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Using Teach Me to Talk Interventions to Improve Language in Children Birth- Three Years Old

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Using Teach Me to Talk Interventions to Improve Language in Children Birth- Three Years Old

A project presented to
The Graduate Faculty
of Minnesota State University Moorhead
by: Hannah Hendry

In Partial Fulfilment of the
requirements for the Degree
of Masters of Special Education
with Emphasis in Early childhood
special education

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Abstract

The propose of the study was to determine the effectiveness of using Teach Me to Talk strategies from Speech Pathologist Laura Mize, with children from the birth to three-year-old early intervention program. The study looked at children who have communication needs based on qualifying scores after completing a special education evaluation and the use of specific interventions to increase their language. The researcher wanted to determine students' improvement with their communication goals and how parent involvement supports their learning. The study was originally structured around weekly home visits that were ongoing since the child qualified for special education services. Parents provided information on how the intervention was working in their natural routines. The early intervention teacher that was instructing the home visits used observation notes and progress reports will provide knowledge on the effectiveness of these interventions. The results from this study indicated that interventions were working but due to COVID 19 pandemic the research project had to be changed and amended to an autoethnography.

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Chapter One

In this chapter, the researcher presents the general problem and their purpose of doing this study, and who the participants will be involved in this study.

General Problem-

For many years now, school districts have been providing special education services for children birth – three years old at their homes when the student qualifies for services.

Researchers have been studying parent involvement in their child's education and surveys have been created to find out what concerns and issues parents have with the education system.

Surveys have found that parents would like more information from teachers about parenting education and what interventions they can do at their homes to increase their child's

development. The It Takes Two to Talk Program states, "When parents are involved in their child's intervention in ways that strengthen their ability to help their child. Parents learn what to do to help their child learn and develop, and the earlier parents are involved in their child's intervention, the better the child's outcome" (Hanan pg. 3 2020).

International Journal of Research in Education and Science had parents fill out surveys on their perceptions of education and their involvement in the schooling process. "Many parents agreed that educated parents and society affect student achievement because these groups of people have better communication with teachers and principals" (Erdener & Knoeppel p.g 2018).

Erdener and Knoeppel found that education systems need to require professional development for the school administrators and teachers about increasing parent involvement in their children's schooling.

Purpose of Study

To find out the effectiveness of teaching parents Teach me to Talk strategies, to increase their child's communication. Teach me to Talk is the title of a communication treatment manual with interventions and strategies. In the latest manual "Let's Talk About Talking, published in 2017" by Laura Mize, M.S., CCC-SLP has interventions created for toddlers to accomplish before words emerge.

The CDC website writes in its milestones, "Skills such as taking a first step, smiling for the first time, and waving "bye bye" are called developmental milestones. Children reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, act, and move" (CDC pg. 3,2017). In language development children go through emerging skills before words are mastered. "Until a child masters all the things that come first, it's unlikely that he or she will use words to communicate with others. He or she may manage to pop out a word every now and then, but without mastering these important prelinguistic skills, a delay in language skills is virtually guaranteed" (Mize 2020). Research from LinguiSystems, Guide to Communication Milestones, developed data that shows expressive language and the average number of words by which ages. This data also showed the skills the child had to master before words emerged. Children

Subjects and Setting

Description of subjects: The targeted participants that were in this study are students and parents on the researcher's current caseload that are receiving services for a communication delay, in the birth – three early intervention programs. There were 16 students between the ages 10 months – 3 years old that will have parents/guardians to sign forms to participate in this study. Of the participants, three were African American, two were Hmong, three were Vietnamese, one was Mexican, and eight were Caucasian. There were 5 females and eleven male students that participated in the study. All participants were on IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan).

The families the researcher serviced lived in an Urban area, most lived in apartment complexes or single-family homes. Many families had a single income provider. The participants also had cultural differences that create a variety of parenting styles, daily routines, and expectations. Data was written on how each culture and parenting style may affect the implementation of each intervention.

Selection criteria. Participants were selected based on being on the researcher's caseload and they are the students who have communication services. The participants had communication delays and qualified for speech and language services. All Participants were in the emerging state of communication and will begin at the same emerging intervention strategy.

