USING VIDEO MODELING TO TEACH RECIPROCAL PRETEND PLAY

TO CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

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This study focused on the use of video modeling of pretend play to teach two children with Autism both verbal interaction and play actions with typical peers. Collin was a 7 year old boy who was integrated into a Kindergarten class. Collin communicated in sentences, but required prompting to initiate requests, he was able to perform 2 step imitation. Alden was a 5 year old boy who attended pre-school classroom that utilized ABA concepts and principles. With the support of his therapist Alden was also integrated into a kindergarten classroom with typical peers. Alden had play skills in his repertoire but his skills were limited to solitary play. The additional 2 participants were selected from the boy’s kindergarten classroom based on their assertiveness in play activities and ability to follow adult instructions.

The author’s videotaped Kindergarten peers playing with the identical toys used in the study. The authors then videotaped themselves playing with the toys using identical play skills, and the scripted verbal exchanges of the Kindergarten peers. It has been found in previous research that the adult models are more effective than children. The toys provided were an airport setting, toy grill, and a zoo.

Participants were instructed to watch the video model 2 times before given the prompt “it’s play time”. No other prompts or reinforcement was delivered. If a participant tried to leave the play setting he was then prompted “Its play time” but no prompts or experimenter reinforcement were delivered during play interaction.

The results of this study showed an increase in all participants both the children with Autism and typical peer Reciprocal Verbal Interaction (min of 3 conversation exchanges). It may indicate that video modeling could be a useful tool for general education students when increasing understanding and play initiation with peers who have Autism as well. The study also showed increase in cooperative play skills in all three toy opportunities. Colin increased his verbalization by imitating the scripted conversation on the video model and scripted play skills. However, Alden who had some previous video modeling training (to increase his independent play skills) had doubled his unscripted verbalizations. Video modeling provides an opportunity for the child to observe the play skills without the distractions of the natural environment. This study also shows the motivation of social reinforcement in play activities given that the experimenters did not deliver any reinforcement or prompts during the play scenarios. The children continued to play with only the positive reinforcement of the peer interaction.