

Project Abstract

Project Title: Parent Implemented Training for Autism through Teleconsultation (PITA-T)

Applicant Name: Dr. Mark R. Clingan

Address: Center for Excellence in Disabilities (CED)

959 Hartman Run Road

Morgantown, WV 26505

Contact Phone Numbers (Voice, Fax): (304) 293-4692, (304) 293-7294

E-Mail Address: mclingan@hsc.wvu.edu

Web Site Address: <http://cedwvu.org>

Needs and Problems:

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy is an evidenced-based treatment for skill deficits related to Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and other Pervasive Developmental Disorders (Green, 1996). Although a number of West Virginia children have ASDs and other developmental disabilities, ABA therapy is often not available to many of them. This service shortfall is due to the lack of trained clinicians, the geographic distribution of those needing services and the expense of ABA therapy. A similar problem is demonstrated for other underserved families of children with ASD in rural environments, nationally.

One way to remedy the cost and lack of trained clinicians is to train parents to perform ABA therapy. The geographic distribution of families needing services complicates the training approach. Tele-consultation has been used to lessen the difficulties associated with similar geographic distributions across a range of other disciplines and clinical concerns. A similar approach may be helpful in training parents of children with ASD and other developmental disabilities to perform ABA therapy.

Proposed Activities and Population to be Served:

The proposed project will use a novel teleconsultation model in which video models and delayed video feedback are used to teach parents to perform ABA therapy. This teleconsultation will consist of (a) sending families videos that explain and demonstrate how to appropriately perform ABA therapy (b) having parents record themselves performing ABA therapy and sending it back to program staff, and (c) program staff providing follow-up videos that provide feedback regarding the parents' ABA therapy skills. The performance of parents from this treatment group will be compared to that of parents who are given only written instructions on how to perform ABA therapy. It is anticipated that parents who receive teleconsultation will perform better than those who only receive written instructions. Parent perceived changes in their ABA skills, changes in children's social skills, and stress levels of parents will be assessed.

Anticipated Impact:

Findings from the proposed research may indicate a positive impact on the healthcare of rural, underserved children with ASD as well as provide information impacting the way ASD services are organized and delivered.

Keywords: Behavior Disorders, Developmental Disabilities, MCH Research, Parent Education, Rural Population, Training, University Affiliated Programs, Autism.