INDEPENDENT REVIEWS OF EARLY INTENSIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION

Report of the Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities:
“Over 30 years of rigorous research and peer review of applied behavior analysis’ effectiveness for individuals with autism demonstrate ABA has been objectively substantiated as effective based upon the scope and quality of science.”

“Early interventionists should leverage early autism diagnosis with the proven efficacy of intensive ABA for optimal outcome and long-term cost benefit.”

“The importance of early, intensive intervention for children with autism cannot be overstated.”

“Furthermore, early, intensive, effective intervention offers the hope of significant cost/benefit.”


Clinical Practice Guideline Report of the Recommendations for Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders by the New York State Department of Health:

“Based upon strong scientific evidence, it is recommended that principles of applied behavior analysis and behavior intervention strategies be included as an important element of any intervention program for young children with autism.”

“Based upon the panel consensus opinion, it is recommended that all professional and paraprofessionals who function as therapists in an intensive behavioral intervention program receive regular supervision from a qualified professional with specific expertise in applied behavioral approaches.”

“Based upon strong scientific evidence, it is important to include parents as active participants in the intervention team to the extent of their interests, resources, and abilities.”

“Based upon strong scientific evidence, it is recommended that training of parents in behavioral methods for interacting with their child be extensive and ongoing and include regular consultation with a qualified professional.”

**Practice Parameters Consensus Panel of the following Professional Organizations and Agencies:**

- American Academy of Neurology
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Occupational Therapy Association
- American Psychological Association
- American Speech-Language Hearing Association
- Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics
- Autism Society of America
- National Alliance for Autism Research
- National Institute of Child Health & Human Development
- National Institute of Mental Health

“The press for early identification comes from evidence gathered over the past 10 years that intensive early intervention in optimal educational settings results in improved outcomes in most young children with autism, including speech in 75% or more and significant increases in rates of developmental progress and intellectual performance.”

“However, these kinds of outcomes have been documented only for children who receive 2 years or more of intensive intervention services during the preschool years.”

“Autism must be recognized as a medical disorder, and managed care policy must cease to deny appropriate medical or other therapeutic care under the rubric of “developmental delay” or “mental health condition.”

“Existing governmental agencies that provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities must also change their eligibility criteria to include all individuals on the autistic spectrum, whether or not the relatively narrow criteria for Autistic Disorder are met, who nonetheless must also receive the same adequate assessments, appropriate diagnoses, and treatment options as do those with the formal diagnosis of Autistic Disorder.”


**Practice Parameters for Autism by the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry:**

“At the present time the best available evidence suggests the importance of appropriate and intensive educational interventions to foster acquisition of
basic social, communicative, and cognitive skills related to ultimate outcome.”

“Early and sustained intervention appears to be particularly important, regardless of the philosophy of the program, so long as a high degree of structure is provided. Such programs have typically incorporated behavior modification procedures and applied behavior analysis.”

“These methods build upon a large body of research on the application of learning principles to the education of children with autism and related conditions.”

“It is clear that behavioral interventions can significantly facilitate acquisition of language, social, and other skills and that behavioral improvement is helpful in reducing levels of parental stress.”

“Considerable time (and money) is required for implementation of such programs, and older and more intellectually handicapped individuals are apparently less likely to respond.”


_Mental Health: A Report of the U.S. Surgeon General:_

"Thirty years of research demonstrated the efficacy of applied behavioral methods in reducing inappropriate behavior and in increasing communication, learning, and appropriate social behavior."

"A well-designed study of a psychosocial intervention was carried out by Lovaas and colleagues (Lovaas, 1987; McEachin et al., 1993). Nineteen children with autism were treated intensively with behavior therapy for 2 years and compared with two control groups. Follow-up of the experimental group in first grade, in late childhood, and in adolescence found that nearly half the experimental group but almost none of the children in the matched control group were able to participate in regular schooling."


PEDIATRICS Vol. 107 No. 5 May 2001, p. e85

(snippet) ELECTRONIC ARTICLE: Technical Report: The Pediatrician's Role in the Diagnosis and Management of Autistic Spectrum Disorder in Children

“There is a growing body of evidence that intensive early intervention services for children in whom autism is diagnosed before 5 years of age may lead to better overall outcomes. The only controlled study of early intensive interventions with young children was done by Ivar Lovaas of UCLA. It has received much attention for its remarkable results. Lovaas reported outcomes of treating young children with ASD (average age at initiation of treatment, 2.8 years) with 40 hours per week of 1-to-1 behavioral training (also called applied behavioral analysis or discrete trial learning) for 2 years. The training method focused on the acquisition of compliance behavior, imitation activities, language acquisition, and integration with peers using repeated discrete behavioral trials to accomplish the goals. After 2 years of therapy, almost 50% of the children in the treatment arm of the study were functioning typically in intellectual and academic areas. At 5-year follow-up, most had maintained their gains. The major criticisms of the study are nonuniform participant selection, lack of clear standard diagnostic criteria at entry, the required intensity of the intervention for such young children, choice of outcome measures, and randomization issues. A recently published retrospective study of the Lovaas method and preschoolers with autism and severe mental retardation showed that children receiving intensive early behavioral intervention obtained significantly higher IQ scores and better expressive speech in a small group of children. Two other studies found similar results.

Intensive behavioral treatment is becoming increasingly popular and being implemented in some early intervention programs and school districts. Several model programs based on the applied behavioral analysis approach have been developed. In a recently published clinical practice guideline, the New York State Department of Health Early Intervention Program endorsed this method as its sole strategy for toddlers with ASD in a recently published clinical practice guideline. However, more replicative studies with improved methodology are needed before it can be unequivocally recommended for all young children.”