

ABSTRACT

EFFECTS OF PARENT PLAY TRAINING ON AFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Given the importance of effective communication and emotional expression on the development of healthy social relationships, a great deal of research has explored strategies of teaching developmentally disabled and typically developing children social and social-affective skills. However, research has looked at teaching these social and social-affective skills to children with the specific diagnosis of autism. This study looked at whether children with autism could be taught to show affection (particularly hugging) through increasing the play interaction between them and their parents. Participants were two children with autism spectrum disorder who were 2 and 3 years of age. Parents were taught how to play appropriately with their children while the children were taught how to show appropriate affection through hugging. Data were collected on both parent play behavior and child play and affection behavior. Results indicated that physical affection and hugging behavior did not increase due to the play procedures implemented.

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