

Behaviour Innovations

Newsletter

VOLUME 14

WINTER, 2016



Behaviour Innovations

57 Young Street
Hamilton, Ontario
L8N 1V1
(905) 570-0777

618 The Queensway
Toronto, Ontario
M8Y 1K3
(416) 251-9277

www.behaviourinnovations.com

Behaviour Innovations (BI) provides high quality services to children with ASD and other developmental disabilities at home, and at Children's College. **BI** also provides supported inclusion in schools, diagnostic assessments, as well as day programming for young adults with developmental disabilities. In addition to therapeutic services, **BI** also provides training and consultation to families, professionals, organizations, public/private schools, and residential care facilities. The Directors of BI are Dr. Joel Hundert and Dr. Nicole-Walton, psychologists, Board Certified Behaviour Analysts-Doctoral and instructors at McMaster University. For more information, please visit www.behaviourinnovations.com.

In this Issue

Page 1: Announcements

Page 2: Update on SOAAR

Page 3: *In the News:* ABA/IBI Wait Lists

Page 4: *Article:* Stimulus Over-Selectivity

Page 5: *Article:* Stimulus Over-Selectivity (*continued*)

Page 6: 2016 ABAI Conference

Page 7: 2016 ABAI Conference (*continued*)

Announcements

● **Respite Services:** Behaviour Innovations recently sent out a questionnaire to families inquiring about the need for respite services. We will be reviewing your feedback to determine whether this is a demand for providing such services. Stay tuned for more information!

● **Website Overhaul:** Keep an eye out over the next several months for changes to our website! Behaviour Innovations plans on updating it's website with useful resources and articles, as well as an e-store.

Update on SOAAR Toronto & Oakville

By **Rebecca Drouin** – *Coordinator, SOAAR*

SOAAR Day Program has been busy at both locations over the holiday season and into 2016! The two groups (SOAAR Oakville and SOAAR Toronto) were involved with many fun outings: the Royal Winter Fair, photos with Santa, touring Casa Loma, skating outdoors, among many others! In lieu of a day of outings, the participants decided to redirect their outing money to donate to various charities. They had a great time picking out toys for Sick Kids and the Firefighters toy drive, dog toys and treats for the Guide Dogs, and food for the local food banks. Kudos to you, SOAAR participants!

SOAAR Oakville, through the charity 'Bursary of Hope for Autism', was extremely fortunate in December to be the recipient of a very generous donation from The Co-Operators HB Group Insurance Management Ltd. Other donations were also received in the late fall through charity partnership with two half marathons, 'Oakville Nutrience Half Marathon' and the 'Marathon of Hope'. SOAAR can't thank everyone enough for their hard work that went into these events. It is through the support of so many awesome families that SOAAR continues to grow and serve so many amazing young adults.

Check out the SOAAR Facebook page, 'SOAAR Day Program', to follow all of the incredible things that SOAAR participants do!



The SOAAR crew pictured with Santa in celebration of the 2015 Holidays.



The SOAAR crew pictured with a cheque they received from The Co-Operators HB Group Insurance Management Ltd.

In the News: ABA/IBI Wait Lists in Ontario

By Matthew Rossi – Office Administrator, Behaviour Innovations

Wait lists for Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) services has grown substantially according to new data released as a result of a Freedom of Information request filed by Monique Taylor, a NDP MPP. In early November 2015, the New Democratic Party revealed that wait lists for both ABA and IBI services has risen to more than 16,000 children across the province of Ontario. Monique Taylor stated, “The evidence is clear that early intervention is essential and, for far too many children, that is just not happening”. Minister of Children and Youth Services, Tracy MacCharles, said that despite annual increases in autism funding, “more can be done”. There are currently 2,192 children waiting for IBI and 13,966 children waiting for ABA in Ontario. This number has risen considerably, considering that 10 years ago there were only 753 children waiting for ABA and/or IBI services. Tracy MacCharles acknowledged that this issue consumes much of her time, and vows that she is working on a new strategy to address the problems surrounding wait times for autism and developmental disability programs.

Autism Therapy By the Numbers	
2,192 Children awaiting Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI)	2,245 Children receiving Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) paid for by the government
13,966 Children awaiting Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)	8,572 Children receiving publicly funded Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)

Source: Toronto Star

The information above has been summarized from the following articles:

Benzie, Robert. (2015, November 3). Autism therapy wait-list swells to more than 16,000 kids. *Toronto Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.thestar.com/news/queenspark/2015/11/03/autism-therapy-wait-list-swells-to-more-than-16000-kids.html>

