

The Effects of Directive and Responsive Communication Intervention Strategies on Autistic Children's Disruptive Behavior

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Responsive and directive strategies are two broad classes of Naturalistic Developmental Behavior Interventions (NDBIs) that are commonly taught to caregivers to target social communication in autistic children. While approximately 50% of autistic children display disruptive behaviors, few studies have examined if NDBIs that specifically target social communication impact disruptive behavior. Therefore, the current study aims to evaluate the impact of NDBI communication intervention strategies on autistic children's disruptive behavior. Ninety-five mother-child dyads were randomized to either directive or responsive intervention conditions. Behavioral coding of disruptive behavior was conducted pre- and post-intervention. Change scores indicated that children in the directive condition displayed a significant increase of disruptive behavior ($\beta = 4.16$, $SE = 2.03$, $p = 0.04$) compared to children in the responsive condition. Previous findings from the same sample showed that directive strategies facilitated greater communication outcomes. Together, these findings suggest that directive strategies may impact communication and disruptive behavior differently. As such, clinicians should consider their client's individual characteristics and goals when choosing NDBI strategies to optimize child outcomes.