

IS ABA REALLY THE WAY?

ASD EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE GROUP

WHY THIS TOPIC?

Roberts & Prior (2011) evaluated the most effective models of practice in early intervention for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

A Review of the Research to Identify the Most Effective Models of Practice in Early Intervention for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Authors representing

The Australian Autism Research Collaboration
now **The Australian Society for Autism Research (ASFAR)**

Margot Prior
The University of Melbourne

Jacqueline M. A. Roberts
Griffith University

Sylvia Rodger
The University of Queensland

Katrina Williams
University of Melbourne and the Royal Children's Hospital

with assistance from

Susan Dodd

Dr Greta Ridley

Rebecca Sutherland

2011

**This report was funded by the Australian Government
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and
Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).**

THE QUESTIONS WE WANTED ANSWERS TO:

1. Do studies measure, generalisation of skills across environments, maintenance of skills?
2. Are social and language outcomes functional? Eg) Naming colours vs. requesting or commenting.
3. The research (eg. Roberts & Prior) suggests that children with ABA generally have positive outcomes on their IQ, Language Scores – but how does this compare to other interventions?

CHALLENGES

- What do we count as “ABA” or “EIBI”? - it’s a framework rather than a strategy.
- Misinformation about ABA in Australia and Europe

THE COST



THE DIFFERENCE IN ABA PROGRAMS

Interesting article: Keenan et al., 2014

“Autism & ABA: The Gulf between North America & Europe”

Explores:

- The myth-conceptions about ABA
- ABA is “treatment as usual” in North America, but not yet in Europe or Australia
- Some reasons for this:
 - Very few board certified (Masters trained) behaviour analysts in Australia & Europe, even fewer of these are Speech Pathologists
 - Some non-functional programs, turning therapists and families away from programs

RELEVANCE TO PRACTICE

- There are approximately 30 Board Certified Behaviour Analysts in Australia, approximately 13 of these are in NSW. An even smaller number of these are Speech Pathologists (we only know of one!)

Training options:

- The University of Waikato is the only institution in New Zealand or Australia offering online courses that are approved by the BACB® for BCBA® and BCaBA® certification. You need to be a have a degree in psychology.
- Monash University: TBA

THE ROAD TO A CAT



WHAT DID WE DO?

We read, we searched, we CAP-ed.

We wanted a comparison of ABA to other programs

- Eclectic programs.
- Responsive interaction training
- Milieu interventions


We looked at what ABA really was, we examined our teaching styles and strategies, and determined we ALL used some ABA principles in our work.



PAPERS:

- Eikeseth, S., Smith, T., Jahr, E. and Eldevik, S. (2007). Outcome for children with autism who began intensive behavioural treatment between ages 4 and 7: A comparison controlled study. *Behaviour Modification*, 31(3), 264-278.
- Eikeseth, S., Smith, T., Jahr, E. and Eldevik, S. (2007). Outcome for children with autism who began intensive behavioural treatment between ages 4 and 7: A comparison controlled study. *Behaviour Modification*, 31(3), 264-278.
- Eikeseth, S., Smith, T., Jahr, E. and Eldevik, S. (2002). Intensive Behavioral Treatment at School for 4- to 7-Year-Old Children with Autism: A 1-Year Comparison Controlled Study. *Behavior Modification*, 26(1), pp.49-68.
- Howard, J., Stanislaw, H., Green, G., Sparkman, C. and Cohen, H. (2014). Comparison of behavior analytic and eclectic early interventions for young children with autism after three years. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 35(12), pp.3326-3344.
- Howard, J.S., Sparkman, C.R., Cohen, H.g., Green, G., & Stanislaw, H. (2005) A comparison of intensive behaviour analytic and eclectic treatments for young children with autism. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 26(4), 359-383
- Ingersoll, B., Meyer, K., Bonter, N., & Jelinek, S. (2012). A Comparison of Developmental Social-Pragmatic and Naturalistic Behavioral Interventions on Language Use and Social Engagement in Children With Autism. *J Speech Lang Hear Res*, 55(5), 1301.
- Miranda-Linné, F. and Melin, L. (1992). Acquisition, generalization, and spontaneous use of color adjectives: A comparison of incidental teaching and traditional discrete-trial procedures for children with autism. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 13(3), pp.191-210.
- Paul, R., Campbell, D., Gilbert, K., & Tsiouri, I. (2012). Comparing Spoken Language Treatments for Minimally Verbal Preschoolers with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *J Autism Dev Disord*, 43(2), 418-431.
- Peters-Scheffer, N., Didden, R., Korzilius, H., & Sturmey, P. (n.d.). A Meta-analytic Study On The Effectiveness Of Comprehensive ABA-based Early Intervention Programs For Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 60-69.
- Stock, R., Mirenda, P., & Smith, I. (2013). Comparison of community-based verbal behavior and pivotal response treatment programs for young children with autism spectrum disorder. *Research In Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 7(9), 1168-1181.

THE CONSENSUS?

- Results mainly looked at IQ scores, these generally had increases over the treatment period
 - Very limited information about functional communication skills or social skills
 - Limited information about generalisation to non-treatment environments, with non-treatment partners.
 - Some comparisons both used ABA approaches (eg. PECS and PRT are based on ABA)
 - Some prompt dependency for communication trials (child responded to a prompt to communicate)
- 

SOMETHING WE CAN ALL LEARN



SO, WHAT DO WE TELL FAMILIES?

1. You will be most engaged in a program that works with your families values, lifestyle and educational beliefs.
2. There are some guidelines about the qualities of a good program. Ensure the programs you choose meet these.
3. You want to teach functional developmental skills, specific to ASD
 - Ability to attend to elements of the environment
 - Ability to imitate others
 - Ability to comprehend and use language
 - Ability to play appropriately with toys
 - Ability to socially interact with others (Howlin, 1997),

REFERENCES

Keenan, M., Dillenburger, K., Röttgers, H., Dounavi, K., Jónsdóttir, S., & Moderato, P. et al. (2014). Autism and ABA: The Gulf Between North America and Europe. *Rev J Autism Dev Disord*, 2(2), 167-183.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s40489-014-0045-2>

Roberts, J. M. A., & Prior, M. (2006). *A review of the research to identify the most effective models of practice in early intervention of children with autism spectrum disorders*. Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, Australia.

Prior, M., Roberts., J. M.A., Rodger, S., Williams, K., & Sutherland, R. (2011) *A review of the research to identify the most effective models of practice in early intervention of children with autism spectrum disorders*. Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Australia.