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Consonant production patterns of young severely language-delayed children with autism

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Abstract

While much attention has been given to documenting the language skills of verbal children with autism, the basic speech sound development patterns of severely language-impaired children with autism are unknown. Previous research has shown that certain consonants are generally produced earlier in development than other consonants, both in typically developing children and in children with language-learning impairments. While several large studies indicate that children with autism who have strong verbal skills have intact phonological development, there is some evidence that children with autism who are more severely language impaired may have abnormal phonological production. This study documents the speech sound development of non-verbal and minimally verbal children with autism. Prompts were administered for each individual speech sound while spontaneous and imitated sounds were recorded and scored. Results indicate that children with autism show the same general speech sound production patterns as typically developing and language-learning impaired children.

Learning outcomes: Individuals who read this manuscript will obtain information regarding: (1) normal phonological development, (2) a comparison of speech sound production of a group of 14 children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder with the production of a group of 10 typically developing children, and (3) comparisons of imitated and spontaneous sound production of the children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

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