

# Signs, Devices, and Words – Oh My !!!

A Para-Educator Perspective:

Sign Language as a Primary Response Mode and the Emergence of Vocal Responding.

## Peters Township School District Autism Initiative - Verbal Behavior Program

- ▶ January 2012 at McMurray Elementary School – grades 4, 5, and 6;
- ▶ 2012 - 13 at Bower Hill Elementary School – grades K, 1, 2, 3;
- ▶ 2013 - 14 at Peters Township Middle School – grades 7 and 8;
- ▶ 2015 – 16 at Peters Township High School – grades 9 – 12.

## Peters Township School District

- Dolores Miller
  - Learning Support Teacher at Bower Hill Elementary School.
  - K to 3 building has 4 Learning Support classrooms with varying levels of inclusion depending on student's skill levels and needs.
  - Verbal Behavior Program in Learning Support (with Autistic Focus) Classroom for 4 years beginning in 2012-13.
  - Prior to beginning the Verbal Behavior program:
    - Edmark, Sondag
    - Regular Education Curriculum with modification and adaptations
    - Units developed around themes, holidays

## Patty Forbrich

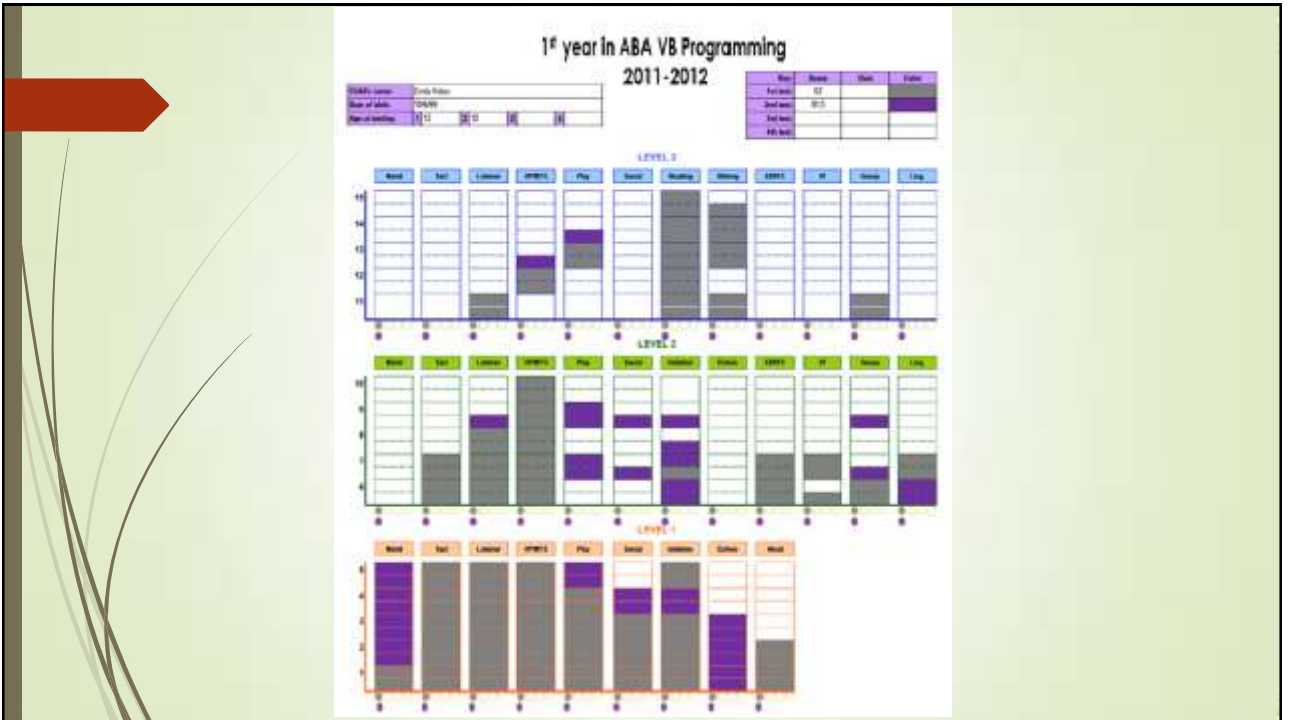
- Paraprofessional for Emily at Peters Township High School
- Past Assignments with Emily:
  - Bower Hill Elementary – grades 1-3
  - McMurray Elementary – grades 4-6
  - Peters Township Middle School – grades 7- 8
- Applied Behavior Analysis Trainings:
  - ABA Intensive Skills Training (Boot Camp)
  - Intermediate/Advanced Training
  - Integrating Speech and ABA Based Programs (Barb Esch)
  - Consultation Participation with PaTTAN Autism Initiative

## Emily

- ▶ Came to Bower Hill in November 2007 for her First Grade year.
- ▶ Came to Peters Township following schooling in Canada.
- ▶ Participated with a homeroom class for arrival, specials, lunch/recess and special events.
- ▶ One-on-one Paraprofessional Support in homeroom, during gym, music, art and library classes with her homeroom and in the support classroom activities.

