Home-School-Community Communication for Autism Using Direct Behavior Rating

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Introduction

Background

High-quality collaboration has been associated with improvements in parental satisfaction, student outcomes, and family-school partnerships, particularly for students with autism, a population often at an increased need for consistent, coordinated care and frequent progress evaluation (e.g., Christenson & Carlson, 2005; Whitaker, 2007). However, there is a lack of cost-effective and efficient tools to facilitate communication and progress-monitoring in order to inform decision-making among home, school, and outside services providers.

Direct Behavior Rating (DBR) is form of behavioral assessment that involves making a brief rating of student behavior following a target activity (Chafouleas, Riley-Tillman, & Christ, 2009). DBR has the potential for being a flexible and efficient progress monitoring method (Chafouleas et al., 2009). This study uses DBR to collect data through a home-school log. The log is used to facilitate cross-systems communication and data-based decision making among parents and educators to improve outcomes for students with autism.

Objective

The purpose of this study is to provide schools with a home-school log utilizing DBR instrumentation and procedures to facilitate cross-systems communication and data-based decision-making for individuals working with elementary students with autism. Student outcome data is monitored in order to evaluate whether use of the log, which is intended to improve the consistency of communication and consequences across settings, also helps to improve student behavior.

Method

Participants: Four student participants with Autism or PDD-NOS in an elementary school setting are the targets of the intervention. The parents and educators involved in each student's education share information through the home-school log.

Design: A multiple baseline procedure across four student participants.

Pre-Baseline: Researcher meets with student's team of parents and educators to discuss target behaviors, target activities, and provide procedural training.

Baseline: Each day they are working with the student, educators will rate the percentage of time the student displayed each pre-specified target behavior during various pre-specified activities using a Baseline DBR Form.

Intervention: Educators continue to rate student's behaviors, but do so on the Daily Ratings pages in the Home-School Log binder, providing comments if desired. Parents complete Home Activity that involves a quick activity with the child (e.g., reading, playing game) and writing any questions or comments for educators. Weekly, educators evaluate students' ratings in graphic format.

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Method

Figure 1. Portion of Daily Ratings Page

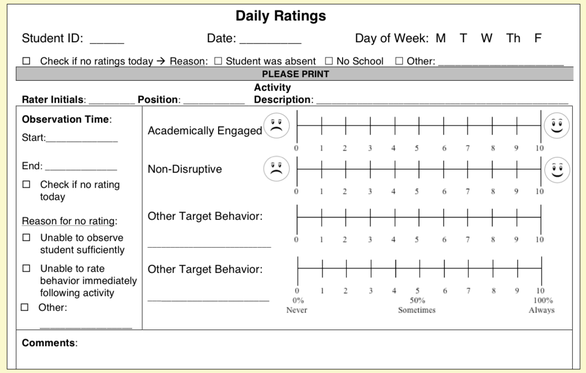
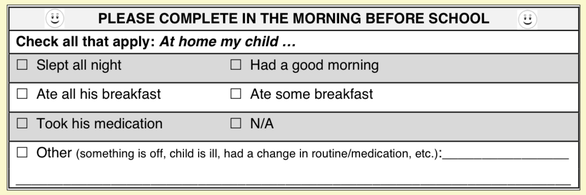


Figure 2. Portion of Home Activity Page



Results

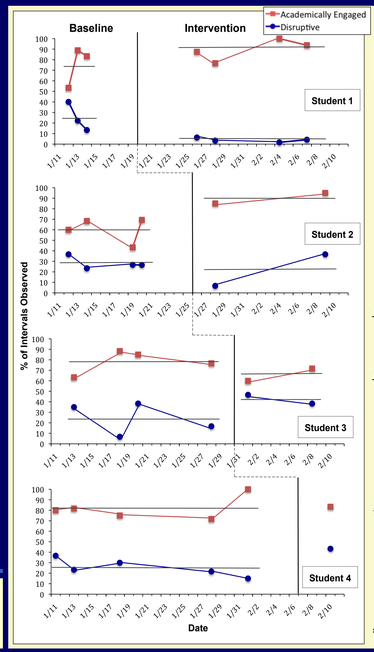


Figure 3. Percentage of intervals students were observed to be displaying Academically Engaged and Disruptive behavior (completed by researchers).