Description of setting. The study took place during the researcher's individual home visits and parent follow through with each intervention throughout the week. In the Journal, *It Takes Two to Talk*, research Hanen writes, "When children learn to communicate in their

natural environment in real-life situations with their caregivers, they are more motivated to communicate and are better able to apply their newly-learned skills to other situations” (Hanan pg. 11, 2020). This research provides support to continue to provide services in the child’s natural setting, their home.

Informed Consent. The researcher obtained permission to conduct this study from the Institutional Review Board of Minnesota State University- Moorhead and the school district Anoka Hennepin. Confidentiality agreement forms and protection of human subject forms were given and filled out before research and the study will begin. All participants (parents) were informed of the purpose for this research and what their requirements will be for participating in this study.

Participants were informed that they can withdraw from the study at any time. The participants for this study to follow through with interventions were the parents, but they will have to sign for their child’s results to be included in this study.

Teach Me to talk Interventions

Research was collected on the effectiveness of using Teach Me to Talk strategies during home visits with parents. From the treatment manual “Let’s Talk about Talking” interventions for eleven skills to master before words emerge. 1. Responding to events in the environment, the child will show the ability to react to sensory information. “Things he or she can see, hear, touch, hold and manipulate” (Mize 2020). 2. Responds to People, child shows the ability to interact with others when they try to talk to him/her. 3. Develops an attention span, typical toddlers can focus on a task or activity for 3-6 minutes. 4. Exhibits joint attention, the child

needs to have the ability to attend to back and forth activities, people and tasks. 5. Plays with toys, manipulate toys, engage in cause and effect toys. 6. Understands and uses early gestures, pointing, waving, motioning to come, etc. 7. Understands early words and follows simple directions, child follows directions related to daily routines and recognizes familiar people and objects by their names. 8. Vocalizes, children show the ability to make a variety of noises. 9. Imitates actions, gestures and words, children show the ability to imitate actions from adults. 10. Initiates interactions with you, the children will show the ability to get your attention and initiate using vocals or gestures towards you. 11. Begins turn taking, child will be able to go back and forth with an activity or toy. These are the eleven skills that a toddler must use or master before words emerge. In each skill, parents will be taught a strategy that best works for their family's routines, lifestyle, and child's interests.

Chapter 2

In this chapter, a review of existing literature and articles used to support the study.

Review of literature

I chose literature that was able to support my study. The literature included Teach Me to Talk therapy manual, articles on parent involvement in education, parent involvement in early childhood development and milestone articles for child development. In the birth – three special education worlds, parents are the main teachers of their children. Parents are encouraged to follow through with early intervention strategies during the week when the service provider is not present. Communication strategies are very effective for student growth

when practiced. Teach Me to Talk strategies by Laura Mize will be utilized to examine the effectiveness of the strategy when taught to the parent of the child.

Existing Research

Studies have shown how important parent involvement and understanding of education is with their child's success. "The complex dimensions of parent education including what is being taught and what are the intended outcomes of the education process. Parent education encompasses a range of content, from providing information about a child's current level of development to instructing parents in the implementation of a programmatic approach to promoting complex skills over time" (Mahoney pg. 28, 1999). Working with families and providing them with education on communication strategies can be challenging. Understanding how each family operates differently, having different cultures, family routines, and family challenges creates opportunities to find the right strategy to implement to increase their child's development.

Center for Parent information and resources article Overview of Early intervention created September 1, 2017 gives parents and professionals information on how specific interventions are tailored to meet the child's individual needs. "Family-directed services are meant to help family members understand the special needs of their child and how to enhance his or her development" (CPIR 2017). With this information given to parents, it will support the research in this study to help parents understand that family-directed services are important to enhance their child's development, specifically in communication.

Teach Me to Talk strategies by Laura Mize are creative and evidence-based strategies that all parents from all backgrounds can use to increase their child's communication

development. Laura Mize is a pediatric speech-language pathologist who specializes in treating young children with communication delays and disorders. In this research study, the strategies will be in the emerging language section and completed with each family. Evaluations the effectiveness of each parent follow through to increase their child's communication development will also be collected.

Chapter three

In this chapter, the researcher gives information on the purposed research question, the plan, methods, and anticipated response.

Research question

How effective were the Teach Me to Talk emerging communication strategies when taught to parents to instruct their children on a daily basis? The purpose of this research is to track the communication improvement of students when being instructed with Teach me to Talk emerging skill intervention.

