

5-2020

Increasing Spanish Speaking Latino Families' Awareness of Applied Behavior Analysis Therapy

Melissa Adilene Valdes
California State University, Monterey Bay

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes_all

Recommended Citation

Valdes, Melissa Adilene, "Increasing Spanish Speaking Latino Families' Awareness of Applied Behavior Analysis Therapy" (2020). *Capstone Projects and Master's Theses*. 814.
https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes_all/814

This Capstone Project (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Capstone Projects and Master's Theses at Digital Commons @ CSUMB. It has been accepted for inclusion in Capstone Projects and Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ CSUMB. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@csumb.edu.

Increasing Spanish Speaking Latino Families' Awareness of Applied Behavior Analysis Therapy

Melissa Valdés

A Capstone project for the Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Family Studies

Increasing Spanish Speaking Latino Families' Awareness of Applied Behavior Analysis Therapy

Introduction

Spanish-speaking Latino parents who have children with early signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder may lack knowledge on the disorder and how to treat the symptoms. The lack of knowledge could make it difficult for parents to find appropriate services and resources for their child and procrastinate on getting a diagnosis. Therefore, I created an informational presentation to teach parents about coping with the challenges of ASD and resources for intervention, in their homes in the Central Coast region given prior to therapy sessions, as a Behavior Technician from Life Applied.

Needs Statement

Spanish speaking Latino parents of a child with early signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may lack knowledge on the disorder and how to treat the symptoms. Early intervention in children with ASD is most beneficial because it helps them gain basic skills to accomplish developmental milestones. Therefore, it is important for families to have a network of help to cope with the challenges of ASD. Some of the challenges parents with a new diagnosis face include understanding ASD, finding treatment options, and resources or programs for the individual on the spectrum (Lange & McDougle, 2013). A common treatment option for ASD is Applied behavior analysis (ABA). ABA is a technique used by professionals in childhood development to improve behaviors. Families who are knowledgeable on ABA therapy, are able to implement strategies to treat their child's ASD symptoms at a young age (Lange & McDougle, 2013). Research shows that early intervention may help reduce early symptoms of ASD and learn basic skills (Tzanakaki et al., 2012).

Most parents of a child with ASD have concerns by the time their child is two years old. Often, parents compare their child to their older children and realize that something is different in their development (Lange & McDougle, 2013). The differences between children with ASD and those without are particularly decreased social-communication behaviors, like joint attention or imitation, and repetitive behaviors which may be evident in early childhood (Ingersoll, 2011). Due to the increase of children diagnosed with ASD, researchers have done an immense amount of work to raise awareness on treatment options (Frasier-Robinson & Graham, 2015). The first step is understanding that early recognition, referral and diagnosis of autism are best matched with evidence-based practice and family-centred care (Zwaigenbaum, 2011). The reason for ASD is still unknown and there is no cure for the condition. However, early intervention has been shown to reduce ASD symptoms (Frasier-Robinson & Graham, 2015).

Many Spanish speaking Latino parents may be in denial of the diagnosis and avoid seeking help. Studies show that Spanish speaking Latino parents associate ASD with embarrassment and family burden which is why they don't seek help from professionals (Zuckerman et al., 2014). ASD is underdiagnosed in Spanish speaking Latino families due to confusion, lack of knowledge, language barrier, and fear of legal issues. Many families have also reported that they assumed early symptoms of ASD were normal or could be related to family dysfunction (Zuckerman et al., 2014). Findings show that Latino children get an ASD diagnosis when they are older compared to non-Latino white children in the United States (Zuckerman et al., 2014). If families wait until the child is older to find treatment, then their development will be negatively affected because they did not learn basic skills to achieve developmental milestones (Tzanakaki et al., 2012).

Parents express finding relief in knowing that effective treatment options exist, such as ABA therapy (Lange & McDougle, 2013). The use of ABA therapy helps children on the spectrum improve cognitive, language, and social skills (Lange & McDougle, 2013). Families are usually referred to early start agencies through their pediatrician or friends and family. Some parents agree to implement early intervention because they have heard stories about ASD being cured while others had no clear expectations (Lange & McDougle, 2013). ABA strategies are used in therapy sessions, but must also be implemented outside of session by parents. ABA techniques include, but are not limited to, schedules of reinforcement, natural environment teaching, and task analysis. Each technique is used to teach a new skill to learners with ASD.

In order to help parents face the challenges of ASD, I created an informational presentation to guide parents through treatment options and find resources for intervention. Children with an ASD need the support of their families to master key developmental tasks. The interactive lesson will occur in their homes prior to therapy sessions, as a Behavior Technician from Life Applied in the Central Coast region.