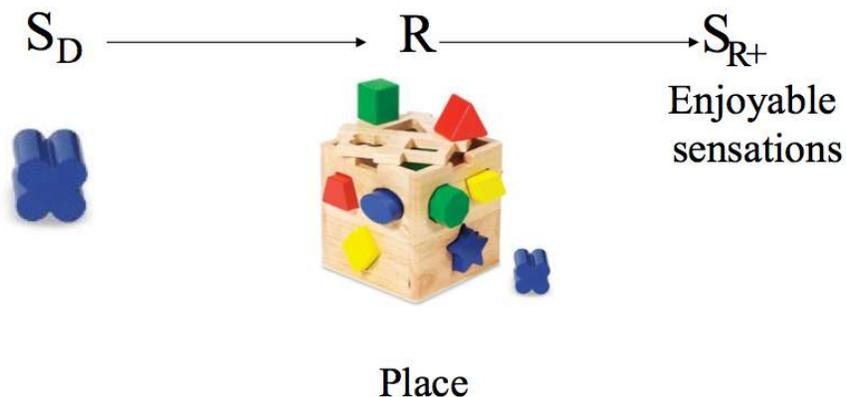
Csanady, Ashley. (2015, November 3). Over 16,000 children on Ontario wait lists for autism services: More kids are waiting than are getting support. *National Post*. Retrieved from <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/over-16000-children-on-ontario-wait-lists-for-autism-services-some-families-are-waiting-years-for-help>

Article: Stimulus Over Selectivity

By Dr. Joel Hundert – Director, Behaviour Innovations

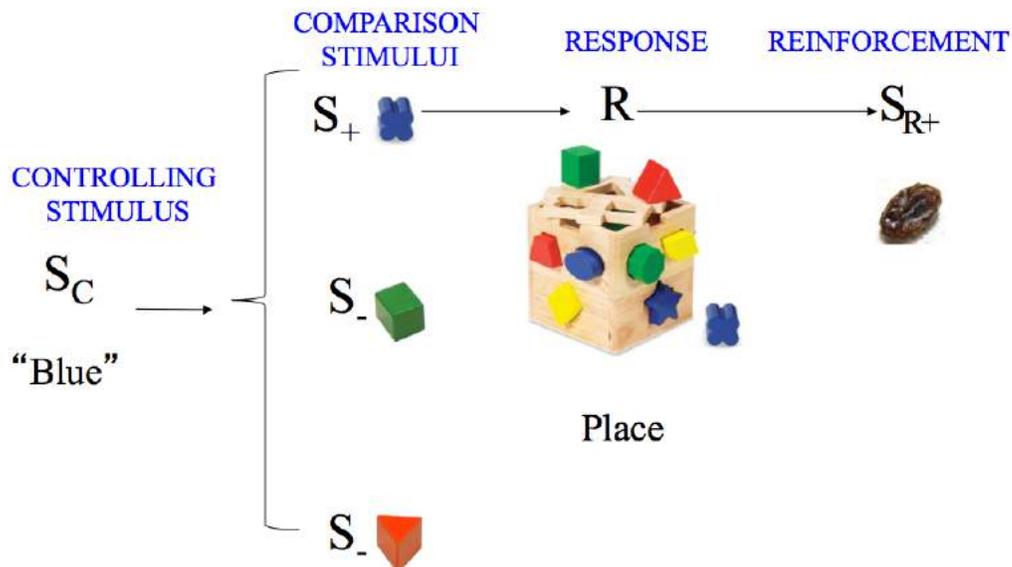
There is a phenomenon that affects approximately 20% of young children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) called “stimulus over-selectivity”. It consists of children with ASD attending to only one feature in multiple-feature discriminations. For example, a child with autism may be presented with a green square and a red triangle and asked to pick the “correct one”. The child is reinforced for selecting the green square and not the red triangle. After the child learns that discrimination, he or she is presented with a series of other shapes and colours including a green circle, and a blue square. Children with autism who show stimulus over-selectivity will make selections based on either shape or colour rather than both.

Stimulus over-selectivity interferes with the acquisition of conditional discriminations. In a simple discrimination, there is a stimulus (such as a shaped block in the figure below). The child makes a response (places the block in the shape sorter), and then is reinforced (by the sensation of placing the block).



Almost all young children with ASD that we see are able to make simple discriminations. What they tend not to be as good at doing is *conditional discriminations*. In conditional discriminations, a child needs to attend to an additional stimulus such as a spoken word as a basis of making a discrimination. In the shape sorter illustration, a conditional discrimination would consist of an initial instruction (“controlling stimulus”) of a colour and based on this instruction, a child selects the corresponding block from three comparison stimuli and places it in the shape sorter. In the example in the figure on the following page, the child is reinforced with a raisin. Other examples of conditional discriminations are a child touches a color when named, the child touches a picture of a person when named, and the child stands up when asked.

Article: Stimulus Over Selectivity (continued)



We serve several children who despite our best efforts, do not learn to follow simple instructions such as touching familiar objects or pictures of familiar family members. Each shows signs of stimulus over-selectivity. Yet, there is a promising approach that we successfully tried with one such young boy with ASD.