## Response Forms by Emily:

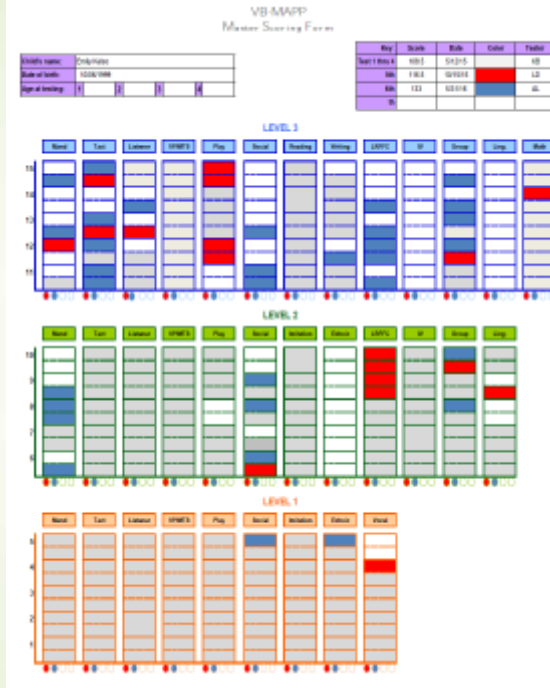
- ▶ Grades 1-3: beginning minimal use of a Dynavox with Gateway Program w/o consistency; PECs for snack
- ▶ Used signs only for Edmark
- ▶ Grade 4 and up: device was used for spelling activities, but signing used as primary response mode
  - ▶ A few contrived requests using Dynavox/PECS only during snack
  - ▶ Device was used for spelling word tasks
  - ▶ No spontaneous generalization was observed
- ▶ Motor skills were assessed, despite weaknesses she showed potential for signing.
  - ▶ Manual sign has shown some superiority over selection based methods (Tincanci, 2004; Anderson, 2002; Curtis 2012; Carbone Consultation Training, April 2016)



## Vocal Repertoire 2011-2012

- ▶ Mand: vocal = 0
- ▶ Mand sign = 0
- ▶ EESA Score (Early Echoic Skills Assessment) = 0
- ▶ Spring 2012: 15 word shells mastered no whole words
  - ▶ Examples of of sounds mastered:
    - ▶ Ah, uh, o, ih, ee, ah-oo, o-uh, a-oh, o-o,
  - ▶ Baseline tact sign: 35 pictures
    - ▶ Mastered through Edmark Reading and Home-based Instruction

## VB-MAPP 2015-2016



## Current Performance

- Mand:
  - Vocal = 44
  - Sign = 192
- Tact sign = 909
- Vocal sound inventory
  - Word shells mastered = 150
  - Whole words mastered = 76



## Instructional Day

- What does a typical day look like?
  - Intensive Teaching – 2 or 3 sessions
    - With technical integrated and manding
  - Manding – 1 or more sessions
    - Peer to Peer up to 3 times a week
  - PAES Lab – 1 session
  - Sensory Integration – 1 short session
  - Information Technology (Computer Skills)
  - Lunch
  - Specials: Ceramics or Partners PE

## Current Instructional Program


- Basic Tacts – Functional Items
- Tact – Adjectives
- Tact – Parts of Whole Items
- Tact – Intraverbal Items by Class
- Tact – Money (Coins)
- Manding
  - Individual
  - Peer to Peer
- NET – natural environment training
- Vocal Shaping
- Edmark Reading






## Videos of Current Teaching Sessions

- ▶ [Intensive Teaching](#)
- ▶ [Manding](#)
- ▶ [Collaborative Speech Sessions with Device](#)
- ▶ [Information Technology](#)



## Natural Environment/Vocational Training

- ▶ Mands for missing items
  - ▶ Various locations and items
- ▶ PAES Lab – exploration of vocational and practical skills
- ▶ Actual objects/functional skills
  - ▶ Using kitchen utensils and equipment – cooking projects
  - ▶ Cleaning up after an event – wiping the table – washing/drying dishes
  - ▶ Folding towels, t-shirts, as well as matching socks



## Future Programming/ Next steps

- ▶ Expanding Intraverbal Programming
- ▶ Expanding vocal shaping/training programming
- ▶ Language for Learning
- ▶ Connecting Math Concepts
- ▶ Expanding Mand opportunities in the PAES Lab
- ▶ Expanding Opportunities with General Education Students
- ▶ Peer to Peer Manding
- ▶ Activities of Daily Living
- ▶ Adult Leisure Opportunities