Pivotal Response Treatment® for Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders

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Pivotal Response Treatment®: Evidence-Based Practice

- Early studies on the Natural Language Paradigm (NLP) (Koegel, O'Dell, & Koegel, 1987; Koegel, Koegel, & Surratt, 1992)
- Empirically Supported Pivotal Response Interventions for Children with Autism (Koegel, Koegel, Vernon, & Brookman, 2009)
- Pivotal Response Treatments for Children with Autism (Koegel & Koegel, 2006)

Evaluating the Evidence

- Educating children with autism (National Research Council, 2001)
- Evidence-based practices and students with autism spectrum disorders (Simpson, 2005)
- Comparisons of discrete trial and normalized behavioral language intervention for young children with autism (Delprato 2001)

Autism Insurance Legislation

- SB1263/HB 2847: Steven’s Law
  - Requires insurance carriers to provide coverage of “medically necessary” services
  - $50,000/year until age 9, $25,000/year until age 16
  - Full range of autism diagnoses
Changes in Core Symptoms of Autism

- Characteristics
  - Social difficulties
  - Language difficulties
  - Restricted interests

- Changes in core symptoms of autism
  - Pre-intervention (approximately 3 years old)
  - Intervention (PRT®; 6-8 weeks later)

Focus on Pivotal Areas for Intervention

- What are “Pivotal Areas”?
  - Versus individual target behaviors
  - Widespread, generalized improvements
  - Collateral improvements in untargeted areas
### Pivotal Areas

- Motivation
- Responsivity to Multiple Cues
- Self-initiations
- Self-management

### Motivational Procedures of PRT®

- Point 1: Child Attention
- Point 2: Maintenance Tasks*
- Point 3: Shared Control*
- Point 4: Contingent
- Point 5: Reinforce Attempts*
- Point 6: Direct and Natural Reinforcers*

### Child Attention

- The question, instruction, and/or opportunity to respond should be:
  - Clear
  - Appropriate to the task
  - Uninterrupted
  - Child must be attending

### Child Attention (video examples)
Maintenance Tasks

- Versus acquisition tasks
- Interspersing tasks
- Task variation

Shared Control

- Child directed/Child choice
- Follow child’s lead
- Shared control
- Provide choices
Contingent

• Reinforcement contingent upon child’s behavior
  – Immediate
  – Dependent
  – Appropriate

Reinforce Attempts

• Increase motivation to respond

• Reasonable attempt
  – Attention to the task
  – Related to the task
  – Reasonable effort

• Intent to respond
Direct and Natural Reinforcers

• Natural consequence
• Directly related to the behavior
• Functionally related to the behavior
• Generalization to the natural environment
water  green
blue
orange blue
orange blue