

Module: Peer-Mediated Instruction and Intervention

Overview of Peer-Mediated Instruction and Intervention

Neitzel, J. (2008). *Overview of peer-mediated instruction and intervention for children and youth with autism spectrum disorders*. Chapel Hill, NC: National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, The University of North Carolina.

Peer-mediated instruction is used to teach typically developing peers ways to interact with and help learners with ASD acquire new social skills by increasing social opportunities within natural environments. With PMII, peers are systematically taught ways of engaging learners with ASD in social interactions in both teacher-directed and learner-initiated activities (English et al., 1997; Odom et al., 1999; Strain & Odom, 1986).

Evidence

PMII meets criteria for being an evidence-based practice within the early childhood and elementary age groups for promoting communication/language and social skills. Only one study met criteria in the middle/high school age group.

With what ages is PMII effective?

PMII can be implemented with pairs or small groups of learners across the age range. With young children (i.e., 3 to 8 years of age), practitioners can use peer-initiation training to help learners with ASD acquire communication/language and social skills. Social networking strategies are more appropriate for older learners (i.e., 9 to 18 years of age). PMII has been shown to have positive effects on academic, interpersonal, and personal-social development, and may be the largest and most empirically supported type of social intervention for learners with ASD (Bass & Mulick, 2007; Maheady, Harper, & Mallette, 2001; McConnell, 2002).

What skills or intervention goals can be addressed by PMII?

PMII targets social skills that include the following: responding to others, reciprocity, understanding others, and interacting with others or in groups.

In what settings can PMII be effectively used?

PMII has been used effectively in clinical and school-based settings across preschool to high school age groups. PMII is intended to be used as part of the daily curriculum through a balance of teacher-directed and learner-initiated interactions and activities.

Evidence Base

The studies cited in this section provide the basis upon which this practice was determined to meet the NPDC of ASD's criteria as an evidence-based practice. This list is not exhaustive; other quality studies may exist but were not included.

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Preschool

- Garfinkle, A. N., & Schwartz, I. S. (2002). Peer imitation: Increasing social interactions in children with autism and other developmental disabilities in inclusive preschool classrooms. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 22*(1), 26-38.
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Elementary and Middle School Age

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Thiemann, K. S., & Goldstein, H. (2004). Effects of peer training and written text cueing on social communication of school-age children with pervasive developmental disorder. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 47*(1), 126-144.

Selected Additional References

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