Caring for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a childhood onset neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by deficits in Social Communication and Social Interaction, restricted interests and the presence of repetitive behaviors. In 68 children has been identified with ASD and ASD occurs 4.5 times more in males compared to females.

1. Social Communication and Social Interaction -- impairments in aspects of joint attention and social reciprocity and challenges in the use of verbal and nonverbal communication
2. Restricted Interests -- Inflexible adherence to routines
3. Repetitive Behaviors: speech, motor movement, or use of objects
4. Sensory Input may/may not be a factor (hypo or hyper-sensitivity)

Common Goals Of ASD Interventions

Early: as soon as ASD diagnosis is seriously considered

Intense: family inclusive active engagement 25 hrs/wk

Personalized: Low student to teacher ratio for 1-on-1 time and small-group instruction

Exposure: Interaction with typically developing peers

Goals: measurement and documentation of progress, resulting in adjustments in programming when indicated

Structure: Incorporate structure through routines, visual activity schedules, and clear physical boundaries

Generalization: Strategies to apply learned skills to new environments and situations and maintain functional use of these skills.

Assessment Based curricula measuring: Communication, social skills, functional adaptive skills, reduction of disruptive/maladaptive behavior, cognitive skills, traditional readiness skills and academic skills

Service Projects

1. The Seven Hills Foundation offers support and services to adults and children with disabilities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The foundation’s goal is to help individuals achieve the highest level of independence and well-being possible. They hosted the second annual AbilityFest, which included a walk, run and other activities such as games, music, and art projects. We helped direct the walkers and cheered them on as they completed the walk. This festival celebrated the abilities and goals of all participants and creates awareness on living with disability.

2. We created a PowerPoint to help guide physicians and families when transitioning patients with autism from pediatrics to adult medicine. We hope that this can be used in a webinar series that raises awareness of the difficulties that can be encountered during this transition and thus help to make it easier for the patients and families, as well as better inform providers about this process.

References


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