

# Social Engagement and the Steps to Being Social: *Enhancing Critical Skills for Social Participation*

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Defines engagement in observable language, and as the basis for all meaningful social interaction

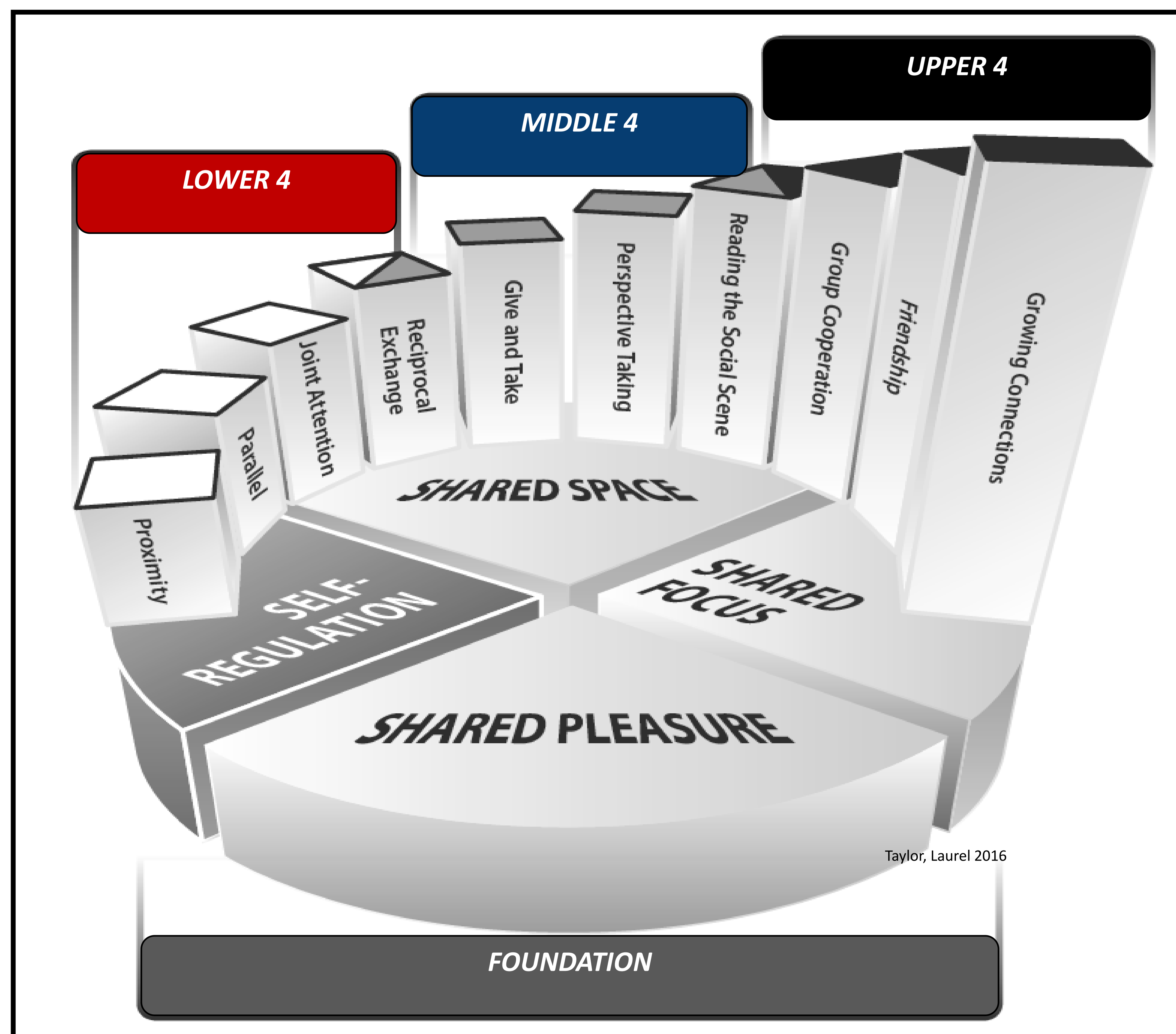
Breaks social skills learning into small objective steps for teaching

