The Advancing Social-Communication And Play (ASAP) Intervention in Elementary School Settings: A Single Case Design Study

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BACKGROUND
Recent estimates indicate that around 30% of children with ASD are minimally verbal (Tager-Flusberg & Kasari, 2013), which would represent around 133,000 students in public schools in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). This group of students has been largely excluded from research (Tager-Flusberg & Kasari, 2013). As such, school programs are in need of evidence-based interventions to target core deficits in children with ASD who are minimally verbal.

The Advancing Social-Communication and Play (ASAP, Watson et al., 2011) intervention is a manualized program for elementary school classrooms serving children with ASD. The ASAP-E (Watson, L., Boyd, B., Baranek, G., Crais, E., & Odom, S. 2011) intervention is a manualized program designed for public preschools. It addresses a hierarchy of social-communication and play skills in one-to-one and group settings within the classroom using evidence-based strategies. Older children with ASD who are minimally verbal typically have difficulty with the early social-communication skills that are targeted in the ASAP intervention.

RESEARCH AIMS
The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of the ASAP intervention on school-age children with ASD, and adapt the intervention for elementary school settings with the following specific aims:

1. Does implementation of the ASAP intervention improve social-communication and engagement of elementary school children with ASD?
2. Is the ASAP intervention feasible and acceptable in elementary school classrooms serving children with ASD?

PARTICIPANTS
Students
- Three male elementary school students

Teachers
- Three white, non-Hispanic females
- All had at least 5 years experience

PROCEDURES
The study is a multiple baseline, single case design across participants.

Baseline Phase
- 10-minute videotaped sessions, 1:1 with teacher
- Instructed to engage child

Training
- 3-hour training on ASAP
- Teacher and at least 1 other school staff

Intervention Phase
- 10-minute videotaped sessions, 1:1 with teacher
- Embedding ASAP in instruction
- Ongoing coaching throughout intervention

Fidelity Data
- Data analysis in progress

RESULTS: FEASIBILITY

Teacher Questionnaire
- Used the URP-I to assess acceptability of the intervention
- Average total scores ranged from 5.0-5.7 on 6-point scale
  - Training, coaching, & support: 5.2 (5.0-5.4)
  - Feasibility & acceptability: 5.3 (4.7-5.9)
  - Usefulness & effectiveness: 5.3 (5.1-5.9)

Teacher Interviews
- Used a semi-structured interview to examine feasibility, acceptability and impact of training and coaching and implementation
- Qualitative analysis in progress

RESULTS: SINGLE CASE DESIGN

Student A
- Increase in RQ, later increases in SI & JA
- Increase in joint engagement

Student B
- Increase in RQ & JA
- Decrease in non-engagement

Student C
- Increase in SI

Future Directions
- Revise the ASAP manual for elementary school setting
- Conduct a larger study with the revised manual

REFERENCES

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