

ABSTRACT

A Comparison of PIPRT and VMO to Increase Social Play Skills in Children with Autism

by

Kathleen S. O'Hara

Dr. John Filler, Doctoral Committee Chair
Professor of Special Education and Early Childhood Education
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Young children with autism often experience delays in social play skills. These delays result in poor relationships with adults and peers, decreased social interactions, and engagement, and eventually social isolation and withdrawal. Social play skill deficits are essential to the development of self-regulation and cognitive skills. Addressing these delays is critical to improve social functioning and minimize any detrimental effects on future engagement and academic achievement.

The purpose of this study was to use an alternating treatment design to determine whether PIPRT intervention or a VMO intervention would be effective to increase social play skills in two settings for four young children with autism. The PIPRT and VMO interventions were both implemented in the classroom prior to structured play centers and on during recess on the playground. Data were collected daily during structured play centers and recess.

Results of this study suggest that there was a significant difference between the PIPRT and VMO interventions for all four participants, favoring the PIPRT intervention in both settings. Visual analysis of the data also indicated that the PIPRT intervention

had a higher increase in social play skills for all four participants in class and at recess on the playground.