The Helping Answer Needs by Developing Specialists in Autism (HANDS) in Autism
Summer Training 2010 and 2011 Training Evaluation and Fidelity

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Abstract
The HANDS (Helping Answer Needs by Developing Specialists) in Autism program was developed in 2004 to provide intensive training to personnel working in educational settings. HANDS in Autism provides information on ABA and empirically-based practices over a week-long intensive summer training session through didactic instruction, observation, modeling, hands-on practice, and coaching. Each day of the five day long training session focuses on a different area including structure/choreography, assessment, planning/intervention, academic, and social skills. Summer training participants in 2010 and 2011 provided daily feedback on program activities specifically regarding goals and objectives, content, information, and experience with hands on practice and coaching. In addition, HANDS staff was rated daily on fidelity in implementing training curriculum. Results of evaluations completed by 96 training participants and fidelity of training staff from 2010 and 2011 will be presented. Conclusions regarding follow-up evaluation, study implications and future directions will be discussed.

Background
The HANDS in Autism program has developed a unique training model for school-based professionals that is founded upon evidence-based practices. The HANDS training model incorporates didactic instruction with observation and modeling. Additionally, participants are afforded hands-on opportunities to work with school-aged individuals affected by autism spectrum disorders within the HANDS structured classrooms. Such opportunities are then enriched with HANDS trainers providing immediate feedback and coaching to summer training participants.

The HANDS in Autism summer training incorporates the HANDS training model and is offered in one-week sessions three times each summer. Training focuses on ABA principals, best practices, and the use of both in-classroom and out-of-classroom settings.

Summer training participants were asked to complete an evaluation measure daily to establish participant satisfaction with training and to determine if training was meeting participant needs. In addition, a measure was completed daily to verify the ability of training staff to follow guidelines outlined in the HANDS training curriculum.

Methods and Participants
Ninety-six (N=96) professionals from school-based settings attended one of six week-long summer training sessions offered by the HANDS in Autism program between 2010 and 2011. Participants consisted of teachers (both general education and special education), therapists (e.g., school psychologist, SLP, or OT), instructional aides/paraprofessionals, and school administrators.

Each week-long summer training session consisted of five days each lasting eight hours. At the conclusion of each training day participants were asked to complete an evaluation regarding their experience for the day and the information that had been covered. In addition, two lead HANDS trainers assessed staff fidelity to the training program curriculum on each specific day.

The following subjects were taught throughout each training session:

- **Day 1:** Introduction, Structure, and Choreography – Visual and physical structure, role distribution and collaboration with classroom staff and other entities in the educational system. Introduction to the HANDS Model and Philosophy
- **Day 2** Assessment - Informal, curriculum-based, and standardized assessment, data collection and analysis
- **Day 3:** Planning/Intervention: Development of IEP and BIP goals and objectives, behavior reduction
- **Day 4:** Academic - 1:1 teaching, independent work systems, development and adaptation of teaching materials
- **Day 5:** Social Skills - Social development, assessment of individual strengths and needs, developing and implementing social skills goals

Results presented above suggest the HANDS in Autism model of professional training is highly satisfactory to participants, easy for participants to follow, and easy for staff to implement based upon received training.

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For more information about the program, visit our website www.HANDSinAutism.org

The following is a table summarizing 2010 and 2011 training evaluation and fidelity data. The conclusions and future directions will be discussed.