The use of Comic Strip Conversations in Shaping Social Behaviour of Children with Autism in the Context of Play

Abstract

The play world of children with autism is based on a fixed formula of their behaviour. They do not participate willingly in games taken up spontaneously and any attempts to initiate them or join games voluntarily are not always successful. They wish to participate in social contacts like every child, they have motivation towards it but they lack the appropriate knowledge and skills in how to get involved in them normally (Pisula, 2005, p. 103; see Njardvik, Matson & Cherry, 1999, pp. 287–295). The effective method that supports problem solving and enables children to learn social skills, including play skills, is the usage of Comic Strip Conversations, which arranges in a systematic way “what people say and do, and emphasize what people may be thinking” (Gray, 1994, p. 1).

Key words: autism, play, play skills, social skills, social behaviour, social interaction, communication, Comic Strip Conversations, cartooning

Introduction

Different definitions about autism are found in the published literature. All include the essence of social developmental disorders, which is expressed in terms of difficulties relating to alternate social interactions. This is not only a dysfunction in the process of communication, but also an occurrence of types of behaviours, interests and activities (Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental