

The Effect of the use of Enhanced Milieu Teaching on the Expressive Language Skills of Young Children with Autism

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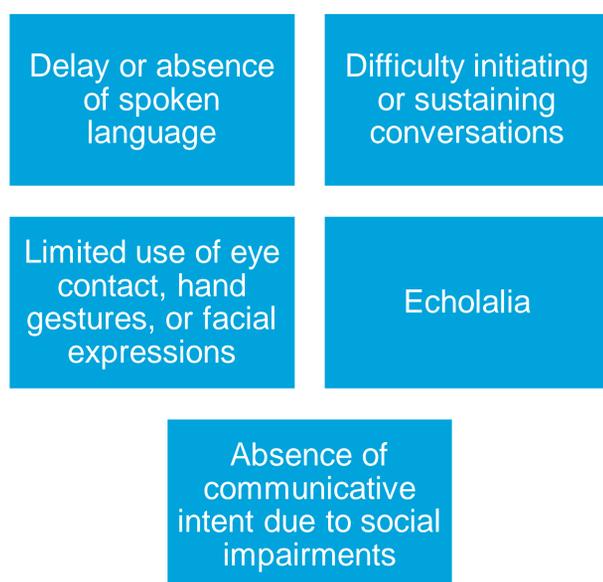
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the use of Enhanced Milieu Teaching (EMT) on the expressive language skills of young children diagnosed as having autism. Findings of the literature indicate an increase in expressive language in multiple areas. Further research is necessary due to a variety of implications.

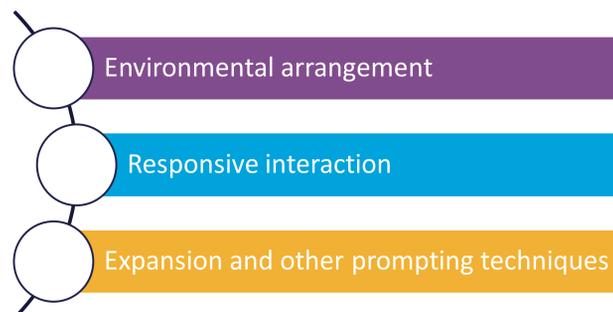
Characteristics of Autism in Young Children

Autism, affecting 1 in 44 children, is a bio-neurological developmental disability that can impair social interaction skills, cognitive function, and expressive and receptive language (Ingersoll, 2011 & Maenner et al., 2021). Individuals with autism are typically diagnosed within the first three years of life and may exhibit patterns of impaired speech, language, behavior, and a variety of medical conditions (Hampton et al., 2020). According to Pratt et al., 2017, common characteristics of young children with autism may include:



Enhanced Milieu Teaching (EMT)

Enhanced Milieu Training (EMT) is an early intervention method that incorporates a naturalistic environment and caregiver involvement to promote increases in language and overall communication skills in children birth to three (Nabei et al., n.d., Kaiser et al., 2002, Kaiser & Roberts, 2013, & Olive et al., 2006). EMT may include:



The use of EMT focuses on the needs of the family with regard to the child rather than the child's individual needs. This provides opportunities to promote maximum parental involvement. EMT allows professionals to explore generalization and functional success (Hampton et al., 2020).

EMT for Children with Autism

According to the review of literature, EMT has been identified as an appropriate intervention method for young children diagnosed with autism due in part to high levels of recommended parental involvement and intervention occurring in the most natural settings.



Effect of EMT on Expressive Language

Children with autism who participate in EMT to increase expressive language skills will experience greater communicative progress due to the use of specific strategies, a naturalistic environment, and/or intentional exposure to language. 100% of the research in this study reported gains in communication, expanding beyond expressive language. Other types of communication included the use of AAC, receptive language, and social communication. Although research promotes EMT as an effective treatment method used to increase communication skills, limitations exist. Increases in expressive language may be due to increased caregiver interactions rather than the implementation of the EMT method. Further research could be conducted isolating the use of EMT.

References