The participants in this research study were the current parents and children that are in early intervention. Information collected from each family to find out what they are currently doing to improve their child's communication and observe the child during a home visit to see their development. The researcher collected data on the progress each child had made on their language development from using Teach Me to Talk strategies by using a checklist that had eleven stages the child will complete before words may emerge. An observation form to write up what happened during the visit, what intervention/activity was used to teach the family, and if the family was able to do the intervention on their own. Researchers Dr. Coyle and Dr. Mckee

found wrote from their studies, “Early interventionist recognized that parent participation has a positive impact child on child outcomes” (Coyle & Mckee pg. 2, 2015).

Research plan

The study began by families being informed and got permission to use them in the study. The researcher continued with their weekly visits with each individual family working on the child’s individual family service plan outcomes. The researcher used Teach Me to Talk intervention with their families that offer parent participation. The families were given Teach Me to Talk homework at the end of each visit to implement in their daily routine throughout the week to increase their child’s communication skills.

The instruments used in this research process were parent surveys, interviews, and data collection on student achievement and progress towards their speech and language. The information gathered from the student achievement data collection determined how effective Teach Me to Talk strategies are during a home visit along with parent implementation throughout the week.

During this study the research was able to improve parent’s involvement and track the progress their child had in communication while being taught with emerging intervention strategies. To determine if Teach Me to Talk emerging interventions with parents were effective. And if more parents have better follow through using Teach Me to Talk strategies. “Parental involvement is an important factor in promoting the successful transition of youth with disabilities and influences not only students’ motivation but also teacher’s willingness to increase their performance” (Erdener & Knoepfel pg. 1-13,2018).

Methods and Rationale

All Participants were around the same age and on similar foundation communication levels. Meaning all students were able to play with explore and manipulate toys. The children were all able to engage in cause and effect play understanding. All students had similar sounds and word approximations. All the children had least one parent that is the primary caregiver to follow through with practice and communication skill homework.

In the Journal of Education and Social Policy, researchers Dr. Coyle and Dr. Mckee found that, Parents reported needs for improvement in communication and implementation of services (Coyle & Mckee pg. 32, 2015). The interviews they collected showed that most professionals in early intervention reported that many parents do not adequately participate in early intervention services. "Parents they asserted, valued direct instruction more than consultation, professionals reported an interest in working more actively with parents to increase their participation in early intervention" (Coyle & Mckee pg. 35, 2015).

Schedule

During this research study, the early intervention provider continued to visit each family weekly for one hour each. Data was collected at the end of each visit on how the child is mastering their individual communication goal using Teach Me to Talk strategies checklist. The researcher then compiled the data weekly on how the child is progressing with their communication. The researcher continued to do this weekly for six weeks. Observation notes from each visit to track information from the parents report of how the interventions/activities have been going when done on their own. Observation notes were used to observe how the

student is mastering and completing an intervention to determine if they are ready to move to the next skill. All participants data from the checklists, observation notes, and parent input was used to see if there are correlations between them.

Are their students that are now at the same level since beginning interventions? Are their families that are following through with the interventions on their own time that have created progress for their child? This data will show if of Teach Me to Talk emerging interventions are effective and it will also show if a parent follow through is effective towards their child making progress.

Ethical issues.

Ethical issues that had arise during this study are parent's involvement to complete the weekly homework with the child.

Anticipated Response

If any of these issues arise, the researcher dealt with them appropriately. The researcher had already placed families into groups that I believe will deliver outcomes to this study. If parents were unable to participate, they will be removed from the study and their information will be taken out.

For the following chapters, author writes in first person to narrate their own experiences after getting permission to begin their research study from IRB, collecting two weeks of data, but then having to halt the study due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The research

proposal had to change into an autoethnography. "Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience." (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner pg. 54)

Chapter 4

In this chapter, the researcher gave information on the data that was collected before the COVID 19 pandemic, information on handouts given to parents, observations from parents, and how the pandemic created a halt to the study and change to education.

Data collected before pandemic

I was able to collect data for two weeks, which gave me information from families on the type of intervention the parents/guardian was going to implement, the frequency of their implementation after one week, and the family's personal feelings, understandings, and observations during the first week. The data collected from five families, showed that the families were provided with one communication strategy from Teach Me to Talk, 11 skills based on the communication level of their child, whom I case manage. Each family and child had a one-hour weekly visit with me, to show the family how to implement the strategy in their own home during real life daily routines. I was able to demonstrate the strategy to the families that gave permission for the study and then the following week was able to get data from the parents if they wrote on their handout. Otherwise, I received information from interview questions and my own observations during the visit.