Theory

Bronfenbrenner, in his ecological model, demonstrated the impact different environments have on humans. In the model, there are five systems which influence children's development: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The microsystem is the most immediate environment for a child, such as home, school, or the community (Sincero, 2012). The mesosystem refers to the relationship between elements of the microsystem, such as the linkage between home and school (Sincero, 2012). Children are more likely to have academic achievement if their parent(s) is involved in their school life (Sincero,

2012). Third, the exosystem is the relationship between two settings that may affect the child indirectly (Sincero, 2012). Parents who come home stressed from work may affect the child negatively. The largest system is the macrosystem, which contains people and places that significantly affect the child (Sincero, 2012). This system is made up of cultural values, dominant beliefs, and political and economic status (Sincero, 2012). For instance, children are raised differently depending on where they grow up. Finally, the chronosystem is the transitions in one's lifespan, for example, a divorce may affect the child's behavior (Sincero, 2012). Parents will gain a stronger insight into how they can influence their children's behavior positively.

The ecological model theory applies to my project because as a therapist, I am coming into families' homes to give them support to face the challenges of ASD. All the parents I will be presenting to are working parents. Being a working parent could be stressful because after work they still have to be present in therapy sessions. Stress may impact the way parents treat their children and the way they implement ABA strategies. I am utilizing the theory in my project by presenting in the families' natural home environment. Parents will come home from work and learn the importance of ABA therapy for their child.

Consideration of Diversity

My presentation will be conducted in the families' homes prior to the therapy session. Given that families are receiving services from Life Applied, participants must be parents of a child with a developmental delay or have an ASD diagnosis. Parents must also be able to read and write to follow along and comprehend the presentation and answer the questionnaire. An issue of diversity found in my project is the language barrier. I will be visiting six different homes of Spanish-speaking Latino families. The presentation will be delivered in Spanish at each

home. 80 % of the clients at Life Applied are Spanish-speaking Latino families (B. Pemberton, personal communication, March 12, 2020). The majority of families that Life Applied serves are Latino, which is why I chose to do my presentation with that population. As previously mentioned, the content will only be aimed towards families facing challenges of ASD. Families of children with other diagnoses will not be included. The information that I will provide is beneficial to parents with a child of any age. However, the information is geared towards parents of children between the ages three and five, as that is when early intervention is performed. In addition, although many of the parents are Hispanic, I am not going in depth about issues of cultural perspectives on ASD or children with disabilities. If I had more time with them or a whole group of specifically Latino parents, more information could be given on cultural views of disability.

Learning Outcomes

I plan on providing parents with an informational 45 min. PowerPoint presentation about ABA therapy in their homes.

After listening to my presentation and discussing the content, parents will:

1. Describe the goal of ABA (ex. increasing, decreasing behavior)
2. Indicate one ABA strategy parents could use (ex.reinforcing an appropriate behavior)
3. Indicate one activity that is beneficial for the child receiving ABA services (ex. playing with water, playing with sensory toys)

Method- Presentation Plan

I conducted a one-day presentation, but I repeated it in six different Spanish speaking homes. The families were informed ahead of time, by the supervisor, that I would be presenting

prior to the therapy session. I began by greeting the family as usual and continued on to set up my laptop for the presentation (See Appendix A). While I set up, I asked the parents to fill out a pre-questionnaire that correlated with my presentation (See Appendix B). I gave the families 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire before collecting them. I explained to parents that the presentation would be an open discussion to encourage their participation. My presentation slides flowed along with the discussion. I began by defining Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), then asked the family to describe the goal of ABA. Families shared their thoughts out loud and I proceeded to explain that the goal is to increase or decrease specific behaviors. I provided each family examples of behaviors the behavioral technicians are working on with their child. Next, I asked parents to share examples of strategies the behavioral technicians have been implementing during the session. Together, the parents and I made a list of strategies each family is using and discussed why they have been implemented. Then, I showed a video to further demonstrate ABA strategies: <https://youtu.be/7pN6ydLE4EQ>. Lastly, I asked the parents to name different activities that they have seen their child benefit from during the session. The presentation content was the same at each home, but I made sure to personalize it by using their child in the examples. I wrote their answers on a small whiteboard I brought in to make the presentation more interactive. At the end, I thanked parents for listening to me and handed out a post-questionnaire to measure the learning outcomes (Appendix C). I collected the post-questionnaire until the end of the session to give the families enough time to answer.

