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

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Preschool Age Communication

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

(Case-Smith, 2013; Guralnick, 2010)
Peer Supports

Benefits:

• Natural communication partners
• Shared common interests in play
• Provide opportunities to practice and develop social communication skills
• Similarly-aged model

facts on AUTISM

1 in 68 children are diagnosed with autism.

48% of children with autism do not speak.

ASD is almost 5 times more common among boys (1 in 42) than among girls (1 in 189).

Fastest growing developmental disorder.

No medical detection or cure.
How can we use Peers to support Children with ASD?

Social Support Model
(Hunt 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

4. Facilitate Positive Social Interactions
   • Adult Support Behaviors
What was the effect of Peer Supports?

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

Overall IRD Results:
- Mean IRD: 0.72
  (SD = 0.23; Range = 0-1.0)
- Large effect size

Who were the Children with ASD?

- Mean age: 4.3 years old
Who were the Children with ASD?

What was the impact?

How did the impact differ across Children with ASD?

Gender:

Female: Very Large

Male: Moderate
What was the impact?
How did the impact differ across Children with ASD?

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

What was the impact?
How did the impact differ for Children who were identified as having access to AAC?

**AAC:**
- Past access to AAC: moderate
- Used AAC in intervention: Very large
Who were the Peers?

- 5 studies reported both peer & child with ASD outcomes

What were the Peers taught to do?

- Initiate interaction (large)
- Prompt target behavior (large)
- Engage in proximity behavior (moderate)
- Reinforce behavior (very large)
What is the Social Support Model?

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Friendship/Ability Awareness Groups:

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

**IRD:**
• Very Large
What is the impact of (2) Using and Identifying Interactive Materials?

**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

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**Identifying Interactive Materials:**

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

- Material selection based on classroom routine (22%)
  - *IRD*: Moderate
What is the Impact of
(3) Arranging Social Activities?

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

What is the Impact of
(4) Facilitating Positive Social Interaction?

Adult Support Behavior(s)
• Model: 83%
  • IRD: Moderate

• Prompt: 100%
  • IRD: Large

• Check: 39%
  • IRD: Moderate

• Fade: 50%
  • IRD: Moderate
What did we learn about Peer Support Interventions?

- 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.
  - IRD= .90 (very large effect size)


Questions?

Thank You!

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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*(2), 73.


