

**Preschool Group Therapy for
Speech/Language**

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The Speech Therapy Solution

Benefits of Group Therapy

Time Constraints

- Only certain times the child can be out of class
- Only certain times the therapist is available

Peer Support/Normalization

- See that they're not alone
- See that this is normal
- See that others can overcome it

Increased Awareness of Skills

- Be able to hear the error in someone else's speech
- Know what the other person should do to fix

Learning Through Teaching

- Teaching a peer can be a very effective way to learn

Benefits of Perspective Taking

- See what it's like to be on the other side of communication problems

Practice with Peers/Better Generalization

- It's different to work on new skills with peers than with adults

When NOT to Do Group Therapy

Child has Severely Limited Attention

- If they can't learn or practice if there are ANY distractions or other people

Child is in Certain Stages of Learning with Childhood Apraxia of Speech

- When first learning speech sounds and getting past initial phases, need lots of repetition

Child isn't Making Progress with Group Therapy

- Possibly time for a change

** Some children will need individual therapy for some skills and group therapy for others

To Group or Not to Group:

To decide if the child should work in a group:

- Look at each specific skill that the child needs to work on and consider:
 - The child's distractibility
 - The child's current mastery of the skill and amount of prompting needed to achieve
 - The nature of the skill (does it lend itself well to working with others or alone?)
- When you find a skill that would work well in a group, consider what other children are available to group with and consider if the skills can be worked on simultaneously.

Where to Do Group Therapy

Group therapy can take place:

- In the classroom or natural environment
- In the speech therapy room
- In a private clinic
- In public

How to decide:

- Take a look at the skills that they need to work on and their current mastery or stimulability
- Consider whether they need to work on carry-over or if they are just establishing a skill
- Consider whether they generalize skills easily to new environments

Speech Sound Group Therapy Ideas

- Take the student's sound flashcards and bury them in a sensory tub, each student helps identify whose word it is based on the featured sound.
- Get counters and have each child compete for who can say the most words with their sounds correct
- Hold yoga poses while practicing words
- Have students evaluate each other's productions
- Turtle races: for every word you say correctly you get to scoot your bottom on the ground one scoot
- Make an "accidental" mess with your artic cards and have the students help sort (and say) them to get them back in their containers

Language Group Therapy Ideas

- READ BOOKS!
- Work together to complete a puzzle, structure, follow a recipe or instructions for a craft, etc.
- Assign roles in multi-person activities
 - 1 person (or more) can see the picture of a structure and a different person has the blocks to make the structure and the first must tell the second what to do
 - Play restaurant and have one person be the waiter, another a cook, another a customer, etc.
- Have students make up a story using a series of picture cards (you pick ones that heavily rely on the language skills they need to work on). Each child takes a turn adding one of their cards to the story or just telling you what's on the card so you can add it to the story.

Mixed Skill Group Therapy

- READ BOOKS!
 - Each child gets asked a different question based on the skill they need to work on
- Stations (for older, more independent preschoolers)
- Play Dough: Work on using language skills to talk about what they're building, guess what you're making, describe the playdough, request tools, etc. Can require them to practice speech sounds to get new tools or colors
- Play a game and have students say a certain number of words before they get their turn. Have other students evaluate or practice quietly when it's not their turn.

Using Play during Group Therapy

- Create an episodic story-like play scenario that will provide multiple opportunities to practice key concepts or sounds (like a basket with toys that all contain the sound or are all from a vocab category). Make it story-like to help the children remember it better.
- Assign roles to children so everyone plays a part and no one just sits by and watches.
- Prompt children to use their language skills with each other or to answer questions from you that will elicit their skill.
- Facilitate the play in a manner that will encourage practicing of the specific skills as needed.

Sample Play Activities:

<https://thespeechtherapysolution.speechandlanguagekids.com/how-to-use-play-to-promote-language-development-webinar-recording/>

Group Therapy During Classroom Activities

Use the following common classroom activities to work on these communication skills as a group:

- Circle Time (Large Group): Answering questions, following directions, recalling past events (and sequencing them), imitating
- Small Group Lessons/Crafts: Following directions, requesting help and/or materials, sequencing, taking turns, answering questions
- Snack Time: Requesting snack from teacher or for a peer to pass something, responding to peer requests to pass things, peer social interactions (asking and responding)
- Free Play: Initiating interactions with peers, responding to peers, taking turns, engaging in fun, skill-loaded play scenarios (like the previous slide), pretend play and perspective-taking

Data Collection During Group Therapy

Rubric-Style Data Collection:

- Ideal for push-in therapy because you don't have to collect data on every trial but you still get a numeric score.
- Rate the student's performance on a scale of 1-5 (or more)
- Collect data on their performance overall (one rating) or once at the beginning and once at the end of the session).
- Compare the number over time to track progress

Rubric Style Example

Social Language Group Data Collection Form

Date: _____ Therapists: _____

Skill One: _____

Skill Two: _____

Child's Name: _____	
Skill One: Prompting needed	Skill One: Prompting needed
1 = Independent, no prompts	1 = Independent, no prompts
2 = Visual reminder	2 = Visual reminder
3 = Verbal reminder (use your words, etc)	3 = Verbal reminder (use your words, etc)
4 = Verbal model	4 = Verbal model
5 = Hand-over-hand assistance	5 = Hand-over-hand assistance

Child's Name: _____	
Skill One: Prompting needed	Skill One: Prompting needed
1 = Independent, no prompts	1 = Independent, no prompts
2 = Visual reminder	2 = Visual reminder
3 = Verbal reminder (use your words, etc)	3 = Verbal reminder (use your words, etc)
4 = Verbal model	4 = Verbal model
5 = Hand-over-hand assistance	5 = Hand-over-hand assistance

The 5-Minute Alternative to Groups

- Instead of a 1-2 longer, group therapy sessions per week, do 3-5 individual 5-minute sessions per week.
- Get more reps in 5 minutes alone than you would have in 30 minutes of a group (hopefully making faster progress)
- A shorter time means you don't have to do as much to entertain them so you have fewer behaviors and more reps
- Can be done in the classroom for improved carry-over

Sources: <https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/rtispeech/>

<https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/5-minute-speech-therapy-how-long-should-speech-therapy-sessions-last/>

Social Skills Groups

- For a whole webinar on social skills groups:

<https://thespeechtherapysolution.speechandlanguagekids.com/how-to-run-a-social-skills-group/>

How to Obtain Continuing Education

- If you need continuing education credit for this presentation, please email Carrie at Carrie@SpeechAndLanguageKids.com to receive a copy of the continuing education certification letter.
- You will receive 1 Certification Maintenance Hour (CMH) for attending live, which is like a CEU but I can't report it to ASHA so you'll need to keep track of this form and report it yourself.
- Let me know if you are outside the US or are not a certified member of ASHA (you'll get a different certificate)

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