
MORE THAN WORDS AND LEARNING LANGUAGE AND LOVING IT: THE HANEN PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

CHARACTERISTICS OVERVIEW CHART

Verbal Skills	Grade Levels	Cognitive Level	Areas Addressed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nonverbal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Verbal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PK <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary <input type="checkbox"/> Middle/High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Classic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High Functioning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (Pre)Academic/Cognitive/Academic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adaptive Behavior/Daily Living <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Behavior <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication/Speech <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Emotional

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Several naturalistic programs have been developed to address the social and communication skills for children with autism (AU) (cf., Ingersoll, Dvortcsak, Whalen, & Sikora, 2005; Prizant & Wetherby, 1998). Among them are the More Than Words (Sussman, 1999) and the Learning Language and Loving It programs (Weitzman & Greenberg, 2002).

DESCRIPTION

Early intervention with parents as interventionists is a key to the More Than Words program, whereas Learning Language and Loving It focuses on educators as providers of instruction. These naturalistic programs emphasize responsiveness to the child to promote reciprocal interactions and social communication skills. The intervention program includes child-oriented strategies (e.g., observe the child, follow the child's lead, be face-to-face), interaction-promoting strategies (e.g., use routines, take a turn and pause for a response, cue the child to take a turn), and language-modeling strategies (e.g., interpret child's actions, label, expand).

Interventionists learn to support children's initiations by (a) including the children's interests by commenting or joining in, (b) interpreting the child's actions or vocalizations as meaningful, (c)

imitating the child’s actions or vocalizations, and (d) intruding when children are unengaged or involved in repetitive behavior. They also learn to initiate a topic, routine, or game and to support their children’s engagement in interaction. To promote longer interactions, adults learn to use structured and predictable routines as contexts for increasing the length of children’s engagement in interaction sequences.

SUMMARY

These social interactionist approaches have four major goals: (a) improved two-way interaction, (b) more mature and conventional ways of communicating, (c) better skills in communicating for social purposes, and (d) an improved understanding of language.

RESEARCH TABLE

Number of Studies	Ages (year)	Sample Size	Area(s) Addressed	Outcome
2	1-2	54	Social, communication	+

STUDIES CITED IN RESEARCH TABLE

1. Girolametto, L., Sussman, F., & Weitzman, E. (2007). Using case study methods to investigate the effects of interactive intervention for children with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Communication Disorders, 40*, 470-492.
Three children with autism between the ages of 1 and 2 and their mothers participated in an 11-week study using the More Than Words curriculum. All three children showed positive outcomes in vocabulary and the number of engagements in social interaction. In addition, improvement was observed in social initiation skills for all three children.
2. McConachie, H., Randle, V., Hammal, D., & Le Couteur, A. (2005). A controlled trial of a training course for parents of children with suspected autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Pediatrics, 147*, 335-340.
Fifty-one children from 24 to 48 months old participated in a seven-month study on the More Than Words curriculum. The study revealed significant outcomes for participants’ vocabulary development, but no gains in core areas of deficit for children with autism, such as social interaction and social initiation skills.

REFERENCES

- Girolametto, L., Sussman, F., & Weitzman, E. (2007). Using case study methods to investigate the effects of interactive interventions for children with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Communication Disorders, 40*, 470-492.
- Ingersoll, B., Dvortcsak, A., Whalen, C., & Sikora, D. (2005). The effects of a developmental, social-pragmatic language intervention on rate of expressive language production in young children with autistic spectrum disorders. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities, 20*, 213-222.
- McConachie, H., Randle, V., Hammal, D., & Le Couteur, A. (2005). A controlled trial of a training course for parents of children with suspected autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Pediatrics, 147*, 335-340.
- Prizant, B., & Wetherby, A. (1998). Understanding the continuum of discrete-trial traditional behavioral to social-pragmatic developmental approaches in communication enhancement for young children with autism/PDD. *Seminars in Speech and Language, 19*, 329-353.
- Sussman, F. (1999). *More than words: Helping parents promote communication and social skills in children with autism spectrum disorder*. Toronto, ONT, Canada: The Hanen Centre.
- Weitzman, E., & Greenberg, J. (2002). *Learning language and loving it: A guide to promoting children's social, language, and literacy*. Toronto, ONT, Canada: The Hanen Centre.

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

- The Hanen Centre: <http://www.hanen.org/web/Home/tabid/36/Default.aspx>
This links to the website for the Hanen Centre, which offers resources for parents and early childhood educators.

GENERAL RESOURCES

- Autism Internet Modules (AIM) www.autisminternetmodules.org. The Autism Internet Modules were developed with one aim in mind: to make comprehensive, up-to-date, and usable information on autism accessible and applicable to educators, other professionals, and families who support individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Written by experts from across the U.S., all online modules are free, and are designed to promote understanding of, respect for, and equality of persons with ASD.
- The Autism Web Course: http://cdd.unm.edu/swan/autism_course/about/index.htm. This web course was developed out of materials from the Interactive Collaborative Autism Network (ICAN). The Autism Programs at the University of New Mexico has updated and added information to this web course.
 - Characteristics
 - Assessment
 - Academic Interventions
 - Behavioral Interventions
 - Communication Interventions
 - Environmental Interventions
 - Social Interventions
 - Family Support Suggestions
- Indiana Resource Center for Autism (IRCA) <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca/fmain1.html>. The Indiana Resource Center for Autism staff's efforts are focused on providing communities, organizations, agencies, and families with the knowledge and skills to support children and adults in typical early intervention, school, community, work, and home settings.
 - IRCA Articles: <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/index.php?pageId=273>
- Texas Statewide Leadership for Autism www.txautism.net. The Texas Statewide Leadership for Autism in conjunction with the network of Texas Education Service center with a grant from the Texas Education Agency has developed a series of free online courses in autism. Please check the training page, www.txautism.net/training.html, for update lists of courses, course numbers and registration information. Current courses include the following:
 - Asperger Syndrome 101
 - Augmentative and Alternative Communication and the Autism Spectrum
 - Autism for the General Education Teacher
 - Autism 101: Top Ten Pieces to the Puzzle
 - Classroom Organization: The Power of Structure for Individuals with ASD
 - Communication: The Power of Communication for Individuals with ASD
 - Futures Planning for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Navigating the Social Maze: Supports and Interventions for Individuals with ASD
 - Solving the Behavior Puzzle: Making Connections for Individuals with ASD