

Module: Pivotal Response Training (PRT)

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE

Sarah, Infant/Toddler

Sarah is a 3 year old receiving in-home services weekly from an interventionist. Sarah's parents want to begin preparing her for the preschool environment and are concerned that she does not enjoy playing with peers. Sarah spends many hours playing by herself and especially enjoys playing with her dolls. She is able to dress them and brush their hair.

The therapist works with Sarah's parents to identify play skills as a priority target behavior. Sarah's parents tell the therapist that there are several neighbor children that they would like to invite over for a play date with Sarah. The therapist and Sarah's parents discuss several activities involving shared control and embedding Sarah's interests to facilitate turn taking between she and her peers. Sarah's mom identifies her daughter's interest in doll play as a good activity to target. Mom realizes that Sarah needs a little practice on how to let others play with her dolls before inviting peers over to play and with the therapist's assistance, she creates a game plan on how to proceed. First, Mom allows Sarah to select her favorite dolls and accessories (e.g., clothes, shoes, brush, hair ribbons, and other props) and begins taking turns helping Sarah dress her dolls with whatever item Sarah chooses. Mom is careful to let Sarah choose each time what piece to put on what doll but she makes sure to include herself in the play by handing over the item Sarah requests or holding the doll to be dressed. Sarah

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resists initially but because Mom follows through with this expectation, provides lots of choice-making opportunities, and immediately reinforces Sarah's communicative choices and Sarah begins to understand the routine. She also starts to pull Mom more into the activity by giving Mom a doll to dress and items to put on without being asked. Mom and the therapist decide Sarah is now ready to participate in this activity with peers.

On another day, Sarah's Mom invites a 3 year old neighbor girl over to play. She suggests that the girl bring any dolls she may want to play with to their house. Sarah's Mom acts as the facilitator of the play date, helping the girls make choices and share control inside the activity of dressing the dolls. Mom does this by helping one girl choose the doll and the other girl picks an item to put on the doll and then encouraging the girls to trade roles. Mom reminds Sarah to communicate to her friend what item she wants when Sarah grabs for something, as well as helping each girl hand over the requested item when asked. The result is an activity that both girls enjoy and can take turns doing together.

Sarah's parents feel encouraged to see that with simple choice-making opportunities, shared control, and a little practice ahead of time, Sarah is able to interact with a peer during a preferred play activity. Sarah's parents continue targeting this goal and in their next meeting with the therapist make a list of other of other activities that Sarah could

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participate with a peer. The therapist encourages Sarah's parents to think about choice-making opportunities and how to divide the materials for taking turns, as well as what reinforcers or rewards can be applied in the activity to help Sarah achieve a target skill. With this information, Sarah's parents will be better equipped to understand Sarah's motivation to participate and how to embed teaching opportunities that fit within her preferences.