

Introduction

- Poor social skills are a core diagnostic feature among individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).
- Direct group training is the most common intervention for social skills. However, these groups are typically conducted outside of the natural setting (Kasari et al., 2011).
- Social skills programs have been found beneficial for higher functioning adolescents with ASD (Mesibov, 1984).
- Teachers who report higher levels of program satisfaction and treatment integrity do affect the levels of student outcomes (Noell et al., 2005)

Objectives

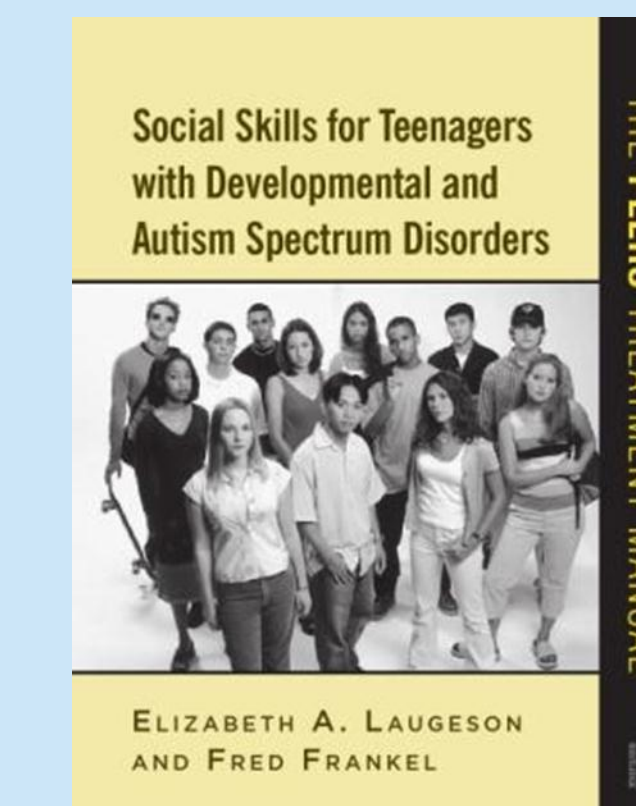
- To examine the teacher buy-in of implementing a school-wide social skills curriculum in the classroom.
- To examine the extent to which adolescent social skills outcomes are affected by program implementation.

Methods

- Participants were selected from a non-public school (N=149) of adolescents diagnosed with ASD.
- Teachers (N=24) provided daily classroom-based social skills instruction for 14 weeks using the Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS; Laugeson & Frankel, 2010).
 - Concurrent parent & teen sessions
 - School-based program daily 30 minute lessons
 - Teaches ecologically valid social skills
- Social skills was measured using the Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS; Elliott & Gresham, 2008) parent and teacher reports.
- Program Implementation of teacher-led social skills groups was measured using an adaptation from the Program Implementation Climate Scales (PICS; Dingfelder, H., & Mandell, D. (unpublished) ©. Adapted from Klein, K.J., Conn, A.B., & Sorra, J.S. (2001).

Demographics

Variable	ASD (n=103)
Adolescents	
Age (mean)	15.18 (1.8)
Race (% Caucasian)	53.3
Gender (% Male)	83.5
IQ level (% Avg & Above)	79.4
Diagnosis	
Asperger's Disorder	22.8
Autism	41.2



Pre/Post Intervention

	SSP1	SSP2	SST1	SST2	PBP1	PBP2	PBT1	PBT2
Minimum	55	60	52	50	85	91	86	90
Maximum	126	112	128	125	160	156	155	160
Standard Dev.	13.72	13.0	17.35	15.64	16.21	14.90	15.61	17.57
Mean	80.81	85.62	88.60	89.04	122.0	118.29	155.57	117.37

Note: SSP1 = social skills parent time 1, SSP2 = social skills parent time 2, SST1 = social skills teacher time 1, SST2 = social skills teacher time 2, PBP1 = problem behavior parent time 1, PBP2= problem behavior parent time 2, PBT1= problem behavior teacher time 1, PBT2= problem behavior teacher time 2

Post Intervention

	PICS ease of use	PICS stress of use	PICS global
Minimum	10	5	18
Maximum	24	17	35
Standard Dev.	3.7	3.3	4.5
Mean	18.4	12.7	27.4

Results

	PICS stress	SSIS ext.		SSIS more ext.	SSIS less ext.	X2
PICS Stress	1	-				
SSIS ext	-.24*	1				
			PICS (% less stress)	27.7	51.2	5.22*

*p<.05

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Discussion

- Over the 14-week intervention, both parents and teachers rated the students as having lower levels of problem behaviors and higher levels of social skills post-intervention.
- Post-intervention results demonstrated that teachers had a range of both stress and ease of use while implementing PEERS.
- Teachers who found the PEERS intervention less stressful to implement had students who showed greater improvement in their social skills over the course of the intervention.

Conclusion

Results suggest that teachers experienced a wide range of program satisfaction in relation to a teacher-implemented school-based social skills curriculum. Overall, teachers who reported less stress related to implementation of the PEERS program had better social skills outcomes among their students, suggesting that teacher buy-in and classroom climate are important factors to consider in teacher-facilitated school-based interventions. Future research might examine other teacher fidelity measurements.

References

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Acknowledgments

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