

communication intervention

speech and language therapy
early intervention
oral motor therapy
occupational exercises



ASHA CALL FOR PAPERS SUBMISSION

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Biographical Sketch: Debbie Brassell; Ph.D, JD, EJD, MS-CCC-SLP with over 30 years experience is a U.S. Consultant to Ireland directing a research project involving group parent-based early intervention. She developed a Hippotherapy Program in Bedford, Virginia. She has authored a book: "Alzheimer's Disease: Survivor or Victim. Know the Facts."

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Demographic Information:

Instructional Level (Introductory)

Target Audience (SLP)

Session Format Option Request: POSTER SESSION-SLP Topic

Time-Ordered Agenda: N/A for Poster Session

Abstract Type: Research

Learner Outcomes: Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to

1. Describe major elements of the study design.
2. Discuss author's conclusions.
3. Identify possible implications for practice.

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Title of Proposal: Efficacy of Ireland's Release Communication Group-Parent-Based Early Intervention.

Abstract of Proposal: Sixty-nine children enrolled in the RELEASE Model of weekly one-hour parent-based-group speech-language therapy sessions, were compared to thirty-four Irish children enrolled in the Traditional Irish Model of individual therapy absent caregiver participation, and to nine children at George Washington University Speech & Hearing Clinic, enrolled in individual speech sessions without caregiver participation.

Higher performances occurred for both the RELEASE Model and GWU children. Parent stress levels were remarkably reduced for the RELEASE Model children.

Summary of Proposal:

Among all the interventions deployed in relation to children on the autistic spectrum, parents' potential to change their child's immediate behavior, and to influence his or her short- and long-term functioning, is widely recognised. Parent training aims to assist families to develop appropriate management strategies and increase social communication skills for the child and may prevent the development of secondary behavioural problems. Currently there is interest and enthusiasm for parent-mediated interventions.(1)

1. This study examined the speech-language performance of sixty-nine children (ages:10 months to 5 years-5 months) diagnosed with moderate to severe speech-language disabilities to yield information about: the progress of children whose caregivers were involved in the therapy sessions; and
2. the resultant effect on the caregiver stress levels.

Sixty-nine Irish children enrolled in the RELEASE MODEL of weekly one-hour parent-based-group speech-language therapy sessions for six months (retrospective study), were compared to thirty-four Irish children (ages: 1 year-1 month to 16 years-9 months) enrolled in the Traditional Irish Model of individual therapy absent any caregiver participation (prospective study), and to nine children (ages: 1 year-8 months to 5 years-11 months) at George Washington University (GWU) Speech & Hearing Clinic enrolled in weekly individual speech sessions without caregiver participation (retrospective study).

Research Questions:

1. Will children receiving weekly group parent based speech-language therapy demonstrate higher scores than children receiving therapy without parent involvement?
2. Will caregivers' stress scores decrease after receiving weekly group parent based speech-language therapy?

Results:

- (1) Higher gains occurred for both the RELEASE MODEL children and GWU children.
- (2) Minimal progress occurred for the Traditional Irish Model children.
- (3) Parent stress levels were remarkably reduced for the RELEASE MODEL children.

According to literature, the intervention programs that use the parents as the primary agents of intervention and use child-centered techniques maximize the quality of parental communication during the emerging language period of the child. (2)

RELEASE is an internationally award winning not for profit speech and language therapy social enterprise in Ireland with a focus on empowering parents to best work with their child. RELEASE provides a group therapy model which helps to improve not only language and speech skills, but social skills as well. Tara Cunningham; Managing Director, and Jennifer-Wetter Grundulis-Speech Pathologist are putting caregivers in charge. A joint-contract is entered into in which caregivers agree to attend one hour of group therapy weekly in addition to completing three hours of work outside the therapy room.

The RELEASE Model has effectively been used with children and caregivers with diverse disabilities in schools and private clinics and if applied nationally to Ireland, would eliminate waiting lists.

This study explores the effects of training parents to interact and provide speech and language stimulation intervention to their children with receptive and expressive vocabulary delays. The literature reports that for successful intervention with children with a specific language impairment it is important to identify parental stressors and to treat and support parents too. One reported study based on an inquiry of 98 mothers with speech and language impaired children reported that nearly 50% of the mothers suffered from stress because of their children's disabilities. The results proved that mothers of children with even minor disabilities feel overstrained by their children's disorders.(3)

Child outcome measures for the RELEASE MODEL children included the Rossetti Infant-Toddler Language Scale, Receptive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test, Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test, Renfrew-Bus Story Test, Renfrew-Action Picture Test, and Arizona Articulation Proficiency Scale-3rd. The Parental outcome measure included the Parent Stress Index (Short form).

At the end of intervention, 74% of the children who received the RELEASE MODEL, improved in a severity level with regards to receptive language, expressive language, or articulation skills.

With regards to parent stress levels; on the pre-test, 64% of the parents in the RELEASE MODEL scored in the high stress level, 32% in the normal range, and 4% in the low stress level. At the end of intervention, 28% scored in the high stress level, 43% in the normal range, and 29% in the low stress level.

The results of nine children at the George Washington University Speech & Hearing Clinic were examined who received weekly individual speech-language therapy without parent involvement. Child outcome measures included TELD-3, PLS-4, REEL-3 and Rossetti. At the end of intervention, a total of 78% of the nine children improved in a severity level with regards to receptive or expressive language.

The 34 Irish children who received speech-language therapy without parent involvement exhibited a 14% improvement level in receptive or expressive language. Child outcome measures included a variety of tests. The findings of this study provides support for the use of group-based parenting programs to improve the receptive and expressive language skills of children birth to five years.

The study also provides support that parental stress levels improve with group-based parenting programs. These interventions may have effects not only on child development but also on wider ranging outcomes such as parent child interactions and the quality of family life

References:

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2. Bonifacio S, Stefani LH, Zocconi E. INTERACT: a model of evaluation and intervention for children who are "late talkers". *Pediatr Med Chir.* 2005 Jan-Apr;27 (1-2):1-9.
3. Limm H, von Suchodoletz W. Perception of stress by mothers of children with language development disorders. *Prax Kinderpsychol Kinderpsychiatr.* 1998 Oct;47(8):541-51.