Table 1. Mean direct observation data across phases

		Baseline	Intervention
Student 1	Academically Engaged	75%	89%
	Disruptive	25%	4%
Student 2	Academically Engaged	60%	90%
	Disruptive	28%	22%
Student 3	Academically Engaged	78%	66%
	Disruptive	24%	43%
Student 4	Academically Engaged	82%	*
	Disruptive	25%	*

Note: Higher % for AE is desirable whereas a lower % for Disruptive is desirable.

Level
- Improved for Students 1 and 2

Immediacy of effect
- Immediate positive effect for Student 2
- Unclear for other students, however it is typical for this type of intervention to show more improvement over time

Variability
- Improved for Student 1
- Not enough data yet to evaluate for other students

*Not enough Intervention phase data to evaluate for Student 4 yet

Results

Figure 4. Percentage of time students were estimated to be displaying Academically Engaged and Non-Disruptive behavior during Morning Routine (completed by classroom teacher).

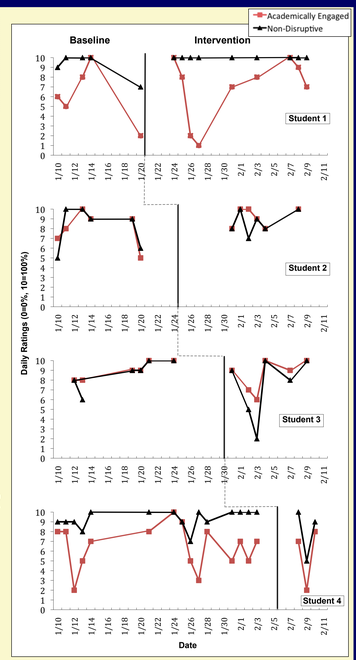
Table 1. Mean Daily Rating data across phases

		Baseline	Intervention
Student 1	Academically Engaged	6.2	6.9
	Non-Disruptive	9.2	10.0
Student 2	Academically Engaged	8.0	9.2
	Non-Disruptive	8.2	8.7
Student 3	Academically Engaged	9.0	8.4
	Non-Disruptive	8.7	7.0
Student 4	Academically Engaged	6.5	5.7
	Non-Disruptive	9.3	8.0

Level
- Improved for Students 1 & 2
- Slight decrease for Students 3 & 4 thus far

Immediacy of effect
- Immediate positive effect for Students 1 & 2

Variability
- Improved for Students 1 & 2
- More variability for Student 3
- No change yet for Student 4



Summary and Conclusions

Data collection for this study is ongoing, however, thus far data from the Home-School Log intervention have indicated improvements in behavior for Students 1 and 2. Improvement in behavioral data for Students 3 and 4 is unclear so far, however it is typical for this type of intervention to show more improvement over time. Additionally, educators had not yet evaluated the Home-School Log data in graphic format at the time this poster was created. It is hypothesized that over time, the Home-School Log will:

- ease **collection and communication of data across systems**,
- facilitate **data-based decision-making**,
- improve **student outcomes**,
- improve **family-school partnership,** and
- improve coordination of **interdisciplinary care**.

References

Chafouleas, S.M., Riley-Tillman, T.C., & Christ, T.J. (2009). Direct Behavior Rating: An emerging method for assessing social behavior within a tiered intervention system. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, *34*, 195-200.

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Whitaker, P. (2007). Provision for youngsters with autistic spectrum disorders in mainstream schools: What parents say—and what parents want. *British Journal of Special Education*, *34*, 170-178.