

Intervention Case Study 5

Introduction

James is 20 years old and lives with his family. He has some chores assigned at home, such as putting away dishes, but needs direct supervision to complete most tasks.

Measurement

James was observed through one-way windows at least twice a day and up to five times a day. His task was to put away booklets scattered around the room. The team measured whether he completed the task, when he did not complete the task, and when he attempted to escape the task by leaving the room.

Intervention

The team was interested in seeing how task size affected James's ability to complete the task without supervision. James first had a low task requirement followed by a high task requirement. Each session started with an adult asking James to pick up the booklets and put them in a box. The adult told James that if he picked the booklets up, he could listen to music. The adult then left and if James completed the task he would get to listen to his favorite song. The low task size consisted of picking up 20 booklets and the high task size consisted of picking up 100 booklets. After an initial assessment phase of several low task requirement sessions followed by several high task requirement sessions, the team had sessions where they gradually increased the number of booklets from 20 to 100.

Results

In the initial assessment phase, James completed the low task requirement consistently without supervision. When the high task requirement immediately followed the low task requirement, it was also consistently completed. However, James failed to complete subsequent high task requirements. He consistently completed the high task requirement after participating in sessions where the task size gradually increased.

Dunlap, G., & Plienis, A.J. (1991). The influence of task size on the unsupervised task performance of students with developmental disabilities. *Education and Treatment of Children, 14*, 85-95.