A DIRECT COMPARISON OF SELECTION-BASED VS TOPOGRAPHY-BASED MANDING IN CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

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ABSTRACT

Deficits in communication form part of the primary diagnostic criteria for autism. Even with early and intensive intervention, some children fail to acquire useful speech (Cicero, 2004).

Two augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) modalities, sign language and picture exchange communication system (PECS), demonstrate promising results when taught as early intervention strategies. The majority of research on AAC training provides support for each modality, suggesting between sign language and PECS may be equivalent.

This study reports the results of a direct comparison of sign language and PECS training in three preschool-aged children with autism.

METHOD

Participants and Setting
3 boys diagnosed with ASD, attending a centre-based IBI program (30-31 years).
- Jonah: 4:10 years
- Adam: 3:1 years
- Leon: 3:11 years

Design
- Alternating treatment design with initial baseline phase and final "best-treatment" phase.
- Following baseline the 3 participants received alternating Sign Training and PECS training, selected at random order.

Three consecutive days did not begin with the same training modality.

Assessments
- PECS Training: adapted from Bondy and Frost (1994).
- Each child received four 20-minute training sessions per day.
- Number of Trials to Mastery

RESULTS

Number of Trials to Mastery

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Generalization

Jonah: PECS faster rate of acquisition, sign training resulted in secondary behaviors (i.e., problematic behaviors such as screaming and resistance to prompting)

Leon: PECS faster rate of acquisition, sign training resulted in secondary behaviors

Adam: Frequency of Vocalizations

- During the best-treatment phase only the most effective training modality was validated to reach mastery.

A second preference assessment was conducted to increase array of preferred items

REFERENCES