

*A Descriptive Analysis of Positive  
Behavior Support Research with Young  
Children with Challenging Behavior*

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# Introduction

- Importance of intervention research with young children
  - Increase number of young children who demonstrate challenging behaviors (Campbell et al., 1995; Webster-Stratton, 1997)
  - A number of intervention programs exist (e.g., Incredible Years, RIP)
    - Emphasis on reactive approach rather than a proactive approach to intervention

# Introduction - continued

- Positive Behavior Support
  - A proactive approach for working with children with challenging behaviors
  - An emerging technology (Carr et al., 1999)
  - Most of the research has been conducted on persons with developmental disabilities
    - Fewer studies have been conducted with young children

# Introduction - continued

- National emphasis on evidence-based practices
- Increased national attention on proactive interventions to address these problem behaviors in young children
  - Center on Evidence-based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior ([www.challengingbehavior.com](http://www.challengingbehavior.com))

# Purpose

- To provide a descriptive overview of the PBS research conducted with young children who demonstrate challenging behaviors
- To discuss for future research directions

# Search Procedures

- Identified empirical research studies using PBS strategies with young children (ERIC, Psych lit)
  - Key Words:
    - Positive behavior support
    - Functional assessment, Functional behavioral assessment
    - Self-management
    - Functional communication training
    - Assessment-based interventions
- Hand search of journals/authors

# Criteria for Inclusion

- Experimental research study
- Included at least one participant 6 years or younger
- Implemented one of the following types of interventions:
  - Assessment-based intervention
  - Self-monitoring
  - Functional Communication
  - Choice making

# Journals

- Total number of journals = 20 (1984 - present)
- Journals included:
  - Behavior Disorders (4)
  - Behavior Modification (3)
  - Behavior Therapy (1)
  - Child & Family Behavior Therapy (1)
  - Early Education and Development (1)
  - Education and Treatment of Children (3)
  - Education and Treatment of Young Children (1)
  - Education and Treatment of Mental Retardation (1)
  - Exceptional Children (3)
  - Intervention in School & Clinic (1)
  - Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis (16)
  - Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (1)
  - Journal of Autism and Developmental Disabilities (2)
  - Journal of Behavioral Education (1)
  - Journal of Early Intervention (1)
  - Journal of Emotional & Behavioral Disorders (1)
  - Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions (7)
  - School Psychology (1)
  - School Psychology Quarterly (1)
  - Topics in Early Childhood Special Education (3)



# Coding Procedures

- Categories
  - Disability type (no disability, at risk, intellectual disability/severe/profound/mild-moderate, SED/EBD/ODD, ADHD/ADD, developmental delay/autism/PDD, speech/language impairment, physical disability)
  - Ages (1 - 6 years old)
  - Number of participants
  - Gender of participants
  - Race
  - SES
  - Intervention settings (community school/preschool, special education placement, home community, residential/hospital, clinical, other)

# Coding Procedures - continued

- Categories - continued
  - Target behaviors/dependent measures (destructive, disruptive, engagement or on/off task responding, stereotypy, social interactions, skill performance, psychosocial measures)
  - Interventions linked to functional assessment outcomes?
  - Generalization measures collected?
  - Maintenance measures collected?
  - Treatment fidelity measures collected?
  - Social validation measures collected?

# Coding Procedures - continued

- Categories - continued
  - Assessment with no intervention
  - Intervention type (antecedent intervention, instructional intervention, functional assessment based intervention, self-monitoring intervention, multicomponent intervention)
  - Intervention agents (teacher/child care provider, parent, residential staff, researcher, peer)
  - Design utilized

