Effects of Peer Support Interventions on the Communication of Preschoolers with ASD: A Systematic Review

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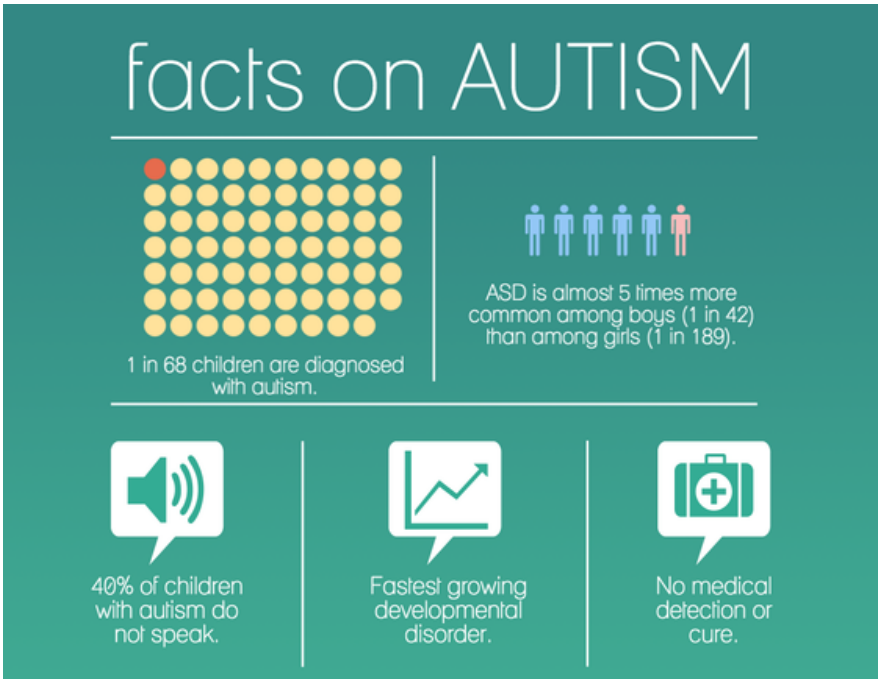
Preschool-Age Communication

Social Communication Goals:

- Initiation of interactions
- Provision of appropriate responses to peers
- Use of conflict resolution strategies
- Sustained engagement in social play or group activities

(Case-Smith, 2013; Guralnick, 2010)



Peer Supports

Benefits:

- Natural communication partners
- Shared common interests in play
- Provide opportunities to practice and develop social communication skills
- Similarly-aged model

How can we use **Peers** to support **Children with ASD**?

Social Support Model
(Hunt et al., 2009)

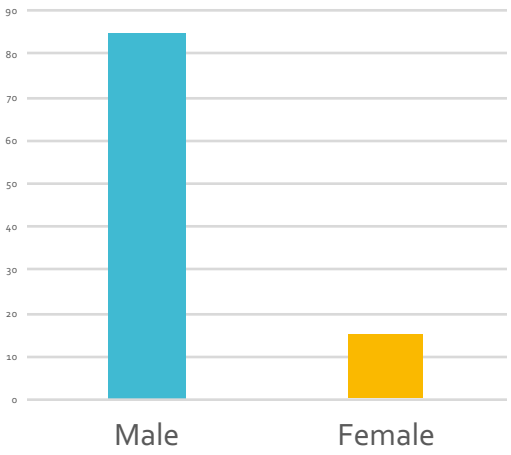
- Building Blocks for designing and implementing social supports to increase opportunities for students with CCN to interact with their peers.

What is the **Social Support Model**?

What was the effect of **Peer Supports**?

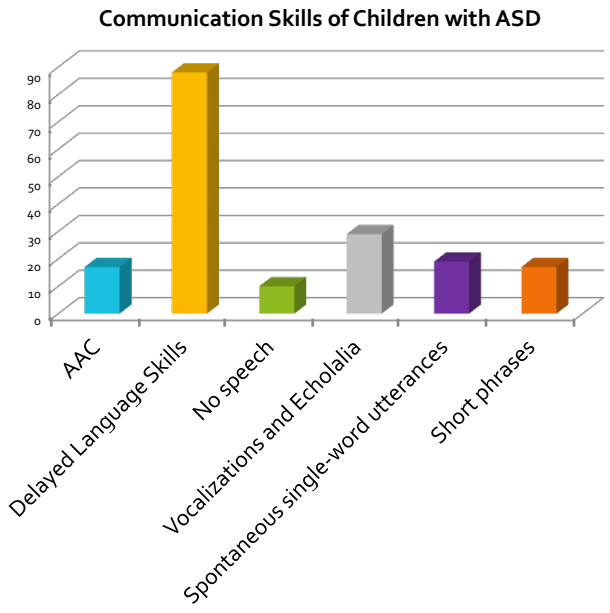
- 18 Studies
  - 48 children with ASD
  - At least 138 Peers
- **Overall IRD Results:**
  - Mean IRD: .72 (SD=.23;Range=0-1.0)
  - Large effect size

Who were the **Children with ASD**?



