Module: Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)

Evidence Base for Functional Behavior Assessment

The National Professional Development Center on ASD has adopted the following definition of evidence-based practices.

To be considered an evidence-based practice for individuals with ASD, efficacy must be established through peer-reviewed research in scientific journals using:

- *randomized or quasi-experimental design studies.* Two high quality experimental or quasi-experimental group design studies,
- *single-subject design studies.* Three different investigators or research groups must have conducted five high quality single subject design studies, or
- *combination of evidence.* One high quality randomized or quasi-experimental group design study and three high quality single subject design studies conducted by at least three different investigators or research groups (across the group and single subject design studies).

High quality randomized or quasi experimental design studies do not have critical design flaws that create confounds to the studies, and design features allow readers/consumers to rule out competing hypotheses for study findings. High quality in single subject design studies is reflected by a) the absence of critical design flaws that create confounds and b) the demonstration of experimental control at least three times in each study.

This definition and criteria are based on the following sources:

Horner, R., Carr, E., Halle, J., McGee, G., Odom, S., & Wolery, M. (2005). The use of single subject research to identify evidence-based practice in special education. *Exceptional Children, 71,* 165-180.

Nathan, P., & Gorman, J. M. (2002). *A guide to treatments that work.* NY: Oxford University Press.

Odom, S. L., Brantlinger, E., Gersten, R., Horner, R. D., Thompson, B., & Harris, K. (2004). *Quality indicators for research in special education and guidelines for evidence-based practices: Executive summary.* Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children Division for Research.

Rogers, S. J., & Vismara, L. A. (2008). Evidence-based comprehensive treatments for early autism. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, *37*(1), 8-38.

Module: Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)

Using these criteria, the empirical studies referenced below provide documentation for supporting functional behavior assessment as an evidence-based practice for children with ASD. This list is not exhaustive; other quality studies may exist that were not included.

Preschool

Mancil, G.R., Conroy, M.A., Nakao, T., & Alter, P.J. (2006). Functional communication training in the natural environment: A pilot investigation with a young child with autism spectrum disorder. *Education and Treatment of Children, 29*(4), 615-633.

Elementary

Buckley, S., & Newchok, D. (2005). Differential impact of response effort within a response chain on use of mands in a student with autism. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, *26*(1), 77-85.

LaBelle, C., & Charlop-Christy, M. (2002). Individualizing functional analysis to assess multiple and changing functions of severe behavior problems in children with autism. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 4*(4), 231-241.

Lucyshyn J. M., Albin, R. W., Horner, R. H., Mann, J. C., Mann, J. A., & Wadsworth, G. (2007). Family implementation of positive behavior support for a child with autism: Longitudinal, single-case, experimental, and descriptive replication and extension. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 9*(3), 131-150.

Middle/High School

Butler, L. R., & Luiselli, J. K. (2007). Escape-maintained problem behavior in a child with autism: Antecedent functional analysis and intervention evaluation of non-contingent escape and instructional fading. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 9*(4), 195-202.