Objectively defines sub-skills for assessment and program planning

Links specific evidence-based practices to specific goals for intervention

## ABSTRACT

Social Engagement and the Steps to Being Social encourages learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to develop the skills that will enhance their range of life choices and improve membership across communities. This unique visual model provides discrete and objective steps for facilitating the development of social skills across severity levels and age groups. For the purpose of assessment and planning intervention, social skills are broken down into a series of specific steps. The steps identify pivotal skills, and link to specific evidence-based strategies (based on the National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorder). Engagement is defined in observable language and described as the basis of all meaningful social interaction. Steps are organized into skill sets, and sub-steps provide clear and measureable behaviors for assessment and intervention. This model is used to support family members, educators and therapists in assisting individuals with ASD to develop essential social skills. In addition, adolescents and young adults are using the model to accurately self-assess, and to plan next steps in order to learn and use needed skills in real-life settings.

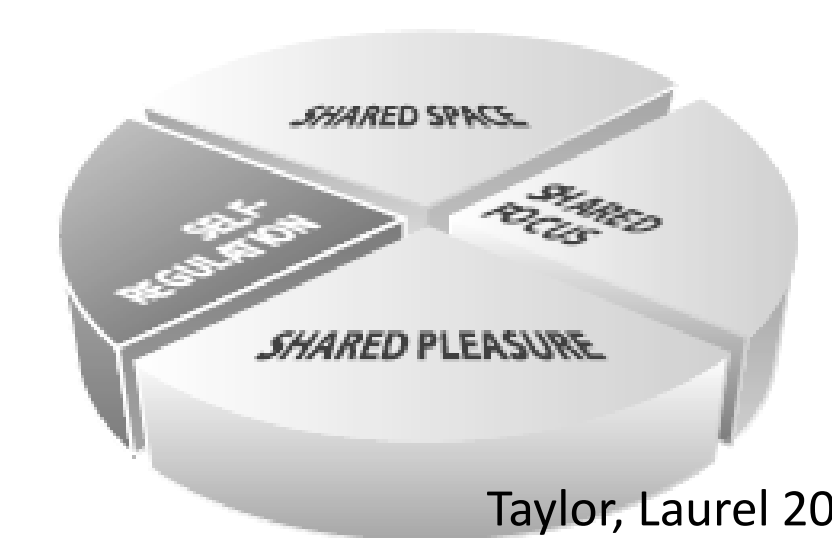


### Linking Evidence-Based Practice to the **FOUNDATION**

- Task Analysis
- Parent-implemented Interventions
- Reinforcement
- Visual Supports (boundaries)
- Prompting
- Antecedent-based Interventions

**Sample Sub-Step** (from Self-Regulation)

*Appears to be in control of body and emotions: Stays in designated space without aggression, yelling, or overt signs of distress*



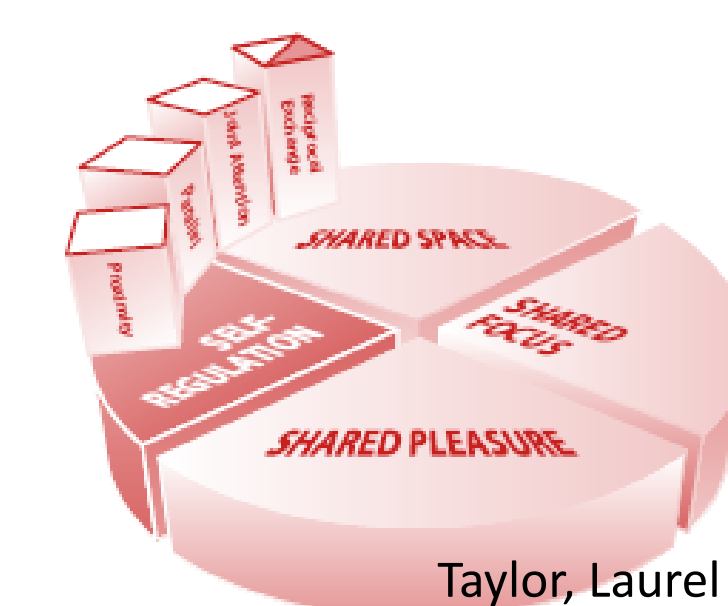
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### Linking Evidence-Based Practice to the **LOWER 4 Skill Set**

