Critical Review:

In non-verbal children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is verbal output increased for those who engage in the picture exchange communication System (PECS)?

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The following appraisal examined the evidence for increased verbal output in non-verbal children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) after engaging in the picture exchange communication system (PECS). An electronic literature search resulted in seven studies which met inclusion criteria. Overall, findings indicate that there is evidence for increased verbal output in children with ASD who have engaged in PECS training and no evidence that PECS inhibits the development of speech.

Introduction

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder characterized by persistent difficulties using communication for social and functional purposes (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). One of the hallmark features of children with ASD is delayed speech and language skills (Charlop & Haymes, 1994). The American Psychiatric Association (2009) estimated that 25% of the individuals living with ASD are nonverbal, indicating that they do not use their own voice to

between both environments and different communication partners (mom and teacher). Spontaneous verbalizations also increased at home and during play sessions at school.

Overall, these findings provided compelling evidence that spontaneous language verbalizations and icon use increase in both home and school settings with the use of PECS. However, there are several limitations that should be noted. The participant did not increase their range of spoken vocabulary.

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