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What is Pragmatics?

The word "*Pragmatics*" refers to "social speech" but in the field of disabilities it has taken on a wider meaning --encompassing all skills that involve social interaction. In order to have meaningful interactions with people, one must have a desire to interact, recognize people as separate beings from one's self, have the capacity for joint attention, physical perspective taking, mental perspective taking, tolerance for differences on the most basic level, understanding of giving and receiving nonverbal cues, and the ability to rapidly interpret and integrate all of this information.

All living creatures both emit and interpret signals. On a basic level, this is how we interact with each other and survive. When two people communicate, they generally use both verbal and nonverbal language to give and receive signals (***pragmatic language***). Interpreting and understanding these signals and using inference enable us to predict what the other person is feeling or trying to say (Theory of Mind). By understanding this information, conversations happen, relationships build, and social relationships can flourish (***social interaction***).

