

Preface

Early intervention for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) is an increasingly popular and well-researched field of inquiry. However, as both popular attention and scientific activity grow, so too does the spread of misinformation. The purpose of this handbook is to put together in one place the latest in scientific information pertaining to the assessment and treatment of young children with ASD. To that end, the editors are pleased to assemble a world-class collection of scientists who have authored chapters touching on a wide variety of topics relevant to the field.

The first part of this volume, “Diagnosis and Background,” brings together a collection of chapters that lay the foundation for autism treatment. The final editing of this volume coincided with the publishing of the DSM V, which significantly changed the criteria for autism diagnosis. Therefore, many of the chapters in Part 1 dance a delicate balance between being current with the new diagnostic criteria, yet summarizing and analyzing the results of relevant research, nearly all of which was done with respect to the old diagnostic criteria.

Part 2 of this volume, “Intervention,” aims at addressing a relatively comprehensive scope of topics on evidence-based treatment for young children with autism. Hundreds of treatments for autism have been proposed but the vast majority retain little-to-no scientific support. Accordingly, all the intervention chapters in this volume focus strongly on aspects of autism intervention which have been the subject of rigorous scientific research, most of which are founded largely or wholly in applied behavior analysis. Chapter 23 rounds out the collection of intervention topics by directly addressing controversial treatments for which there is little or no evidence. Finally, Chaps. 24, 25, and 29 expand the scope by addressing issues related to family systems, general medical disorders, and multicultural issues, respectively. It is hoped that this volume provides a useful reference in the daily work of researchers and practitioners, as well as a springboard to spur further research into still under-addressed areas of assessment and treatment of children with ASD.

Handbook of Early Intervention for Autism Spectrum
Disorders

Research, Policy, and Practice

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