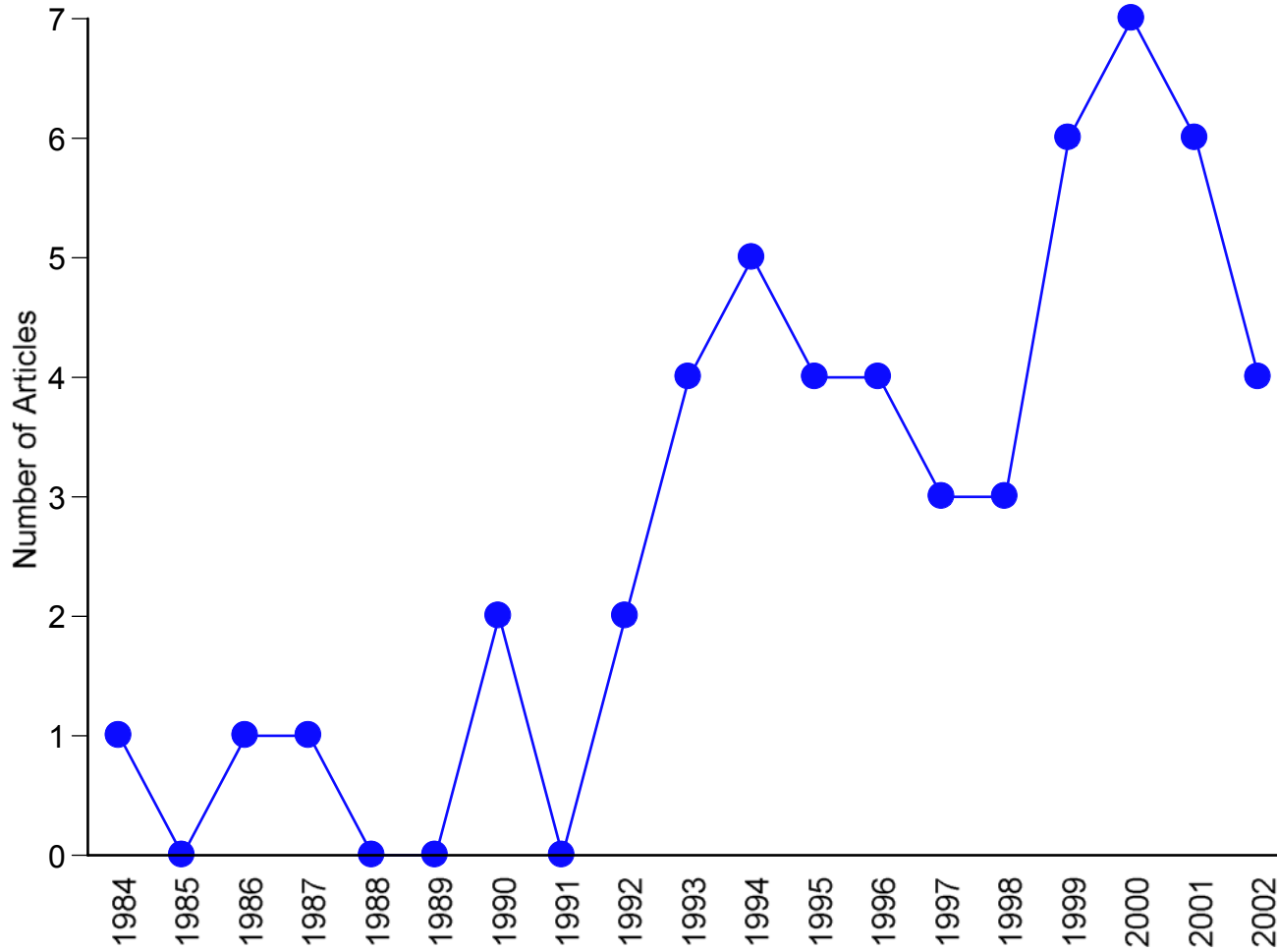
# Coding Procedures - continued

- Reliability calculations
  - 2 Independent observers calculated IOA on each category
  - Percentage of Articles with IOA = 32% (17/53 articles)
  - IOA = 99.9% across all categories

# Results

- Total number of articles = 53
- Increase in the number of PBS Early Intervention articles per year since 1992 (insert graph)

**Number of PBS Early Intervention Articles per Year**



# Population

- Type of disability
  - No disability N = 11 (20%)
  - At risk N = 3 (6%)
  - Intellectual Disability N = 18 (34%)
  - SED N = 8 (15%)
  - ADHD N = 2 (4%)
  - DD/Autism/PDD N = 27 (51%)
  - Speech Delay N = 11 (21%)
  - Physical Disability N = 12 (23%)
- Demographics
  - Race reported N = 3 (6%)
  - Socioeconomic level reported N = 4 (8%)

# Ages & Gender of Participants

- Ages
  - 1 year old N = 1 (2%)
  - 2 years old N = 11 (21%)
  - 3 years old N = 18 (34%)
  - 4 years old N = 24 (45%)
  - 5 years old N = 25 (47%)
  - 6 years old N = 13 (25%)
- Gender
  - Male N = 26 (49%)
  - Female N = 5 (9%)
  - Male & Female N = 19 (36%)



# Settings

- Community School N = 19 (36%)
- Special Education N = 10 (19%)
- Home N = 12 (23%)
- Community N = 1 (2%)
- Residential/In patient N = 6 (11%)
- Clinical/outpatient N = 4 (8%)
- Other NOS N = 10 (19%)

# Dependent Measures

- Destructive N = 43 (81%)
- Disruptive N = 31 (58%)
- Engagement N = 17 (32%)
- Stereotypy N = 2 (4%)
- Social Interaction N = 14 (26%)
- Skill Performance N = 22 (42%)
- Psycho-social N = 1 (2%)

# Intervention Type

- Antecedent Intervention N = 15 (28%)
- Instructional Intervention N = 34 (64%)
- Self-monitoring Intervention N = 9 (17%)
- FA based Interventions N = 14 (26%)
- Multicomponent Interventions N = 26 (49%)
- Intervention linked to FA N = 18 (34%)
- Assessment only (no intervention) N = 9 (17%)

# Intervention Agents

- Teacher N = 24 (45%)
- Parent N = 13 (25%)
- Residential Staff N = 0
- Researcher N = 20 (38%)
- Peer N = 1 (2%)

# Additional Outcomes

- Generalization N = 5 (9%)
- Maintenance N = 7 (13%)
- Treatment Fidelity N = 6 (11%)
- Social Validation N = 12 (23%)
- Research Designs
  - Within N = 42 (79%)
  - Group N = 1 (2%)
  - No design N = 10 (19%)

# Discussion

