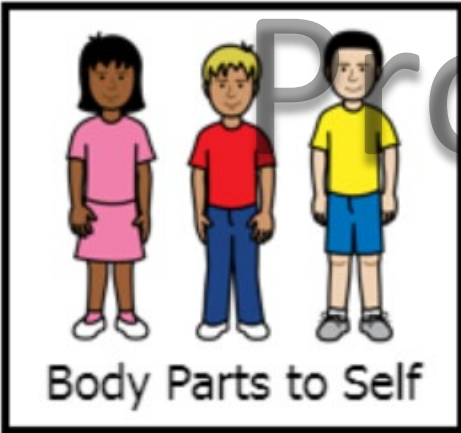
- + Break down complex skills into steps
 - ❖ Skillstreaming.com has program books for different developmental levels, skill cards, skill posters, student workbooks, etc.
- + Consider relevant situations (e.g. materials, people, times of day)
- + Give learners something to SAY or DO
 - ❖ Functional phrase (e.g. 'I need space', 'I don't like that', 'I feel angry')
 - ❖ Adaptive/coping skills (e.g. ask for a hug, deep breaths, take a break, count, etc.)
 - ❖ Alternative choices (e.g. choose a different toy, ask a different friend to play, etc.)
- + Gather materials (role play items, additional reinforcement, contrived practice or generalization activity materials, etc.)

Delivering Explicit Skill Instruction

- + Start with gaining attention!
 - ❖ Sing a song, gross motor imitations, review rules, feelings “check-ins”, intro video
- + Engage learners with educational technology
 - ❖ PowerPoints, video models, start and stop YouTube clips, etc.
- + Use names and prompt active student responding
 - ❖ Consider using learner names for strong choices!
 - ❖ “thumbs up” and “thumbs down”
- + Ask yes/no, fill-in, and simple questions about...
 - ❖ Emotions felt (what, who, *why*)
 - ❖ Choices made (strong/weak)
 - ❖ Consequences (e.g. did they get the cookie they wanted? OR do friends want to play with them anymore?)

