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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Interest-based everyday child language learning[☆]

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KEYWORDS

Everyday activities;
Child interests;
Responsive teaching;
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Language
development

Abstract

Introduction: This paper includes a description of an intervention model and research on the effectiveness of the model and associated practices that used child interest-based participation in everyday activities as sources of communication and language learning opportunities.

Methodology: The intervention included four components: (a) interest-based child learning opportunities, (b) everyday family and community activities as sources of child learning opportunities, (c) methods for increasing child participation in interest-based everyday activities, and (d) parents' use of responsive teaching for promoting child communication and language competence. The participants were 21 practitioners and 58 families of infants and toddlers with developmental delays. The intervention was implemented in the children's home by their parents an average of 12 months. Structural equation modeling was used to trace the effects of practitioner and parent fidelity of the intervention practices to rates of child language learning.

Results: The more children participated in interest-based everyday activities, the greater the growth in the children's language acquisition. The results also showed that practitioner and parent fidelity of use of the practices were indirectly related to changes in children's language development mediated by parents' judgments of the usefulness of the practices and the frequency of child participation in interest-based everyday activities.

Discussion and conclusion: Results indicated that incorporating children's interests into everyday child language learning activities was an effective intervention strategy. The difference between practitioner- and parent-implemented everyday child language learning practices are described as are the implications for practice.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Actividades diarias;
Intereses del niño;
Enseñanza
responsiva;
Profesional del
coaching;
Desarrollo del
lenguaje

Aprendizaje diario del lenguaje en niños basado en intereses

Resumen

Introducción: Este artículo presenta un modelo de intervención y una investigación centrados en la efectividad del modelo y en las prácticas asociadas que usan los intereses del niño para promover su participación en las actividades diarias para el aprendizaje de la comunicación y el lenguaje.

Metodología: La intervención constó de 4 componentes: a) oportunidades de aprendizaje basadas en el interés del niño; b) actividades diarias de la familia y la comunidad entendidas como fuentes de oportunidades para el aprendizaje del niño; c) métodos para aumentar la participación del niño en actividades diarias basadas en sus intereses, y d) el uso por parte de los padres de una enseñanza responsiva para promover competencias de comunicación y lenguaje en el niño. Participaron 21 profesionales y 48 familias con niños con problemas en el desarrollo. La intervención se llevó a cabo en el hogar de los niños. Fueron los padres quienes la implementaron y duró una media de 12 meses. Se usó un modelo de ecuación estructural para trazar los efectos de la fidelización de los profesionales y los padres a las prácticas del programa en el índice de aprendizaje del lenguaje en el niño.

Resultados: Cuanto más participaban los niños en actividades diarias basadas en sus intereses, mayor era el crecimiento en su adquisición del lenguaje. Los resultados también mostraron que la fidelidad de los padres y los profesionales al uso de las prácticas estuvo indirectamente relacionada con los cambios en el desarrollo del lenguaje del niño, mediado a través de la valoración que los padres hacían sobre la utilidad de las prácticas y la frecuencia de la participación del niño en las actividades diarias basadas en su interés.

Discusión y conclusiones: Los resultados indicaron que incorporar los intereses del niño en las actividades diarias de aprendizaje del lenguaje fue una estrategia de intervención efectiva. Se describen las diferencias entre la implementación por parte de los profesionales y el hecho de que sean los padres quienes utilicen las prácticas en las actividades diarias para el aprendizaje del lenguaje en términos de implicaciones para la práctica.

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The purpose of this article is threefold. The first is to describe the key components of a communication and language intervention model that uses children's interests as the cornerstone of everyday child language learning opportunities. The second is to describe the procedures used to promote early childhood practitioner and parent use of the practices. The third is to describe the results from an evaluation of the effectiveness of the use of the model and associated practices. The language learning intervention model and associated practices are part of a line of research and practice on the person and environmental factors influencing child learning and development and parenting confidence and competence (e.g., Dunst et al., 2001; Dunst, Trivette, & Raab, 2014; Raab, Dunst, & Hamby, 2016).

The foundation of the model is the use of children's interests as a way of engaging and promoting child acquisition of functional and meaningful communication and language competence. Interests are either a person or situational (environmental) characteristic (Raab, 2005). Personal interests include a child's individual likes, preferences, favorites, strengths, and so forth that encourage and sustain child engagement and participation in desired and appealing activities. Situational interests include those aspects of the social and nonsocial environment that attract child attention, curiosity, and engagement in interactions with people and objects. The indicators of children's interests

include, but are not limited to, sustained attention, arousal, curiosity, social-affective behavior (smiling and laughter), excitement, and prolonged engagement. Results from a meta-analysis of the relationships between children's interests and communication and language development indicate that incorporating either or both personal and situational interests into everyday activities is associated with optimal child benefits (Raab, Dunst, & Hamby, 2013).

Fig. 1 shows a framework for understanding the key characteristics of interest-based everyday learning opportunities that mirror what we know from available research evidence (see Dunst et al., 2001). Interest-based child learning engages children in interactions with people and objects that provide children opportunities to practice existing skills, explore their environments, and learn and master new abilities (Dunst, Jones, Johnson, Raab, & Hamby, 2011; Dunst, Trivette, & Hamby, 2012; Raab & Dunst, 2007). Nelson (1999), for example, noted that variations in the development of children's language competence were "related easily to the child's life activities and interests" (p. 2). It is now generally acknowledged that early communication and language skills are acquired most easily when learning opportunities are interest-based or have interest-based elements (e.g., Frijters, Barron, & Brunello, 2000; Ortiz, Stowe, & Arnold, 2001; O'Sullivan, 1997; Pruden, Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, & Hennon, 2006).

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