

Teaching Safety Awareness Skills to Children with Autism

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Introduction

- * Children with autism often lacked in specific discrimination skills for safety awareness (e.g., crossing streets appropriately, avoiding situations that might cause physical harm, only following instructions given by familiar people, etc.)
- * Safety awareness should be taught early in programming.
- * This presentation will focus on “Stranger awareness.”

Previous Research

- * Gunby, Carr, & LeBlanc (2010)
- * They used Behavioral Skills Training with In-situ feedback to teach abduction prevention skills.
- * Result shows that all children acquired skills and maintained skills during one-month follow up.

Behavioral Skills Training (BST)

- * BST is a multi-component intervention that consist of instructions, modeling, rehearsal and feedback.
- * Individuals with autism were taught to:
 - * Say “No” when presented with an abduction lure by stranger.
 - * Immediately leaving and running to a safe area.
 - * Immediately reporting the event to an adult.

In-Situ Training (IST)

- * IST is a teaching method that skills are trained in a variety of novel locations.
- * Both BST and IST were effective; however, participants who received IST training scored higher than those who only received BST.

In-Situ Training (IST)

- * When participants in the IST did not perform the appropriate skills, trainers will immediately enter the situation and has the individual perform the safety skills, and provide the individual with corrective feedback and praise.
- * IST with immediate feedback shows that all participants learned the skills. In addition, they all maintained the skills at one-month and three-month follow ups.

Trainings

- * Group one: Non-vocal teens diagnosed with autism
- * Group two: Vocal teens diagnosed with autism

Training for Non-Vocal Learners

- * Training sessions: 10 minutes per day, 7 days per week.
- * Training sessions: both at home and in the community
- * Training materials: photos of immediate family members and photos of people who has similar physical features, and various types of reinforcers.

Training Phases

- * Phase 1: training learners to receptively identify family members vs. strangers using discrete trial teaching methodology (DTT).
 - * Two pictures were presented to the learner; a picture of a family member and a picture of a stranger.
 - * Instructions: “Show me ___ (mommy)”
 - * Correct responses were followed by praise and reinforcer.
 - * Incorrect responses were followed by feedback, “No” or “try again.”

Training Phases

- * Phase 2: Training the learner to follow instructions given by familiar people, but refuse to follow instructions given by strangers.
- * A “known” person gives the learner a simple instruction, “Come with me.”
 - * If the learner went to the person, praise and reinforcer were provided.
 - * If the learner did not go to the person, feedback and prompt were provided.

Training Phases

- * Phase 2:
- * An “Unknown” person gives the learner the same instruction, “Come with me.”
 - * If the learner went to the “Unknown person,” a loud “No” was provided by the “known person” immediately.
 - * The learner was also taught to run away from the “Unknown person” immediately by using either physical or partial physical prompts.

Training Phases

- * Phase 3: In-situ training
 - * Learners were brought to the community settings (e.g., park, store, around the neighborhood, etc.)
 - * Both “Known” and “Unknown” persons were presented, same training procedures (Phase 2) were conducted.

Considerations:

- * If the learner takes longer to master phase I, we recommend to either move to phase II and III after a few days of phase I.
- * We also recommend to teach Phase I simultaneously with Phase II and III.

Training for Vocal Learners

- * Training sessions: 10 minutes per day, 7 days per week.
- * Training sessions: both at home and in the community
- * Training materials: photos of immediate family members and photos of people who has similar physical features, and various types of reinforcers.

Phase I

- * Phase 1: training learners to expressively identify family members vs. strangers using discrete trial teaching methodology (DTT).
 - * Two pictures were presented to the learner; a picture of a family member and a picture of a stranger.
 - * Instructions: “Who is this?”
 - * Correct responses were followed by praise and reinforcer.
 - * Incorrect responses were followed by feedback, “No” or “try again.”

Phase II

- * Phase II: training learner to identify “Known” vs. “Unknown” person using DTT method
 - * Show a picture of familiar person and asked, “Do you know him/her?”
 - * Show a picture of unfamiliar person and asked, “Do you know him/her?”
 - * Correct responses were followed by praise and reinforcer.
 - * Incorrect responses were followed by feedback, “No” or “try again.”

Phase III

- * Phase III: Behavioral Skills Training (BST)
- * Social stories and role-playing were used to teach participants to respond to four different types of stranger lures
- * Simple: “Come here.”
- * Incentive: “If you come with me, I will give you candy.”
- * Authority: “Your mom told me to pick you up today/ Your mom said it was ok to come with me.”
- * Assistance request: “ Can you help me find my dog?”
- * The learner is taught to respond “no,” walk/run away immediately, and tell a “known” adult (e.g., parents, teachers, etc.) when an “unknown” person presents one of the four types of lures.

Phase IV

- * Phase IV: In-Situ Training (IST)
- * Learners were brought out into the community (e.g., neighborhood, grocery store, parks, etc.) to generalize skills taught during the BST phase.

Considerations:

- * If the learner takes longer to master phase I, we recommend to either move to phase II, III, and IV after a few days of phase I.
- * We also recommend to teach Phase I simultaneously with Phase II and III.

Thank you!

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