

Preface

A number of interventions designed to ameliorate the cognitive, social, language, and other behavioral deficits present in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have been developed over the past 50 years. These interventions tend to be most effective when they are early, intensive, and behavioral. Understandably, parents of children with ASD, practitioners serving this population, and researchers in this area consider early intensive behavioral intervention (EIBI) to be of paramount importance for children with ASD. This book presents nine chapters focused on issues related to EIBI for children with ASD. The book begins with a brief introductory chapter that defines EIBI and summarizes research indicating that EIBI produces meaningful change in the lives of children with ASD. Next, because access to effective intervention often depends on early diagnosis, Chap. 2 covers common approaches to ASD diagnosis, recent innovations that facilitate accurate early diagnosis and directions for future research.

The next five chapters are devoted to specific EIBI approaches. The five interventions included in this text share many common core components (e.g., reinforcement), and all have been demonstrated to be effective in studies using a variety of research designs including randomized clinical trials and rigorous single case designs. Leading researchers in the field, and in some cases the creators or co-creators of specific intervention packages, authored the chapters. The five intervention approaches included in this text are Discrete Trial Training in Chap. 3, Pivotal Response Training in Chap. 4, Early Start Denver Model in Chap. 5, Prelinguistic Milieu Teaching in Chap. 6, and Enhanced Milieu Teaching in Chap. 7. These intervention chapters cover the theoretical underpinnings, specific procedures, research base, areas of future research, and considerations for practitioners for each of these evidence-based EIBI approaches. The book concludes with issues related to parent-implemented intervention in Chap. 8 and ethical issues related to fad, pseudoscientific, and controversial interventions commonly used with children with ASD in Chap. 9.

This book is unique in that it presents practical information on EIBI implementation (i.e., fidelity of implementation checklists, task analyses, and other implementation instructions) in tandem with discussion of theoretical underpinnings, analysis of research base, and directions for future research. This text is intended to serve as a resource for graduate students in clinical child, school, and developmental psychology, family studies, behavior analysis, special education, and public health interested in both the theory and practice of EIBI and for practitioners devoted to ensuring that the services they deliver are firmly rooted in research. We hope this text will provide a much needed overview of the field of EIBI for children with ASD useful to advanced practitioners, graduate students, and researchers.

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