Model the Skill

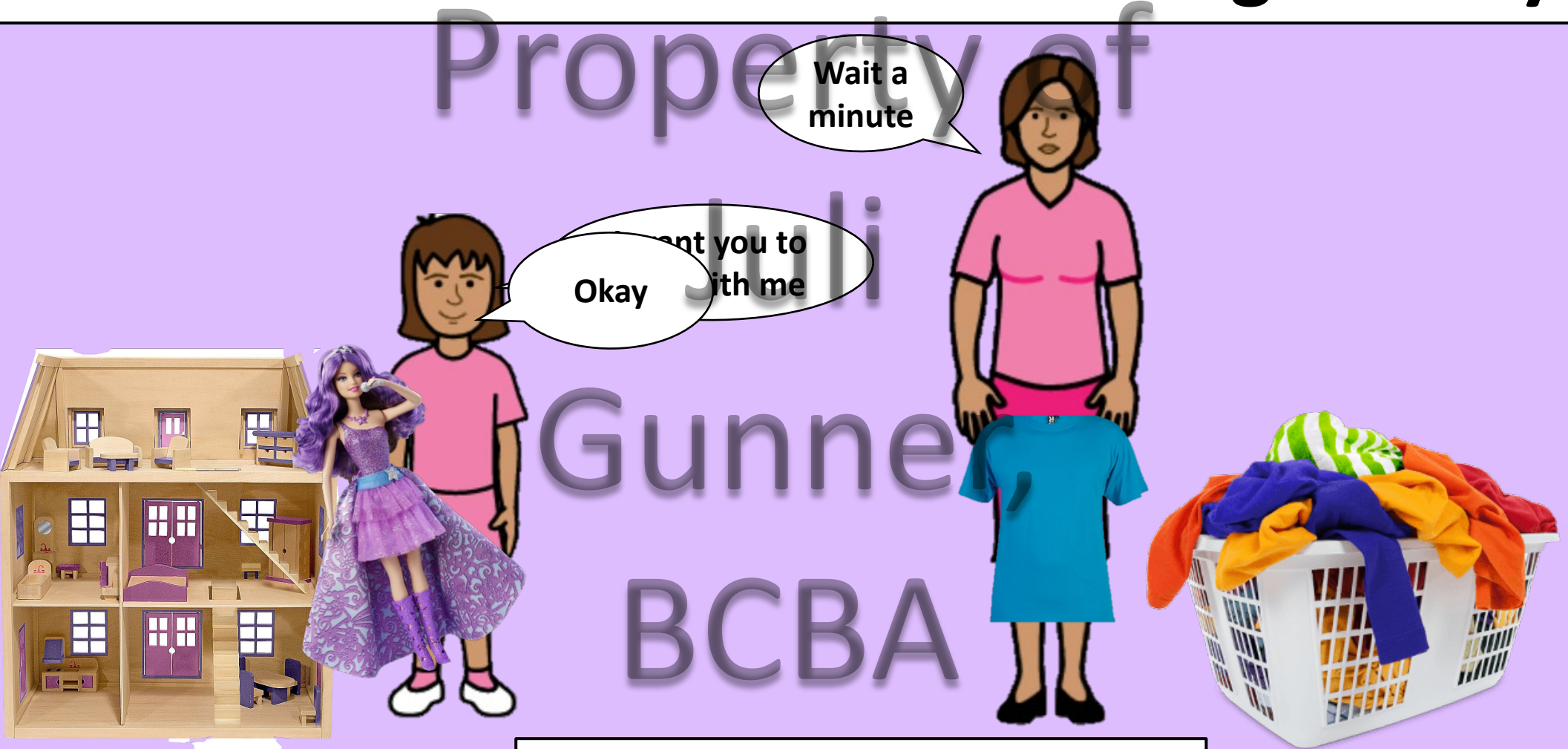
- + Choose relevant examples and materials
 - ❖ Sing a song, gross motor imitations, review rules, feelings “check-ins”, video
- + Consider role playing both STRONG and WEAK choices
 - ❖ Weak choice always comes first → “do you think I can make a stronger choice?”
- + BEFORE modeling, succinctly explain...
 - ❖ Situation and steps you will take (e.g. Skillstreaming)
 - ❖ What will happen → how it will make you feel → choice (strong vs. weak)
- + “Lights, Camera, Action!”
 - ❖ May also use a bell, prop, or other attention grabber!



Gunner,
Boba



When I can't have what I want right away



I need to wait

I may need to wait for my turn with a toy

Your turn!



I wait with a calm body until it is my turn

If I need to wait, I may feel sad or angry



I can take a deep breath and wait with a calm body

If I need to wait for my turn with a toy



Okay

Not right
now



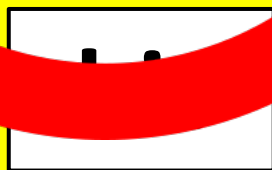
I can play with something different while I wait

If I feel angry because I have to wait for the center I want



I can take a break or choose something different while I wait

If I need to wait, I may feel angry. I may want to:



