

Video-conferencing in delivering early childhood intervention services for children who have hearing impairment

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Introduction

The use of video-conferencing in the delivery of early childhood intervention services for children under 5 years of age is not widely researched and literature in the area is limited. Video-conferencing allows the delivery of services to families living in remote areas where travel time makes regular intervention services difficult to access.

Objectives

This study followed a family over two years to examine whether video-conferencing was an effective tool to deliver early intervention services.

Method

One family with two children who have hearing impairment were video-recorded during intervention sessions completed face to face and through video-conferencing. DVDs of the family were analysed using a framework of interaction that explores levels of attunement and leadership styles. .

Quantitative data was collected on the key features of interaction, for example, eye contact, physical contact, imitation, and communication styles.

Results

Results indicated that video-conferencing can be effective in the delivery of early childhood intervention services when working with this population. Results highlighted factors that contributed to the high levels of attunement shown in video conferencing intervention sessions. These included; time to develop confidence and skills in how the technology is used, the development of therapeutic relationships and the parents' role and ability as a therapist. Over the two year, high levels of attunement were concurrent with the parents skill development in becoming an effective therapist

Conclusion

Video conferencing can be an effective tool in delivering early childhood services. The parent's role and skills are central to the success of video-conferencing intervention services to young children. Attunement can be taught to a parent. More research within this area is needed.

Application to practice

Video-conferencing can be an effective method to deliver services to clients living in remote geographical areas. . Therapists using video conferencing in early childhood services need to consider the role and skill of the parent as being fundamental in the intervention process. Therapists also need to reflect on their own skills and abilities in how to use this technology to achieve meaningful intervention outcomes.