

Session 2

OP_11

“Vivesa”: Let’s read storybooks - Evaluating the effectiveness of an online, self-paced training intervention for Sinhala speaking parents of children with complex communication needs: A pilot study

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Introduction: A majority of the parents of children using augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) do not have sufficient knowledge to facilitate effective communication opportunities. Hence, the study focused on evaluating the effectiveness of an online, self-paced training for parents of children with complex communication needs. The intervention aimed to promote the effective incorporation of the children’s AAC systems during shared storybook reading through the implementation of Read, Ask, Answer, Prompt (RAAP) strategy.

Method: The study used the one-group pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design with eight parent-child dyads recruited from Ayati Center, Ragama. A pretest was conducted at the baseline. After completing the online training and the subsequent coaching sessions, post-tests were conducted with each dyad. The video recordings collected during the pre and post-tests were coded to count the number of accurate RAAP strategy implementations. A paired samples t-test was conducted to test the statistical significance of the participants’ improvement.

Results: The findings of the paired sample t-test suggested that there was a statistically significant increase in the parental RAAP strategy use during the post-test ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 1.718$) when compared with the pre-test ($M = 0.00$, $SD = 0.000$) with a large effect size of 2.08.

Conclusion: The results of the study provided evidence that an online, self-paced training intervention could be effectively used to improve the target strategy use among parents during shared storybook reading activity. This implies that technology can be effectively incorporated into communication partner training programs even in the context of low and middle-income countries.