Effects of Peer Support Interventions on the Communication of Preschoolers with ASD: A Systematic Review

Social Communication Goals:
- Initiation of interactions
- Provision of appropriate responses to peers
- Use of conflict resolution strategies
- Sustained engagement in social play or group activities

Social Communication Goals:

Facts on Autism:
- 1 in 60 children are diagnosed with autism
- 40% of children with autism do not speak
- Picture of a child looking out a window
- No medical diagnosis or cure

Benefits:
- Natural communication partners
- Shared common interests in play
- Provide opportunities to practice and develop social communication skills
- Similarly-aged model
Social Support Model
(Hun: et al., 2009)

• Building Blocks for designing and implementing social supports to increase opportunities for students with CCN to interact with their peers.

What is the Social Support Model?

1. Provide Information to Peers
   • Friendship Training
2. Use and Identify Interactive Materials
   • AAC
   • Material Selection Criteria
3. Arrange Social Activities
   • Adult Support Behaviors
4. Facilitate Positive Social Interactions

What was the effect of Peer Supports?

• 18 Studies
  • 48 children with ASD
  • At least 138 Peers

• Overall IRD Results:
  • Mean IRD: .72
    (SD=.23; Range=0-1.0)
  • Large effect size

Who were the Children with ASD?

• Mean age: 4.3 years old
Gender:
- Female: Very Large
- Male: Moderate

What was the impact of interventions across children with ASD?

AAC:
- Past access to AAC: Moderate
- Used AAC in intervention: Very large

What was the impact of AAC for children who were identified as having access to AAC?

Age:
- 4 & 5 year olds: Large
- 3 year olds: Moderate

What was the impact of AAC for children with ASD?
Initiate interaction (large)

What were the Peer taught to do?

- Promptary behavior (large)
- Engage in proximity behavior (moderate)

- Reinforce behavior (very large)

Friendship/Ability Awareness Groups:

- 8 studies reported use of friendship group or ability awareness information within intervention

IRD:
- Very Large
**AAC**

- 8 children with ASD were reported to use AAC prior to intervention
  - **IRD:** Moderate

- 12 children with ASD were reported to use AAC during intervention activities
  - **IRD:** Very Large

**Identifying Interactive Materials:**

- Material selection based on child with ASD preferences (39%)
  - **IRD:** Large

- Material selection based on classroom routine (22%)
  - **IRD:** Moderate

**Types of Preschool Activity:**

- One main activity: 67% studies
- More than one activity: 33% studies

- **IRD:**
  - Manipulatives & Snack: Very Large
  - Thematic playset: Large
  - Art, Dramatic, Free play, Gross Motor: Moderate

**Adult Support Behavior(s)**

- **Model:** 83%
  - **IRD:** Moderate

- **Prompt:** 100%
  - **IRD:** Large

- **Check:** 39%
  - **IRD:** Moderate

- **Fade:** 50%
  - **IRD:** Moderate
- Interventions to teach peers to support the communication of young children with ASD can result in positive changes in the social communication behaviors of the child with ASD.
  - Average IRD=.72 (large effect size)
- The use of AAC can contribute to positive outcomes.
  - RD=.90 (very large effect size)

**Acknowledgements**

This research was supported in part by

- The Hintz Family Endowed Chair in Children’s Communicative Competence in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Penn State University
- The contents of this presentation do not necessarily represent the policies of these organizations and you should not assume endorsement

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Guralnick, M. J. (2010). Early intervention approaches to enhance the peer-related social competence of young children with developmental delays: A historical perspective. Infants and Young Children, 23(1), 73.