- **Mean age: 4.3 years old**

Who were the **Children with ASD**?



What was the impact?

How did the impact differ across **Children with ASD**?

Gender:

- Female: Very Large
- Male: Moderate

What was the impact?

How did the impact differ across **Children with ASD**?

Age:

- 4&5 year olds: Large
- 3 year olds: Moderate

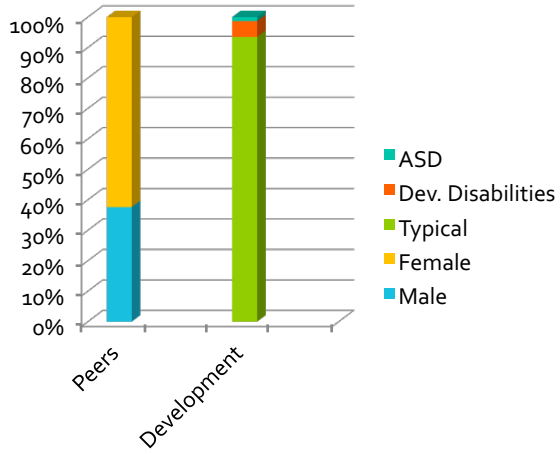
What was the impact?

How did the impact differ for **Children who were identified as having access to AAC**

AAC :

- Past access to AAC: moderate
- Used AAC in intervention: Very large

Who were the **Peers**?



- 5 studies reported both peer & child with ASD outcomes

What were the Peers taught to do?

What was the effect?

- Initiate interaction (large)
- Prompt target behavior (large)
- Engage in proximity behavior (moderate)
- Reinforce behavior (very large)

What is the **Social Support Model**?

What is the impact of

(1) Providing Information To Peers?

Friendship/Ability Awareness Groups:

- 8 studies reported use of friendship group or ability awareness information within intervention

IRD:

- Very Large

What is the impact of

(2) Using and Identifying Interactive Materials?

AAC

- 8 children with ASD were reported to use AAC prior to intervention
  - *IRD*: Moderate
- 12 children with ASD were reported to use AAC during intervention activities
  - *IRD*: Very Large

What is the impact of

(2) Using and Identifying Interactive Materials?

Identifying Interactive Materials:

- Material selection based on child with ASD preferences (39%)
  - *IRD*: Large
- Material selection based on classroom routine (22%)
  - *IRD*: Moderate

What is the Impact of

(3) Arranging Social Activities?

Types of Preschool Activity:

- One main activity: 67% studies
- More than one activity: 33% studies

- ***IRD:***
- Manipulatives & Snack: Very Large
- Thematic playset: Large
- Art, Dramatic, Free play, Gross Motor: Moderate

What is the Impact of

(4) Facilitating Positive Social Interaction?

***Adult Support Behavior*(s)**

- Model: 83%
  - IRD: Moderate
- Prompt: 100%
  - IRD: Large
- Check: 39%
  - IRD: Moderate
- Fade: 50%
  - IRD: Moderate

What did we learn about Peer Support Interventions?

- Interventions to teach peers to support the communication of young children with ASD can result in positive changes in the social communication behaviors of the child with ASD.
  - Average IRD=.72 (large effect size)
- The use of AAC can contribute to positive outcomes.
  - IRD= .90 (very large effect size)
- Hunt et al (2009) Social Support Model provides a useful framework for peer interventions in the EC classroom

Questions?

Thank You!

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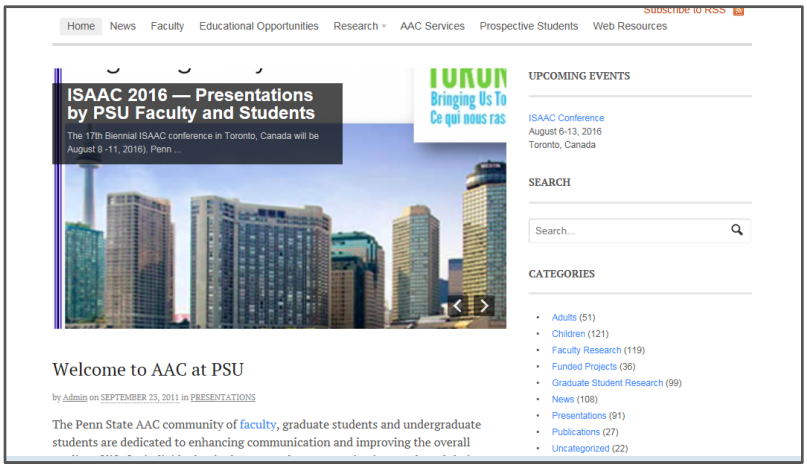

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