- Strategies from **FOUNDATION**
- Visual Supports
- Discrete Trial teaching
- Naturalistic Interventions

**Sample Sub-Step** (from Joint Attention):

*Alternates visual attention between object of interest and the Skilled Partner*



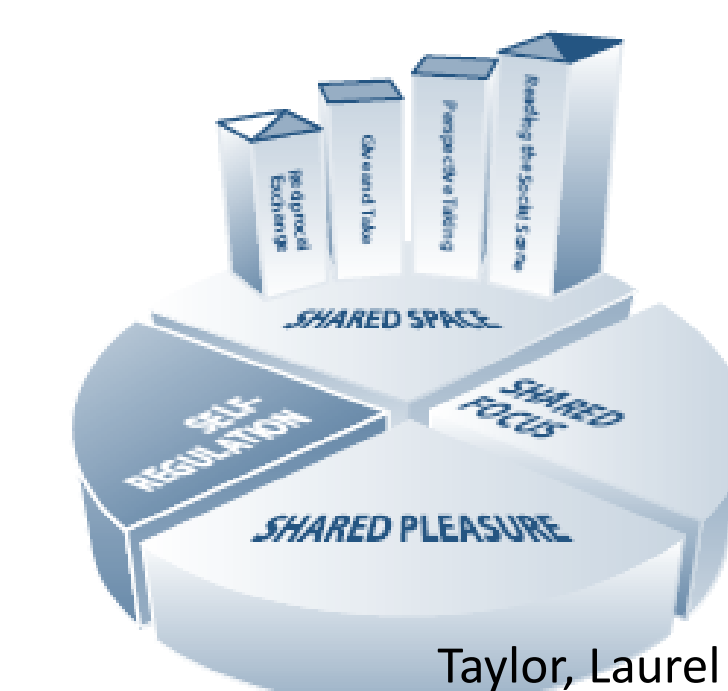
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### Linking Evidence-Based Practice to the **MIDDLE 4 Skill Set**

- Strategies from **FOUNDATION** and **LOWER 4**
- Social Skills Training
- Social Narratives
- Video Modeling
- Peer-mediated Instruction and Intervention

**Sample Sub-Step** (from Give and Take of Conversation):

*Intentionally directs a message (non verbal or verbal)*



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### Linking Evidence-Based Practice to the **UPPER 4 Skill Set**

- Strategies from **FOUNDATION**, **LOWER** and **MIDDLE 4**
- Self-management

**Sample Sub-Step** (from Group Cooperation):

*Agrees on a topic or activity (e.g. suggests, negotiates)*



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## The Steps to Being Social has been used with a variety of social learners including:

### Individuals with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

The Foundation of Engagement is Incorporated into the *Heart Start Early Intervention Model* as part of a multi-university research study in the Western Cape region of South Africa.



### Self-Advocates

We are excited to begin conversations with NM LEND about incorporating the model to assist participants, including self-advocates, in understanding one another's voice.



### Students in the General Education Population

As part of a pilot program in several Albuquerque private schools, staff have learned to implement the model with the entire school population, including those with special learning needs.



### Children in the Foster Care System

The model is used to assess and direct social skills teaching by occupational therapy graduate students at the University of New Mexico.

