



Abstract  
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### **Implementing a Vocal Shaping Protocol with Children with Autism**

A substantial subset of children with autism fail to develop functional vocal behavior. For these individual's alternative methods of communication are often taught in the form of manual sign language, speech generating devices or picture/ icon selection or exchange systems. The research literature suggests each method may have some benefit in producing vocalizations with this group of children. When successful the common factor appears to be the effects of manding where motivating operations establish strong reinforcers along with the pairing of reinforcement with spoken sounds and words by the instructor. In some cases, supplemental methods during mand training have been shown to be effective, e.g. prompt delay and echoic training. Video illustrations of effective methods in clinical settings will be provided. In addition, the potential benefit of instructor transcription of vocal productions will be discussed and demonstrated.

### **Increasing Length of Utterance in Language Training Programs for Children with Autism**

In language training programs for children with autism and related disorders therapists and parents often require multi-word utterance consistent with the child's chronological age. Therapists frequently rely on the psycholinguistic literature (Brown, 1973) and not the behavior analytic literature (Skinner, 1957) to determine appropriate length of utterance. The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of the psycholinguistic approach that guides these clinical decisions. A behavioral analysis of the length of utterance issue will be presented as an alternative conceptual guide for teaching increased linguistic structure to children with autism.