There is research indicating that children with ASD can make discriminations to sound much easier than to spoken words. Using this information, we took objects that make noise and then digitized the sounds that they made so that they can be played on an iPad. We initially taught the boy to touch the corresponding object when the sound of that object was presented. Once the boy acquired this discrimination, we then superimposed a digitized voice saying the name of the object softly. Over time, we increased the volume of the voice while decreasing the volume of the object sound to the point where only the sound of spoken words was presented. Through this strategy, the boy learned to pick out objects by their name. We also successfully used the same strategy of transfer of stimulus control to teach touching pictures of family members to the boy.

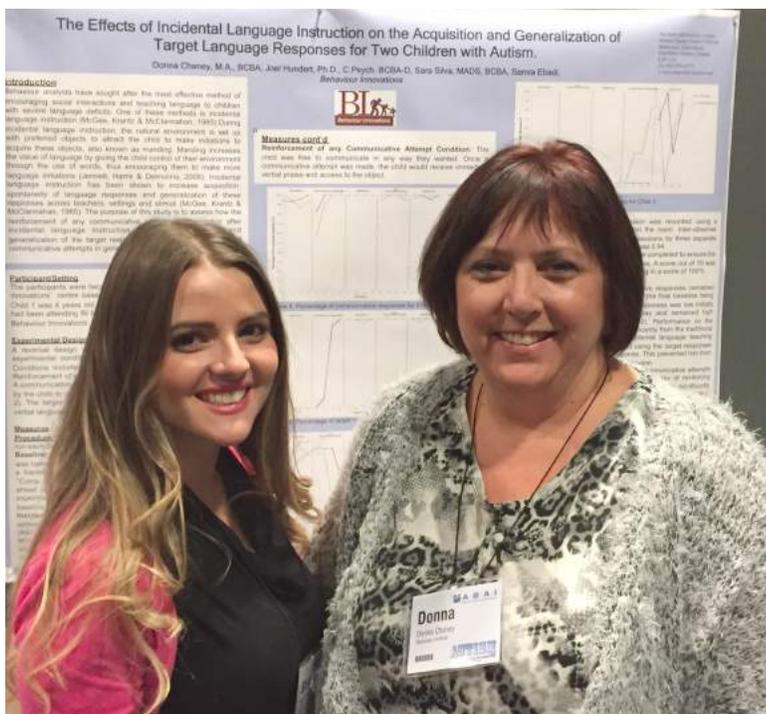
Page O'Neill and Adam Carter are two fourth-year undergraduate students from McMaster University who are conducting their thesis on this topic. Through their assistance, we should be able to more systematically examine whether this strategy is one that will work with a number of children with ASD.

2016 ABAI Conference in New Orleans

By Sara Silva – Coordinator, Behaviour Innovations

Our Senior Clinicians and Coordinators attended the 10th Annual ABAI Autism Conference in New Orleans this past month. Speakers at the conference included Robert Horner, James Carr, Alice Shillingsburg, Kevin Luczynski, Kathryn Peterson, Stephanie Peterson and David Wacker. The speakers presented on various research topics including the use of Telehealth technologies in clinical practice, programming for the emergence of verbal behaviour and evolution of certification standards for Behaviour Analysts.

Donna and Sara presented a poster at the conference titled “The Effects of Incidental Language Instruction on the Acquisition and Generalization of Target Language Responses for Two Children With Autism”. The purpose of this study was to assess how the reinforcement of any communicative attempt before and/or after incidental language instruction affects the acquisition and generalization of the target response, as well as the frequency of communicative attempts in general. Results indicated that incidental language instruction had an effect on the acquisition of the target response, but cannot confirm its role in the perseverance of the target response.



Sara Silva (left) & Donna Chaney (right) pictured in front of their poster board at the 2016 ABAI conference hosted in New Orleans.

2016 ABAI Conference in New Orleans (continued)

Sari and Erin presented a poster at the conference titled “A Comparison of Simple Conditional Discrimination and Simultaneous Mixed Presentation Training on Acquisition Rate and Generalization for Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder.” The first study examined the extent to which items taught using the simple conditional method would generalize to a simultaneous mixed presentation arrangement. The results showed limited generalization of skills for two out of three participants. A second study was conducted to compare the rate of acquisition and then generalization of targets taught using the simple conditional method and the simultaneous mixed presentation method. The results showed that while acquisition was greater for the simple conditional method of teaching, generalization was limited. Conversely acquisition was slower for the mixed presentation method, however generalization of skills occurred. The results of this study impact the teaching methodologies used when teaching language discrimination skills to individuals with autism.

Erin Troubridge (*left*) & Sari Rathwell (*right*) pictured in front of their poster board at the 2016 ABAI conference hosted in New Orleans.