Along with the intervention that was taught to parents, I also provided a handout for parents to use to track how often they were doing the intervention. The written parent

feedback forms showed that most parents appreciated the structure and simplicity of the recording handout.

Parents could put a check mark next to the day of the week on their handout to show how often and what days they did the intervention. Parents also wrote that having that accountability encouraged them to give the interventions a try throughout the week on their own. Based on parent interviews and recording of their own at home data, the communication strategy was being implemented from the five families that I was able to visit the following week.

I also had families write down they were seeing progress with their own child on the skill. Parents reported that the structure of the handout helped the family priorities the family's daily routines and it stimulated them to make the effort to add in communication play with their child. Some parents even wrote that the strategies did not feel like work, it was fun, and they felt empowered as parents.

Example of a parent handout

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Sunday Date:	Monday Date:	Tuesday Date:	Wednesday Date:	Thursday Date:	Friday Date:	Saturday Date:

*Put a mark/tally on the days you implemented a skill 5 activity.

Communication strategy:

Skill #5 - Shifts and shares joint attention with others

Activities- Bubbles: Point to the container. Say, "Bubbles! Pop, pop, pop!" Teach your child the sign for "more" to request more bubbles, hold wand in front of child and say, "Your turn". Catch bubbles, pop bubbles, "Ready, set, go!"

Wind-up Toys: While you're winding up the toy, say, "Turn, turn, turn." "Here it comes!" "You are waiting." Narrate any actions that the toy makes, "Doggie jump!" "Go, car!" "Ready, set, go!"

Hide and Seek: Use a second adult to help your child look or find a hidden person or object. "Where's ____? Let's look!" Use an over-the-top response with lots of surprise and delight, saying, "You found me!" or "You found it!" If the child doesn't respond, then jiggle him, tickle him, or do whatever you can to get a response.

Flashlight: Point to where the light shines and emphasize the word, "Look!" Point to different objects and label them. "Look! I see a shoe! I see a chair!" Label concept words like on, off, under, etc. Sing, "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" while pointing the flashlight to the ceiling.

Parent Report: (What went well, what did you observe, strengths, new ideas)

After reviewing information given from parents, connections were made between the parents on having accountability of follow through with educational tasks for their children. The International Academy of Education wrote "Accountability in Education" and from that book there is a section on parents and community and their responsibilities. "Parents have a responsibility to make decisions for their children, to advocate for their children, and to support

positive changes in the educational system (both locally and elsewhere)” (Anderson pg. 14. 2005).

I believe this responsibility can happen for parents even in the early childhood years. I have created relationships with my birth – three special education families to support them with their child’s wellbeing, education, and life. The accountability begins at birth for all parents to be there for their children.

I created the parent handout and intervention skills in a parent friendly way. Another excerpt from Andersons book states, “School reports should be provided in formats that are easy-to-read and at reading levels appropriate to the general population” (Anderson 2005). Parents have many things to manage throughout their daily lives and having “homework” that is simple and decrease the stress and increase the follow through.

As written earlier in chapter two, the Center for Parent Information and Resources, it brings light on the importance of family-directed services. By having interventions for children made in their natural environment, parents are able to direct and implement the services which increases their child’s skills and development.

Initial Thoughts

When I first heard about an illness that was spreading quite quickly, I tried to be more active with communicating with the families on my caseload about health and wellness. I sent out phone messages to parents before I would come to their home to provide special education

services. I would make sure parents felt that everyone in their home was well and so was I. As more information was coming forward to our school district administration, our lead supervisor held a staff meeting to talk about COVID-19 on March 12, 2020. "Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China" (CDC.gov). This respiratory illness was spreading quickly to other countries as well, and at the time of this meeting, there were no cases in Minnesota.

There was a lot of uncertainty during this meeting, questions were asked by staff members on safety of families and staff members. At this time, the birth to three special education staff were told to continue working on in home services with precautions (cancel visits if ill, wash hands, sanitize, etc.) Within our Birth-Three special education student population, our staff members have many students who are medically fragile (transplants, immune disorders, heart defects, etc.) At our staff meeting, we needed to focus on how we can still meet the needs of our students without having physical contact. Many of our families at that time already contacted their case managers to talk about discontinuing home visits and moving towards other means of service delivery.

