Script Fading for Children with Autism: Generalization of Social Initiation Skills
from School to Home

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Abstract

A critical component of teaching social skills to people with autism is the generalization of behavior change across a variety of untrained situations during which social skills are appropriate. The script-fading procedure is an effective technology for teaching social skills to people with autism, but few researchers have established cues in the natural environment as the discriminative stimuli for social initiations. The purpose of this study was to use a script-fading procedure to teach young children with autism to initiate to one another across various activities in the school setting, and to program for generalization across untrained stimuli in the school setting and in the untrained home setting with a sibling. The three participants, ages 7 to 10 years, demonstrated deficits in social initiations with their peers. During the baseline condition, the participants did emit initiations to one another, although this behavior was variable and did not endure over time. With the introduction of the script-fading procedure, however, social initiations increased systematically for all participants. Moreover, the data demonstrated that the effects of the script-fading procedure generalized across untrained stimuli, responses, and to an untrained setting with an untrained conversation partner. Overall, this study demonstrated the effectiveness of the script-fading procedure in teaching children with autism to initiate to their peers. This study has expanded upon previous research by demonstrating generalization from school with peers to the home setting with siblings, and by providing social validity data that support the effectiveness of the script-fading procedure in producing an important behavior change.