

Functional Communication Training Fact Sheet

Brief Description

Functional communication training (FCT) is a systematic practice to replace inappropriate behavior or subtle communicative acts with more appropriate and effective communicative behaviors or skills. FCT is preceded by an FBA to identify the function of an interfering behavior followed by teaching an appropriate communication skill that may serve the same purpose for the learner with ASD. FCT often includes differential reinforcement procedure in which an individual is taught an alternative response that results in the same class of reinforcement identified as maintaining problem behavior. Problem behavior is typically placed on extinction. The distinct component of FCT is that the alternative response is a recognizable form of communication (e.g., a vocalization, manual sign, Picture Exchange Communication System). FCT usually includes functional behavior assessment, differential reinforcement of alternative behavior, and extinction.

Qualifying Evidence

FCT meets evidence-based criteria with 12 single case design studies.

Ages

According to the evidence-based studies, this intervention has been effective for preschoolers (3-5 years) to high school-age learners (15-18 years) with ASD.

Outcomes

FCT can be used effectively to address social, communication, behavior, play, school-readiness, and adaptive outcomes.

Research Studies Providing Evidence

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