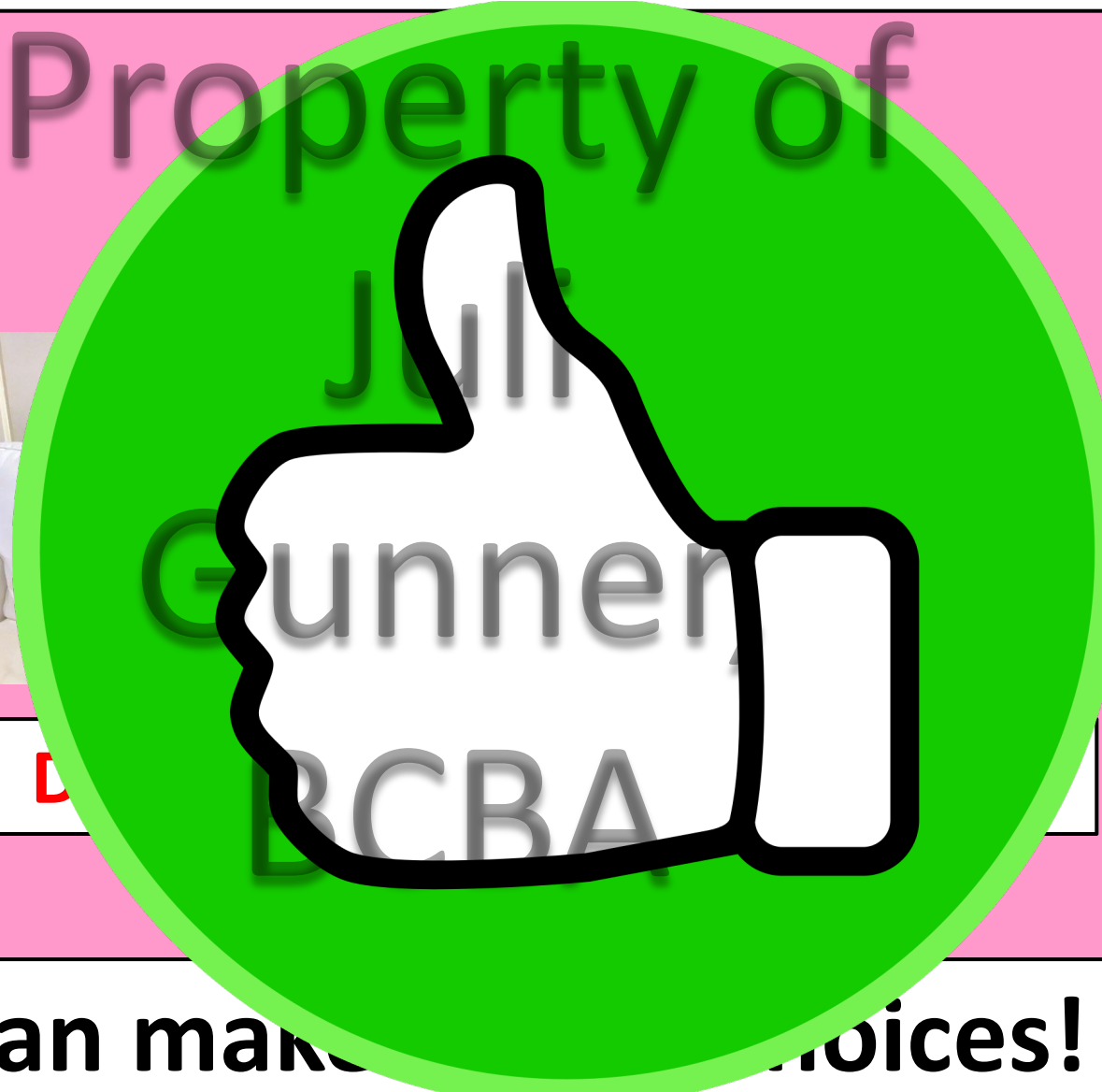
These are weak choices

If I feel angry or sad because I need to wait, I can...



I feel
angry

Say how I feel



Choose Something
Different

I can make choices!

Tina is waiting at the top of the slide. Is this a strong choice or a weak choice?