On March 16th, our district went on its spring break and during that time the superintendent sent out a message that the school district would be extending the break until March 30th. Since that date our district along with other Minnesota schools have extended the closing of buildings until May 4th. There have been many cases in Minnesota, 1,809 cases of COVID-19 in Minnesota have been recorded since April 14, 2020.

Changes in Education and Special Education Services

Once the superintendent had to follow the State guidance from our Governor to shelter in place, Distance Learning was to be used from all Educators. I could no longer go to the homes of the students on my case load. Our lead supervisor instructed the birth-three special education staff to connect with all the families our caseload on what technology devices they have, do they have internet, would they like to participate in virtual google meet visits or connect through phone and email.

The change to distance learning through technology completely changed the implementation of my research study in the area of communication. Some of the families that were participating in the study declined to do virtual visits and would rather have myself and the IFSP team reach out to them through phone or email. Other families that were in the study and decided to do virtual visits, I tried to continue implementing the research study, but the information and the inserting of the skill was not meeting the appropriate standards. The data collection was not reliable.

The distance learning change for education also created additional due process paperwork. MDE came out with Individual Distance Learning Plans (IDLDP's) forms that case managers had to report on how each student is going to receive their special education services during this unprecedented time.

Adjustments had to be made for not only work life but home life as well. Many educators have families and children that are also sheltering in place. The balance of work,

parenting, and home school their children is no easy task. Many special education teachers were doing due process paperwork on the weekends because of family obligations during the week, (homeschool children, mealtimes, supervision, full time teaching job).

Some of the families on my caseload reported they do not have internet or a device, our school district is fortunate enough to be able to loan out hot spots and iPad for distance learning.

Other adjustments were the limitations on modeling skills, positions, etc. with the child. During a normal home visit, if I was working with a family on motor skills and body positioning, I could be hands on with the child and support the parents as they try to do the positioning. Now with distance learning I am focusing more on the coaching technique through the screen and using a pretend baby doll to show positions. It has been challenging but staying positive throughout this pandemic is most important. The special education team and related service staff members are working so hard to help each other out during this time. Being positive for our families and offering any kind of support is helpful for them too.

Chapter 5

In this chapter, the researcher wrote about next steps the researcher is going to take moving forward with the study and also moving forward with their life during this COVID 19 pandemic.

What actions should people take next?

At this time, we are currently directed from our state governor to continue shelter in place until May 4, 2020 and the school districts in Minnesota will be closed until the end of the school year June 6, 2020. It is still unclear for the birth-three staff and I on when we will be able to do home visits. We work on a stretch calendar, so we work during the summer months.

Schools are moving forward to continue distance learning. School district education staff members have to connect with families to make sure students are able to attend and complete schoolwork, this may include lending technology devices and hot spots for internet. I have also continued reaching out to the families on my birth – three caseloads on how they would like distance learning special education services during this time.

I believe it would be a great idea for school districts to provide a family class for parents to learn about technology, how to use it appropriately, what applications students are going to be using for their education, and how they can support their young and teenage learners. I have had phone calls with parents on how to set up certain education applications, video conferences, and other technology questions. If this pandemic continues into the next school year, school districts should provide educational videos on how to use technology, the basics so parents are aware, and this can increase their accountability towards education.

Distance learning is necessary at this time, however there are many missing pieces when doing education online. The authenticity of face to face interaction and relationship building between educators, students, and families.

Conclusion

In the future when education can return to schools and face to face home visits, I would like to continue this research study not only to gain information on communication development but to also gain more information on parent impact with their child's education and what ways can schools support families to have more follow through and participation in their children's education.

To support families, I would like to work towards building self-advocacy for parents to support them with being involved in their child's education. Creating a beginning of the year or beginning of special education services questionnaire. This questionnaire can help educators learn about what technology the family has, the family's daily routines, culture differences, expectations, goals for their child, parent support, friends, family nearby, etc. By doing something like this, teachers can create meaningful relationships and support the entire family. Parents can feel they are being heard which is also a part of building more accountability for parents to be involved in education.

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