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The efficacy of training parents to deliver multiple oppositions intervention to children with speech sound disorders

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Background: Optimal outcomes for phonology-based speech sound disorders (SSDs) can be achieved when intervention is delivered at high frequencies, such as 3 x week. However, many speech pathologists (SLPs) in Australia are unable to deliver such frequent services, with intervention typically being delivered weekly. One strategy to overcome this intensity shortfall is to engage parents in completing practice at home. The efficacy of this strategy is unclear.

Aim/s: In this study, we investigated the efficacy of combined parent-SLP delivered multiple oppositions intervention for children with SSD.

Method: A multiple baselines across participants design was used. Five children aged 3;3 to 5;11 with moderate to severe SSDs and one of their parents attended 1 x clinic-based session per week for 9 weeks. Intervention and parent training were delivered. To meet the empirically recommended intensity of 3 x per week, parents then delivered intervention 2 x week at home. Outcomes were assessed immediately following intervention and at a 4 week follow-up.

Results: Two children showed generalisation to untreated words, word positions and phonemes, with continued improvement after the withdrawal of treatment. The other children showed some system-wide changes, but limited generalisation to untreated words. Effect sizes ranged from small to large.

Conclusion: The results of this study showed that combined parent-SLP delivery of multiple oppositions can be used to achieve the recommended dose frequency of intervention. Child outcomes were likely influenced by multiple factors, including dosage, fidelity, and the nature of the child's SSD. Implications for clinical practice will be discussed.

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