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## **Enriched Home Environment: A Model & Intervention to Facilitate Participation in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

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### **Background:**

Enabling childhood participation in home activities requires complex interactions between the child and a stimulating ecology. Home environment plays a vital role in child development. Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may have lower participation in home activities.

### **Objectives:**

Examine the relationship between participation of children with autism, parenting stress and the enriched home environment and to identify key factors in the environment that influence the child's participation in home activities.

Develop a Home Environment Checklist (HEC) to assess the level of environmental complexity present in the home environment of children with ASD.

Implement an eight-week home modification program to provide learning, sensory and a socially stimulating environment.

Identify changes in participation of children with ASD in home activities following an eight-week intervention program.

### **Methods:**

22 Children with a diagnosis of ASD ages 3 to 6 years were recruited for the study. Home Observation for Measurement of Environment and Preschool Activity Card Sort assessments were performed. The parents filled the Parenting Stress Index, and Social Responsiveness Scale. A spearman rank coefficient and a multiple regression analysis were used to analyze the relationships.

To implement an eight-week home modification program, 2 children were recruited. Pre intervention and post- intervention data was collected. A percentage change was documented to analyze the changes in participation in home activities following an eight-week home intervention.

### **Results:**

Significant correlations were found between parenting stress, the characteristics of the home environment and participation patterns of children in home activities.

Results of the eight week home modification program showed an increase in the participation in home activities for both the children.

### **Conclusions:**

The results of the study helped in understanding the environmental factors that influence participation of children in home activities. Also, the Home Environment Checklist can be used to measure the level of environmental complexity in home environment of children. Providing an enriched home environment to children with ASD can improve their participation in home activities. Overall, this study provides a guideline to develop a measurement and intervention model to develop enriched home environment for children with ASD.