Teaching a Child with Autism to Fasten a Zipper

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Background

Name: Billy

Age: 8-years-old

Gender: Male

Impairments from Triad:

Social Interactions: Lack of interactions with others, does not initiate social interactions with peers, has not developed friendships with peers in the centre, lack of communicative gestures.

Communication: Has difficulty conversing with others, often scripts from movies or television shows, does not imitate others' social behaviour in play.

Restricted Interests and Repetitive Behaviour: Activities and interests are rigid, stereotyped and repetitive movements of hands and arms, focuses on parts of things instead of the whole picture (likes to play with parts of a board game).

Skill Acquisition Program

Domain: Dressing Skills

Program: U-9 Fasten Zipper

ABLLS-R Tasks(s): Fastening a zipper (including starting a zipper) on a jacket or sweater.

Objective: Billy will be able to fasten zippers on a backpack or similar items (jacket, sweatshirt) without assistance.

Materials: Jacket or sweater with a zipper and reinforcers.

Teaching Strategies/Considerations: There are two criteria for this program.
Criteria 1: Billy will be required to fasten a zipper on a jacket/sweater that is in front of him and not on him. This can be taught at the table or on the floor, etc.
Criteria 2: Billy will independently start and complete the zipper on a jacket he is wearing.

S^D: Criteria 1:(Put the jacket on the table or floor in front of Billy) and say "Zip up your jacket/coat."
Criteria 2: After the jacket is on him, say "Zip up your jacket/coat."

Teaching Steps/Task Analysis

Learner Individualized Teaching:

Teaching Steps:

1. Brings the two parts of the zipper close together

2. Latches the two parts of the zipper together (i.e., puts the key in the lock)

3. Grasps the bottom of jacket near the zipper

4. Grasps the zipper

5. Starts zipping up the zipper

6. Zips the zipper all the way up

How to Teach It: Using backwards chaining, the instructor will fully prompt Billy to do the steps he does not correctly complete at baseline and Billy will complete the current teaching step with prompting (depending on the prompt level that the step is being taught at). The program is taught this way until Billy has mastered steps 1-6 at a no prompt level.

Prompting and Error Correction

Prompting: Prompt fading will occur across sessions.

Prompt Fading Procedures: Response prompts will be used to aid Billy.
Full Prompt (from behind for Criteria 1 and from the front for Criteria 2) includes physically guiding his hands to complete the task.
Partial prompt (from the front) includes pointing or slightly guiding his hands to complete the task.
Differentially reinforce him for the responses at different prompt levels.

Error Correction Procedure: When Billy makes an error, do the following:
1. Re-state the S^D.
2. Increase the prompt level to one level higher than the prompt level you are teaching at (for example, if you are teaching at a partial prompt, increase to a full-prompt)
3. Differentially reinforce for error correction trial.

Social Validity

Acquiring the skill of independently starting and completing a zipper will make Billy more independent. It will allow him to dress up independently for going outside, going home, etc. It is important to teach the skill at this time because Billy is 8-years-old and typical children of that age have already acquired this skill.

Baseline

Baseline Method: Baseline data was collected by probing the teaching steps once. The percentage of correct responses is the baseline percentage.

Baseline for Criteria 1: Jacket in front of him.

S^D: "Zip up your jacket."

+ (completed step) or – (did not complete step)

1. Brings the two parts of the zipper close together -
2. Latches the two parts of the zipper together (i.e., puts the key in the lock) -
3. Grasps the bottom of jacket near the zipper -
4. Grasps the zipper +
5. Starts zipping up the zipper -
6. Zips the zipper all the way up +

Results: Baseline percentage=2/6=33%

Baseline for Criteria 2: Jacket on him.

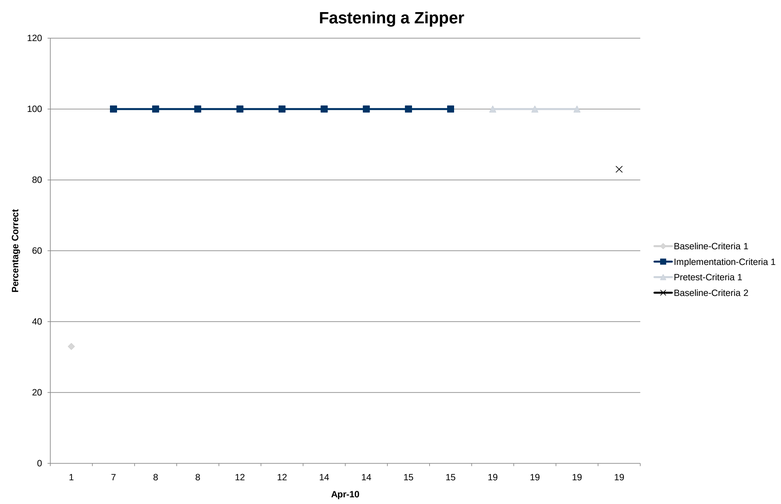
S^D: "Zip up your jacket."

+ (completed step) or – (did not complete step)

1. Brings the two parts of the zipper close together +
2. Latches the two parts of the zipper together (i.e., puts the key in the lock) +
3. Grasps the bottom of jacket near the zipper -
4. Grasps the zipper +
5. Starts zipping up the zipper +
6. Zips the zipper all the way up +

Results: Baseline percentage=5/6=83%

Percentage Graph



Generalization & Maintenance

Generalization: Future goal: Use different jackets or sweaters to help Billy generalize the skill.

Maintenance: After the skill goes into maintenance, there will be maintenance checks completed once per week for three weeks, once every 2 weeks for two weeks, once per month for two months and once per two months.

Results & Discussion

Results for Criteria 1: Billy got 2/6 steps correct in the task analysis at baseline. After baseline, Billy was first taught the last step he got incorrect at baseline, which was step 5 (using backward chaining). Billy mastered step 5 in 9 sessions. After step 5 was mastered, the rest of the teaching steps were pretested. Billy mastered the rest of the teaching steps for criteria 1 at pretest.

Results for Criteria 2: Billy got 5/6 steps correct in the task analysis at baseline. The step he got incorrect (step 3) was pretested and Billy did not master the skill at pretest. The skill is currently being taught to Billy by the staff at Four Points Inc.

Discussion: Teaching dressing skills to children with autism can be challenging. Many children have compliance issues, especially when it involves running programs with clothing. This program was run with a jacket that the child identified with wearing to go home. When Criteria 2 was baselined the child was asking if it was time to go home when he was asked to put the jacket on. These type of issues create barriers for programs being run in the dressing skills domain. Solutions for these type of problems can be to run trials at various times of the day so the child learns that putting his jacket on is not always closely followed by going home or leaving the centre. Another solution can be to run the trials near the time the child is going home. A third solution can be to run trails at the time when the child is required to get dressed to go home.

Future Goals for Billy: Future goals include mastering step 3 and moving on to generalization. Billy should be asked to fasten zippers on multiple coats and sweatshirts. To ensure the skill is maintained, there will be maintenance checks completed according to the maintenance schedule.

Contact information

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