Using Coaching with Preschool Teachers to Support the Social Skills of Children with and without Autism Spectrum Disorders

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to train and coach teachers to use naturalistic teaching strategies and examine the effects of naturalistic strategies on the social behaviors of young children with and without autism. Three preschool teachers participated in training and coaching sessions to learn how to facilitate social interactions between children with and without autism using naturalistic teaching strategies. The goal of the training and coaching was to increase the variety of strategies that the teachers used in their classrooms. Using single case methodology, data were gathered three times each week on teacher and child’s behavior during choice/center time. Results indicated variability in teacher and child behavior. Two of the three teachers were more successful in balancing their use of social and physical strategies following intervention. Overall, following intervention, children engaged more in social play and they spent less time in individual play. Implications for practice and research are discussed.

Key words: Autism Spectrum Disorders, coaching, preschool teachers, naturalistic teaching, social behaviors.