Teacher &
learner role
play

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LIGHTS
CAMERA
ACTION

Learner Role Play/Rehearsal

- + Remind learners to make a strong choice
- + Succinctly reiterate modeled situation and how they should...
 - ❖ Follow each step of the skill sequence
 - ❖ Use a functional phrase, coping skill, or choose an alternative
- + Repeat "lights, camera, action!"
- + "CUT" early if learners...
 - ❖ Demonstrate signs of anxiety
 - ❖ Display challenging behavior
 - ❖ Appear confused
- + Mediate role play by...
 - ❖ Adapting expectations (e.g. change "I need space" to "space", 1 deep breath, etc.)
 - ❖ Reminding learners they can try one more time, or try again later with a teacher

Performance Feedback

- + TONS of social praise
 - ❖ Clapping, high-fives, behavior-specific verbal praise (e.g. "I love how you just...")
 - ❖ Prompt learners and staff to clap for and/or praise other learners
 - ❖ As needed, provide additional reinforcement (e.g. edible, tangible)
- + Ask one or multiple peers to provide feedback on...
 - ❖ If/how they performed a step of the skill sequence
 - ❖ Strong/weak choice
 - ❖ How their choices made themselves and others feel



Contrived Practice Activities

- + Creating structured opportunities to practice skills with expectations explained and available reinforcement in view
 - ❖ Example: Waiting
 - ❖ Set a visual timer on the SmartBoard for 1 minute and explain that they are going to practice waiting. Tell learners that you have a special set of toys (e.g. poppers, sticky hands, figurines, etc.). First, they must wait and listen to a book with a calm body on the rug until the timer beeps/runs out. Then, they can play with the toys. If learners wait appropriately the first time, reinforce with extra sticker/edible, provide social praise, and preferred items.

Generalization Activities

- + Collect data! 😊
- + Examples: Waiting
 - ❖ Pull a virtual game up on the board and reinforce learners who wait appropriately by giving them a turn (“I love how you’re waiting with a calm body and a quiet voice, come on up to the board!”)
 - ❖ Seat learners at a table with coloring sheets, “answer the phone”, and instruct the learners to “wait a minute, and I will get you some markers”. Provide an additional sticker to learners who remain in their seat with a calm body and quiet voice.

Adapting and Differentiating

- + Consider individualized or small group instruction
- + Increase rates of reinforcement and praise for attending
- + Collect data and set specific goals
- + Errorlessly prompt during role play and rehearsal
- + Use video models instead of in-vivo role play
- + Include preferred characters (clips, books, pictures, etc.)
- + Focus on highly specific situations (e.g. waiting for iPad)
- + Wait to introduce contrived practice and/or generalization until they show progress in highly structured settings

Questions?



Helpful Apps

- Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame - engaging and interactive app for problem-solving with Sesame Street characters!
- Daniel Tiger's Grr-ific Feelings - songs, drawing, and games!
- Conversation Builder Teen - great for higher skill level learners
- Model Me Going Places 2 - community social skills in story based format
- Choiceworks App - good for simple calming routines/schedules
- Breathing Bubbles - fun calming activities
- Brillli - scheduling app great for teaching tolerating change in routine for higher skill level learners
- Kaleidoscope Magic - fun calming activities
- Social Story Creator and Library - great for social stories!

Helpful Websites

- Be Good People Core Ed. (Free)
 - Great lessons and extension activities for higher skill level learners [here](#)
 - Calming Strategies Toolbox [here](#)
 - Educator guidelines on SEL across tiers [here](#)
- Zones of Regulation Curriculum (paid content)
 - <https://zonesofregulation.com/index.html>
- [Therapist Aid](#) (subscription required)
 - Problem-solving, emotions ID, and calming strategy resources
- ABA Educational Resources Social Stories
 - <https://www.abaresources.com/social-stories/>
- Life Skills Advocate Guide for Writing Social Stories
 - <https://lifekillsadvocate.com/blog/how-to-write-a-social-story/>
- Healthy Bodies Toolkit
 - <https://vkc.vumc.org/healthybodies/>
- PBS Kids for Parents
 - <https://www.pbs.org/parents/learn-grow/age-2/social-skills/social-problem-solving>

Citations

McGinnis, E., Sauerbry, L., & Nichols, P. (1985). Skill-Streaming: Teaching Social Skills to Children with Behavioral Disorders. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 17(3), 160-167.

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