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Abstract

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PI Title:

Project Title: FATHERS AS IN HOME TRAINERS OF AUTISTIC CHILDREN

Abstract: *DESCRIPTION (Adapted from the Investigator's Abstract): Autistic children and their families must cope with a chronic condition hallmarked by severe communicative and social deficits and aberrant behaviors. Intervention programs are needed to teach family members methods for promoting social interactions to facilitate positive parent-child interactions and the acquisition of communication skills and language development in autistic children. To date, training programs have focused on teaching mothers while no research specifically addresses training fathers of autistic children. The overall goal of this project is the acquisition of communication skills and language development in autistic children by teaching fathers methods of promoting social reciprocity. We will obtain preliminary data from 4 father-child dyads. This information will be used to adapt and further refine Elder's (1995) mother-training intervention. This intervention will then be implemented and evaluated in the homes of 20 autistic children. Individual as well as group data will produce important information regarding intervention efficacy and individual responses to specific components of the intervention package, maintenance effects, and generalization to mothers and siblings. Findings will address current deficits in the parent training literature, particularly regarding fathers provide important information for achieving the ultimate goal of developing and empirically evaluating a comprehensive in-home family training program for children with autism and related disabilities. It is hypothesized that: (1) there will be a significant difference between father-child reciprocity data obtained in the clinic playroom setting and father-child reciprocity data obtained in the homes, (2) there will be significant differences between father-child and mother-child turn taking (social reciprocity) behaviors, (3) after receiving instruction: (a) the fathers will demonstrate effective use of the child-training interventions (b) the*

autistic children will respond with increased social initiating and responding behaviors, (c) the quality of the father-child interactions will improve, and (4) father-training will generalize to mothers.

Thesaurus Terms:

*autism, father child interaction, home health care, nursing intervention, social behavior, training
caregiver, communication behavior, language development, mother child interaction, play, social cooperation
adult human (19+), behavioral /social science research tag, child (0-11), clinical research, human subject, videotape /videodisc*

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