

Effects of coaching on the fidelity of parent implementation of reciprocal imitation training

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Access to intervention services for young children with autism often involves long waiting lists and a stressful experience for parents. This study utilized a parent-led intervention for young children with autism. Parents attended a one-time workshop which was followed by individualized coaching in a play-based behavioral intervention approach called Reciprocal Imitation Training (RIT). Child participants increased use of spontaneous imitation through increased use of parent strategies. Parents reported satisfaction with this approach to interacting with their young child during play. This study involved a very small amount of trained professional time and relied on parents implementing the strategies during existing play time with their child for short periods during the day. The findings are helpful in that they suggest that parents can see changes in spontaneous imitation with their child through an enjoyable, play-based intervention.