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Clinical Bottom Line: The study looked at four preschool children with autism receiving enhanced milieu teaching. Enhanced Milieu Teaching (EMT) is a hybrid approach to naturalistic, early language intervention. All children increased spontaneous and prompted language use.

EMT Includes both behavioral and social play approaches, with 3 components (a) environmental arrangement to promote child engagement with activities and communication patterns, (b) responsive interaction techniques to build social, conversational interaction and to model new language, and (c) milieu teaching procedures to prompt, model, and consequate the use of new language forms in their functional contexts.

Clinical Question:

P = 3 boys and 1 girl, mean age of 44 months

I = enhanced milieu teaching (EMT)

C = compared pre and post test scoring on developmental language measures

O = showed all increased after implementation of milieu teaching

Citation:

Hancock, T. B., & Kaiser, A. P. (2002). The effects of trainer implemented enhanced milieu teaching on the social communication of children with autism. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 22*, 39–54

Design:

- Single-Subject: Case Study AB Design Other Complex Designs (e.g., withdrawal baseline, etc.)
- Group Design: Randomized **Non-Randomized** Matching Control Group

Participants:

- Selection Criteria:
 - Be between 2.5 and 5 years of age, at least 6 month delay in expressive language, verbally imitative, expressive vocabulary of at least 10 spontaneous words.
- Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria:
 - Parents had to agree to bring children twice a week for 6 months, allow staff to do in home visits, and video tape child at home.

Experimental Group:

4 children – 3 boys and 1 girl – were used in the study. Therapy took place in a small playroom at a University clinic with three interventionists. Total of 37 therapy sessions – baseline (1 session), intervention, follow up.

Intervention: Conducted twice per week in a playroom; sessions lasted 15 minutes

Control Group: None

Intervention Procedures: (table 2, page 6)

All techniques were used during intervention phase – (name – definition)

- Milieu teaching procedure –
 1. Begin with child request
 2. Follow sequence of prompts (model, wait)
 3. Include corrective prompt as needed
 4. End with positive feedback, expand utterance, access requested object
- Expansion – adult utterance that follows child; embeds into more complete form, extends meaning

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- Follow the child's lead – behavior that relates to topic or behavior of child; do not recruit child to a different activity/toy
- Pauses – waiting at least 3 seconds for child to respond
- Responsive feedback – adult verbalizations that follow utterance, meaningful to child, related to activity
- Talk at child's target level – adult utterances include examples from child's class (2-3 words longer)

Dependent Variables:

- Classes of variables
 - Trainer use of intervention strategies
 - Child social communication

Social communication during observations

- Frequency of total utterances
- Spontaneous child utterances
- Diversity and complexity of language from transcripts

Results: For all four children their total utterances increased from baseline, throughout the intervention, and continued to increase when assessed during follow up. For example, child A started with total utterances of 48.4, during intervention went to 68, and follow up was at 82.3.

Comments on Design:

- When they say “utterances” I can count MBs use of signs as ‘utterances’
- I have already been doing Milieu therapy but without this much structure and terminology for what I do
 - Example: need to stop directing her attention to what I want, wait for her to initiate play (if she doesn't then copy her actions)
 - Example: I currently use too many words and too complex sentences. I need to simplify to 5 word utterances and wait on her to initiate play or action.
 - I can incorporate better responsive feedback; I use “perfect” or “good job” now. Need to use “I like your word *want*” or “you want the puzzle”. I need to be more descriptive of the actions she does.
- Materials included age appropriate toys such as blocks, markers, paper, cars, trucks, balls, chutes, bubbles.