The Effectiveness of Teacher-Child Interaction Training On Behaviorally At-risk Preschool Children

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INTRODUCTION

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy

- Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) was developed to be a short-term intervention program that focuses on young children, 2 to 7 years of age, who exhibit a variety of behavioral, emotional, and/or developmental problems (McNeil et al., 2000).
- The goal of PCIT is to enhance the parent-child relationship and to teach parents effective discipline skills (Funderburk et al., 1998). PCIT teaches parents how to praise their children’s appropriate behaviors and how to ignore their children’s inappropriate behaviors (Funderburk et al.).
- Traditionally, PCIT has been implemented in clinic settings. However, preliminary research has found PCIT to be an effective intervention for managing problem behavior in preschool settings (Filcheck et al., 2004; McIntosh et al., 2000).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- Research has supported the efficacy of PCIT in clinic settings. However, only preliminary research has supported the efficacy of TCIT in school settings.
- The purpose of this study is to implement TCIT with daycare preschool teachers who have difficulty with a child in their classroom displaying problem behaviors. Once teachers are trained to use TCIT techniques, preschoolers’ inappropriate classroom behaviors are expected to decrease.

METHOD

Participants

- 4 female Caucasian preschool teachers
- 11-25 years of experience
- 3 behaviorally at-risk male students
- 4-5 years old
- 2 Caucasian
- 1 Caucasian/African American

Setting

- 3 preschool programs in two different cities in the Midwest
- 15-20 students per classroom
- 1 teacher, 1-2 teacher aides
- TCIT sessions lasting 20-30 minutes each, took place in the preschool setting, twice a week.
- Data collectors observed targeted students’ disruptive behavior and teachers’ use of TCIT in the classroom twice a week.

Previous Research

- Successful PCIT treatment outcomes in the home generalized to behavioral improvements in the classroom (McNeil et al. 1991).
- Positive outcomes were maintained in the school setting at 12-months follow-up (Funderburk et al., 1988).
- In a case study, preliminary results suggest that Teacher-Child Interaction Therapy (TCIT) decreased aggressive behavior and increased compliance (McIntosh et al., 2000).
- Implementing both the Level System and PCIT in the preschool classroom decreased disruptive behaviors classroom wide (Filcheck et al., 2004).

METHOD (continued)

Instruments

- Semi-structured teacher interview
- Behavior Assessment for Children, Second Edition (BASC-2)
- Parent & Teacher
- Disruptive behavior recording form
- Teacher-Directed Interaction (TDI) skills recording form

Design

- A combination of concurrent and non-concurrent multiple-baseline design across individuals was utilized to evaluate the effects of TCIT on disruptive student behavior
- Independent variable - TCIT
- Dependent variable - Preschoolers’ disruptive behavior (non-compliance, verbal disruption, and physical disruption)
- Treatment integrity - Teacher’s use of TDI skills in the classroom

Procedures

Partial Interval Recordings:

- Collected 2x a week for 30 minutes during baseline, treatment, and follow-up
- Disruptive behavior:
  - Interobserver agreement
  - Collected 25-33% of the observations
  - 97-99% agreement
- TDI skills:
  - Interobserver agreement
  - Collected 25-27% of the observations
  - 93-99% agreement

Teacher-Child Interaction Therapy (TCIT):

Child-Directed Interaction (CDI)

- Sessions 1-4
- Goal: Increase positive interactions between the target child and his teacher
- Skills: Praising, reflecting, imitating, and describing appropriate behaviors

Teacher-Directed Interaction (TDI)

- Session 5-10
- Goal: Decrease the child’s inappropriate and disruptive behaviors and increase the child’s appropriate social interactions within the classroom
- Skills: Effective instructions, following through on non-compliance, increasing consistency of positive behaviors, and ignoring inappropriate behaviors

RESULTS

- Percentage of total disruptive behavior in the classroom during baseline (Figure 1) decreased disruptive behavior across phases. This examination allows clinicians to better assess the effects of TCIT on disruptive student behavior
- Increases in disruptive behavior were observed across all three preschool students after the TCIT intervention was complete
- Dan’s disruptive behavior made the greatest improvement
- More than the other teachers, Dan’s teacher’s use of TDI skills was greater and increased over the course of the study
- Although not directly manipulated, it appears that praise is an essential part of positively influencing preschools’ disruptive behavior

DISCUSSION

- Dan’s teacher had the highest treatment integrity, which likely accounts for his greater improvement
- Single-subject design permits an in-depth examination of changes in the children’s disruptive behavior across phases. This examination allows clinicians to better prepare teachers for how their student’s behavior will change, especially during the TDI phase
- Replication studies as well as modifications which may improve implementation, teacher acquisition, and staff-wide generalization of TCIT should be further explored
- Studies might also assess whether students exposed to TCIT in the classroom setting continue to display long-term maintenance of appropriate behaviors as they progress through school

REFERENCES