

Report Rainbow United Inc, Autism Project: Spring 2004-2005

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A paucity of studies exist that examines the effects of the behavior modification approach for the treatment of autism using the following therapeutic treatments: Discrete Trial Training; Picture Exchange Communication program (PECS); Brain Gym; and Balance Auditory, Vision and Exercises program (Bal-A-Vis-X) on motor performance and imitation skills of children with autism. An exploratory study was performed by Rainbows United Inc. (RUI) based on a combination of these treatments (i.e., eclectic approach) which emphasizes blending the strengths of these intervention strategies to meet the individual needs of each child.

Seven children (3-4 yrs) with autism participated in a 11-mos, 1-8 sessions/mos, 2 ½ hour therapy session program. The 150 minute therapy session began with 60 minutes of PECS , Brain Gym, and Bal-A-Vis-X. This was followed by eight, 10 minute sessions of the following therapy: occupational therapy, speech therapy, academic skills, work box, structure play, self care, artistic skills, and physical therapy. The eight, 10 minute therapy sessions were 1:1 (i.e., child with therapist) while the 60 minute sessions were group sessions (i.e., 3-7 children). Data analysis was done using percent changes.

There were no consistent improvements demonstrated by the children. Indeed, the percent of completed attempts in imitation continued to cycle from high to low throughout the study. The varied amount of shortcomings in methodology were addressed focusing on inconsistencies in task selectivity, task frequency, and testing environment.