Results

Not completed due to COVID-19

Discussion

Not completed due to COVID-19

References

- B. Pemberton (Personal Communication, March 12, 2020).
- Frasier-Robinson, M., & Graham, A. (2015). Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Guide to the Latest Resources. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 55, 113-117.
doi:10.5860/rusq.55n2.113
- Ingersoll, B. (2011). Recent Advances in Early Identification and Treatment of Autism. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 20, 335-339. Retrieved from
www.jstor.org/stable/23045750
- Lange, N., & Nicholas, C. J. (2013). Help for the Child with Autism. *Scientific American*, 309, 72-77. doi:10.1038/scientificamerican1013-72_
- Tzanakaki, P., Grindle, C., Hastings, R. P., Hughes, C., Kovshoff, H., & Remington, B. (2012). How and Why do Parents Choose Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention for their Young Child with Autism? *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 47, 58-71. Retrieved from
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/230634014>
- Zuckerman, K., E., Sinche, E., Mejia, A., Cobian, M., Becker, T., & Nicolaidis C. (2014). Latino Parents' Perspectives on Barriers to AutismDiagnosis. *The Official Journal of The Academic Pediatric Associates*, 14, 301-308. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2013.12.004>
- Zwaigenbaum, L. (2011). Assessment and diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders: New NICE

guidelines set clear evidence based standards for quality care. *BMJ: British Medical Journal*, 343, 855-856. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/23052176

Appendix A

Presentation

ABA Explicado

Por: Melissa Valdes



Análisis Aplicado del Comportamiento

- Método Científico para entender diferentes comportamientos y usado para mejorar o cambiar comportamientos específicos.



¿Cual es el gol de ABA?

- Mejorar comportamientos
- Mantener habilidades adaptativas

Estrategias

- Necesitadas para mejorar los comportamientos
- Usando refuerzo positivo

Actividades

Adentro:

- Tocar musica
- Usar juguetes sensoriales

Afuera:

- Jugar con agua
- Salir a caminar



¿Preguntas?

Appendix B

Pre-questionnaire

Cuestionario sobre Análisis Aplicado del Comportamiento
(Applied Behavior Analysis Questionnaire)

1. ¿Qué es lo que sabes de Análisis Aplicado del Comportamiento (ABA)?

(What do you know about Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?)

2. ¿Cuándo se usa ABA?

(When is ABA used?)

3. Lista algunas estrategias de ABA que sabes usar

(List ABA strategies that you know how to use)

Appendix C

Post-questionnaire

Cuestionario sobre Análisis Aplicado del Comportamiento 2

(Applied Behavior Analysis Questionnaire 2)

1. Describe el gol de ABA

(Describe the goal of ABA)

2. Indica una estrategia de ABA que los padres pueden usar

(Indicate one ABA strategy parents could use)

3. Indica una actividad que beneficia al niño recibiendo terapia de ABA

(Indicate one activity that is beneficial for the child receiving ABA therapy)

Appendix D

Capstone Presentation



ABA Therapy

Melissa Valdés



Intro



The lack of knowledge on ASD may lead to difficulty finding appropriate services and resources.

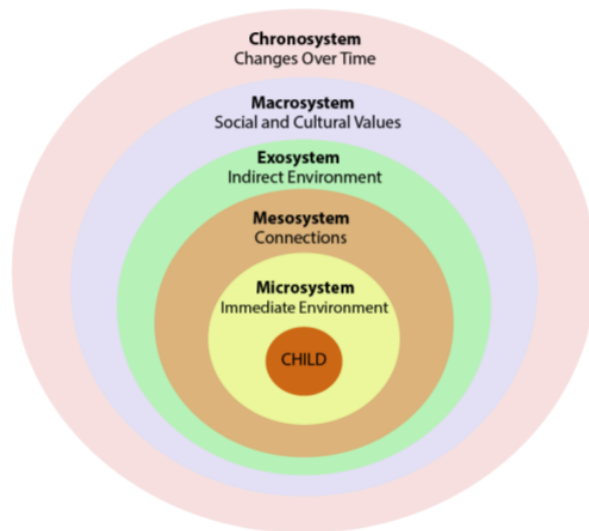
Needs Statement

- ASD is underdiagnosed in Spanish speaking Latino families
- Early intervention is needed for children with ASD



Theory

- Working Parents
- Environment influences one's development



Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model

Who? What? Where?

- Presentation on ABA
- Parents of child with ASD
- Central Coast Region



Learning Outcomes

Provided parents with an informational 45 min.
PowerPoint presentation in their homes.



Results

Unable to complete due to COVID-19

Learning Outcome #1

- Describe the goal of ABA



Learning Outcome #2

- Indicate one ABA strategy parents could use



Learning Outcome #3

- Indicate one activity that is beneficial for the child receiving ABA services





Discussion

What Would I Do Differently?

- Gather families in one location





Thank you

Any Questions?

Melissa Valdés