



Using a social story intervention to decrease inappropriate behavior of preschool children with autism

Angkhana Khantreejitranon

Department of Vocational Education, Faculty of Education, Kasetsart University, Bangkok 10900, Thailand

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 6 August 2015

Received in revised form 27 April 2016

Accepted 3 June 2016

Keywords:

autistic child,
inappropriate behavior,
social skills,
social story

ABSTRACT

This research investigated the inappropriate behavior of preschool children with autism in a classroom and examined the effectiveness of the use of social stories to decrease inappropriate autistic behavior. An A-B-A-B single subject design was used across the five participants selected for the study. Investigating the problematic social skills and developing a social story intervention for the preschool autistic children was completed, followed by an examination of the effectiveness of the social story intervention. Ten common problematic social skills among the autistic children in preschool were identified—walking around, making loud noises, not sharing their toys with others, showing frustration when feeling unsatisfied, having no patience, not putting toys away when finished, taking other people's belongings without permission, not knowing how to greet others, destroying things when feeling frustrated, and giving a hug to other people at inappropriate times. It was found that the social story intervention helped to decrease inappropriate behavior in children with autism. The social story intervention consisted of five social story books and five e-books (one story per child) using a single subject design with an A-B-A-B pattern. The autistic children preferred social stories from the hardcopy books compared with stories from the e-books. A fourth stage time trial was used over 6 weeks, five times per week, for a total of 30 times. The findings suggested that the use of properly constructed social stories can be effective in decreasing the inappropriate behavior of children with autism. However, each story intervention should be applied with caution because of individual differences between children. The social story intervention should be designed only for autistic children who exhibit specific inappropriate social behavior.

© 2018 Kasetsart University. Publishing services by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Introduction

According to the National Education Act of B.E. 2542 (1999), Chapter 2: Educational Rights and Duties, Section 10, persons with physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, social, communication, and learning deficiencies, those with physical disabilities, the crippled, those unable to support themselves, or the destitute or disadvantaged, shall have the right and opportunities to receive specially

provided basic education. Furthermore, education for the disabled shall be provided free of charge from birth or at first diagnosis. These persons shall have the right to access the facilities, media, services, and other forms of educational aid in conformity with the criteria and procedures stipulated in the ministerial regulations (Department of Education Ministry of Education, 2006). The goals of “education for special needs” were to provide free, appropriate public education for all students with disabilities in Thailand, and to enable students with disabilities to be able to benefit from educational opportunities (Ministry of Education, 2002). Thus, special education in Thailand was

E-mail address: angie_thai@hotmail.com.

Peer review under responsibility of Kasetsart University.

provided for gifted children, children with learning disabilities, and children with autism (Srisuruk, n.d.). The idea that special education services for students with severe disabilities, like students with autism, would take place in regular education classrooms is relatively new. The successful inclusion of students with autism in regular preschool classrooms or child care facilities requires a high level of commitment, support, and preparation by everyone involved (Ministry of Education, 2002).

An autistic child is classified as gifted and has developmental disabilities in three areas—social, communication, and behavior (Sarnrattana, 2006). It has been revealed that medical treatments impaired the development of children with autism. As a result of a malfunction or failure of the brain, an autistic child develops differently from a normal child. An autistic child is unable to recognize and communicate in an uncontained environment. Generally, he/she is isolated in a world of his/her own, lacking the ability to communicate with other people and lacking imagination and cognitive ability (Powers, 2000).

An autistic child is able to enhance his/her understanding toward his/her environments through learning social skills. A child can adjust more easily to other people as he/she understands the emotions of others and properly identifies those emotions in a situation. Learning social skills also helps to lower some behavioral problems (Staley, 2001). Moreover, Swaine (2004) reported that good social skills are important for an autistic child because it helps him/her to develop social understanding. Without learning social skills, an autistic child cannot appropriately interpret others' behavior which leads to miscommunication and a lack of relationships with others. Thus, supporting the development of social understanding in an autistic child is necessary (Swaine, 2004).

The preceding issues led the researcher to study how to reduce unexpected behavior in autistic children. Using the social story is an effective teaching tool that can be used to develop social skills (Reynhout & Carter, 2006) and helps to reduce unexpected behavior. It also helps a child to recognize the environment, understand the people surrounding him/her, and to be able to appropriately interact with other people. Since good social skills are developed, such a child is more accepted in society (Gray & Garland, 1993). An autistic child needs to know and understand the various emotions as he/she interacts with other people. This helps the child to happily co-exist with others in society. Furthermore, it is necessary to develop training and guidance for parents, teachers, and related personnel to support an autistic child and to help the child to maintain appropriate social skills in the long term.

Social stories could help an autistic child to learn expected types of behavior by teaching specific component skills that can be chained together with a larger task. Social stories can be used for variety of purposes. Gray and Garland (1993) stated that numerous uses of social stories included: (a) explaining routines or changes in routines, (b) describing social situations without intimidating, (c) teaching academic skills, (d) teaching social skills, (e) training adaptive skills, and (f) dealing with difficult types of behavior, including emotional expression, aggression, or obsessive behavior (Gray, 2000).

Gray (2004) described six types of sentences that can be used to write social stories—descriptive, perspective, affirmative, directive, control, and cooperative—to explain abstract situations, often through the use of analogies. Briefly, descriptive sentences provide social rules governing the target situation and objective facts or events occurring. Perspective sentences describe other's thoughts or feelings associated with the target situation. Affirmative sentences emphasize a value underlying a particular fact (for example, taking care of friends is a good thing to do.). Directive sentences provide information about how to behave in the target situation. Control sentences consist of a description developed by the student to help retrieve important information in the target situation. Finally, cooperative sentences describe who will help the individual and how to succeed in the target situation. The story should be within the child's comprehension level and limited to the vocabulary and print size that are appropriate to the child's age and ability.

In addition, Gray (2000) reported that pictures in the social story are possible when they do not distract the child and do not restrict his/her ability to generalize the principle beyond the depicted situation.

The purpose of the current study was to investigate inappropriate types of behavior of preschool children with autism in a classroom and to examine the effect of social stories on children with autism to decrease their inappropriate behavior. The study provided specific instructions describing how social stories should be written; Gray (2004) gave guidelines for implementing social stories. The current study showed that using social stories was an effective teaching tool which develops social skills and helps reduce unexpected behavior. The study adds to the current literature by evaluating the extent to which social stories (books and electronic books) can effectively reduce inappropriate types of behavior of children with autism.

Methods

Research Design

This study employed an A-B-A-B single subject design consisting of four phases: baseline phase A₁ (no social story), intervention phase B₁ (social story read prior to observation session, then left students to access independently), baseline phase A₂ (no social story), and intervention phase B₂ (social story read prior to observation session, then left students to access independently and the teacher to review with the student).

Participants

Five children aged between 6 and 10 years with a diagnosis of autistic disorder (ASD) were selected from preschool classrooms. The participants were autistic children and had impairments in social skills, including inappropriate interactions with others and behavioral problems in social situations.

The criteria used to select the participants for this study were: (a) diagnosed with ASD, (b) aged between 6 and 10

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6843974>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6843974>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)