

4-20-2011

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Recommended Citation

Shields, Micah and Lyons, Carlton, "Examination of Social Responding in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder" (2011).
Symposium on Undergraduate Research and Creative Expression (SOURCE). 17.
<https://scholar.valpo.edu/cus/17>

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Examination of Social Responding in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Impairments in reciprocal pretend play are well documented in children with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The play of children with this disorder is characterized by repetitive behaviors and lack of symbolic or social quality. This disorder is also characterized by deficits in spontaneous language, imitation, and social interaction. The effectiveness of many different behavioral teaching techniques has been examined in order to teach play skills to children with autism. Research supports the viability of these different interventions, but very few studies have directly compared the effectiveness of these different interventions. The current study provided a direct comparison of two popular social interventions. Researchers first explored the video modeling technique and then examined the adult prompting and reinforcement technique. A control group where children participated in a structured play session with no direct intervention was also included. Children were placed in the different conditions using random assignment. Researchers predicted that children who were trained using the video modeling technique would demonstrate a greater number of social responses. Ultimately, researchers plan to generalize the results beyond the research setting to other situations in the child's natural environment.

Information about the Authors:

Micah Shields is a senior psychology major at Valparaiso University. He is planning on pursuing clinical psychology graduate studies. He is a teaching assistant in the Department of Psychology and a member of Psi Chi and Mortar Board. Carlton Lyons is a senior double major in psychology and biology. He is planning to pursue graduate studies in cognitive neuroscience.

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